

## Karni Sena chief shot dead at Jaipur home

**Jaipur:** Right-wing group Shri Rashtriya Rajput Karni Sena's president Sukhdev Singh Gogamedi was shot dead in the living room of his house here Tuesday by three armed men, one of whom was also killed in retaliatory firing, police said. One of Gogamedi's security guards sustained bullet injuries in the exchange of fire with the assailants, who had gone to his house in the Shyam Nagar area on the pretext of meeting him, they said. **P9**

## 15 picnickers hurt as van overturns

**Titlagarh:** At least 15 people, including four women and six children, sustained grievous injuries after a pickup van they were travelling in overturned near Katakela railway level-crossing under this block in Bolangir district Tuesday. Locals along with police and a fire brigade team reached the spot and rushed the injured to Titlagarh DHH.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Looks like he has won the elections, and his party is in power now



**NATURE'S FURY:** An inundated road following downpour under the impact of cyclonic storm Michaung, in Nandapur block of Koraput district, Tuesday **OP PHOTO**

## Michaung: South Odisha on alert

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** Southern districts of Odisha were put on alert Tuesday night as the intensity of rains was likely to increase as an impact of severe cyclone Michaung that made landfall in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, officials said. The storm made landfall in the afternoon near Bapatla between Nellore and Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh, with a maximum sustained wind speed of 90-100 kmph, gusting up to 110 kmph. Light rainfall has been recorded in Malkangiri, Koraput,

Rayagada, Ganjam, Gajapati and Kalahandi districts of Odisha till the evening, and the intensity is likely to increase overnight, officials said. After landfall, the cyclone is likely to move northwards and weaken into a depression, they said. At least 12 people lost their lives in various rain-related incidents in and around Chennai even as personnel on fishing boats and farm tractors were engaged in rescuing stranded people in the city Tuesday. The DMK has demanded an immediate Central assistance of ₹5,000 crore for the rain-ravaged state.

## 'Cash-for-kidney': Investigation ordered

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 5:** The National Organ and Tissue Transplantation Organisation (NOTTO) under the Union Health Ministry has ordered an inquiry into allegations of cash-for-kidney scam against Indraprastha Apollo hospital, sources said Tuesday. Director of NOTTO, Anil Kumar has written to Principal Secretary (Health) in the Delhi government to get the matter examined, take appropriate action according to provisions of the Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act 1994 and furnish an action taken report within a week. The Indraprastha Medical Corporation Ltd asserted that it follows every legal and ethical requirement for transplants.

## Green push

Waiver of MV Tax & penalty on old vehicles to facilitate scrapping among 10 proposals to receive Odisha Cabinet nod

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** In a move aimed at easing vehicular pollution, the state Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Tuesday approved waiver of Motor Vehicle (MV) Tax and penalty pending against more than 50,000 vehicle owners as it would go a long way towards scrapping of their old and polluting vehicles.

Chief Secretary PK Jena said despite notice and special drives, the state government has been able to recover dues from only 4,668 vehicle owners in 2022. "Besides, in line with the country's effort to curb vehicular pollution by phasing out old polluting vehicles, the state government has decided to offer one-time waiver of pending MV Tax and penalty on vehicle owners who want to de-register/scrap their vehicles at Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSF)," he said.

The proposal was among the 10 approved by the Odisha Cabinet, Jena said. The Cabinet has also decided to amend the Odisha Government Land Settlement Rules, 1983, to resolve the long-pending land issues in Puri Municipality, and wasteland lease for homestead purposes in Bhubaneswar and Jatni tehsils of Khurda district. It also approved a package for Welspun



Chief Secretary PK Jena addresses media in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

Group's projects in Cuttack and Sambalpur districts, which includes incentives on land and electricity, he said.

The Cabinet decided to develop a utility corridor between Gopalpur Port and Tata Steel Industrial Park in Ganjam. A tender worth Rs 128.88 crore was approved for the project, which will be executed by the state Industrial Development Corporation, said Jena.

The Cabinet decided to amend the Odisha MSME Development Policy, 2022, and Odisha Food Processing Policy, 2022. With these amendments, a differential amount of financial benefit can be extended to industries that have availed similar incentives from the Centre, if the state offers higher incentives, he said.

The Cabinet also decided that the Secondary Board High School in Cuttack will be taken over by the state government with effect from January 1, 2024.

## Non-payment of wages: Boy kills employer

AGENCIES

**Berhampur, Dec 5:** A 15-year-old boy allegedly killed the owner of an eatery where he was working with a stone slab after he was not paid his monthly wage of ₹1,500 for a long, and abused and assaulted whenever he asked for it, police said Tuesday.

The decomposed body of the 37-year-old man, who ran the fast food joint at Gopalpur in Odisha's Ganjam district, was found Sunday in his rented room, they said.

He hired the boy of Bhanjanagar area, promising a monthly wage of ₹1,500, to work as a helper at the eatery. The boy also used to live with him in that room, police said.

However, he did not pay the boy his wage, and whenever he asked for his dues, the man used to abuse and assault him. He also threatened the boy with a police case in case he tried to leave, Superintendent of Police (SP) Saravana Vivek M said. In the early hours of November 29 when the man was sleeping, the boy brought a heavy stone slab and bludgeoned him with it. Then, he also hit him with an iron clamp, police said.

After ensuring the man's death, the boy left the house and bolted the doors. The body was recovered after a foul smell started coming from it, they said.

The boy was nabbed Tuesday, the SP said.

DSPL-442



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**421**  
New Appointments

Newly Appointed  
2021 Batch

**ODISHA CIVIL SERVICE OFFICERS**

General Administration & Public Grievance Department



Chief Guest

**Shri Naveen Patnaik**  
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha

**6th December 2023 || 5PM**  
Convention Centre  
Lokaseva Bhavan, Bhubaneswar

# leisure



## 'I MAY HAVE A HANDFUL OF FILMS LEFT IN ME'

Hollywood actor Nicolas Cage recently shared the news that he could be retiring from Hollywood soon as he wants to 'say bye on a high note'. The actor added that he may have just a handful of films left in him.

## CARMEN DIDN'T THINK OF HERSELF AS A SEX SYMBOL

Actress-model Carmen Electra never thought of herself as a sex symbol despite posing nude for *Playboy* magazine numerous times at the height of her career. She also said that it always came as a surprise to her whenever she was given a compliment about her body.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Your convincing powers are so great that you can even convince people to do what they don't want to do. Today these powers will bear remarkable results. You realise the need to improve your home and your personality. Ganesh says today you will take some concrete steps in this direction.

**TAURUS**  
In all probability, the fair sex will have a wonderful time in kitchen and at the dining table, foresees Ganesh. You may have family friends and close relatives coming over to your place in the evening. Romance will free-flow with your soul mate later in the day, says a beaming Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Today, you will look more presentable than ever, predicts Ganesh. At work, you will employ new business strategies to succeed. By evening, you will give a demo of your supreme sense for style, especially when it comes to dressing up. Your spouse will be enamoured by your new avatar.

**CANCER**  
You are honest and straight-forward, and today will be no different. It's just that you can be too straight at times, leaving those around you embarrassed. Early in the day, small things may bother you in a big way. You may get involved in big financial transactions. You will get due appreciation for your efforts at work.

**LEO**  
Today, you will most certainly pay close attention to your personal appearance, says Ganesh. After all, no one ever said looking good was a crime. At work, you shall find the resources to dig up a successful business tactic. If you are a job aspirant, an interview in the evening shall go well.

**VIRGO**  
A vital turning point is about to take place in your relationships and will dictate how they will progress. Today you will be preoccupied with the organisational details for a social gathering with friends and near and dear ones.

**LIBRA**  
Optimism and a positive mindset are second to your nature today, says Ganesh. So carry it with you wherever you go. You may tend to be slightly overcautious at work, but that will only protect you. Today seems to be one of those days when you can't stop worrying about your career prospects. But everything shall happen in due course, reminds Ganesh.

**SCORPIO**  
The itch of love will spread like a rash today. Passion will set you ablaze, says Ganesh. At work, the course of things may shift to being better than before. However, in love relationships, cold logic will rule over intense emotions. But sweat not in the heat of love, and find the poignancy hidden within, advises Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Ganesh suggests you get down to looking your dashing best. Preen that plumage and make heads turn. Your social standing, on the other hand, will add that extra jazz. Talking fast and smooth might just help you effect a robust consummation.

**CAPRICORN**  
You will love to play God today, and may make use of every tactic of the power game to yield the desired results, says Ganesh. A clear thought process and non-judgemental attitude will show you a new direction to life, but you will have to be focused to meet success.

**AQUARIUS**  
Today, you will blow hot and cold. Hence, no one will know what to expect from you. This will throw your rivals off balance, keeping you a step ahead of them. At work, you will finally win recognition and respect. Ganesh wants you to be satisfied for now, and wait for a better tomorrow.

**PISCES**  
You have been under a lot of pressure of late, but today should see a marked change in your fortunes. A progressive day when it comes to business and professional matters. Fun and frolic too is on the agenda, with invitations to parties and other social get-togethers coming your way, says Ganesh.

## There're no rules in fashion: KHUSHI

**Mumbai:** Upcoming actress Khushi Kapoor has emerged as an inspiration to the younger generation as she advocates a self-assured approach to personal style.

Speaking of her 'go to fashion' mantra, Khushi revealed: "I don't think there are rules in fashion. I think if you look good in something and like wearing it, you should completely own it. I also feel that confidence can elevate any outfit and do whatever makes you feel good."

Known for consistently making style statements, Khushi unabashedly owns every outfit, creating a league of her own.

Her unmatched style reflects an individuality that resonates with confidence and authenticity, setting her apart in the world of fashion.

In Zoya Akhtar's *The Archies*, she will be portraying the iconic character of Betty Cooper.

The flick also stars Agastya Nanda, Suhana Khan, Vedang Raina, Mihir Ahuja, Aditi Saigal and Yuvraj Mendha.

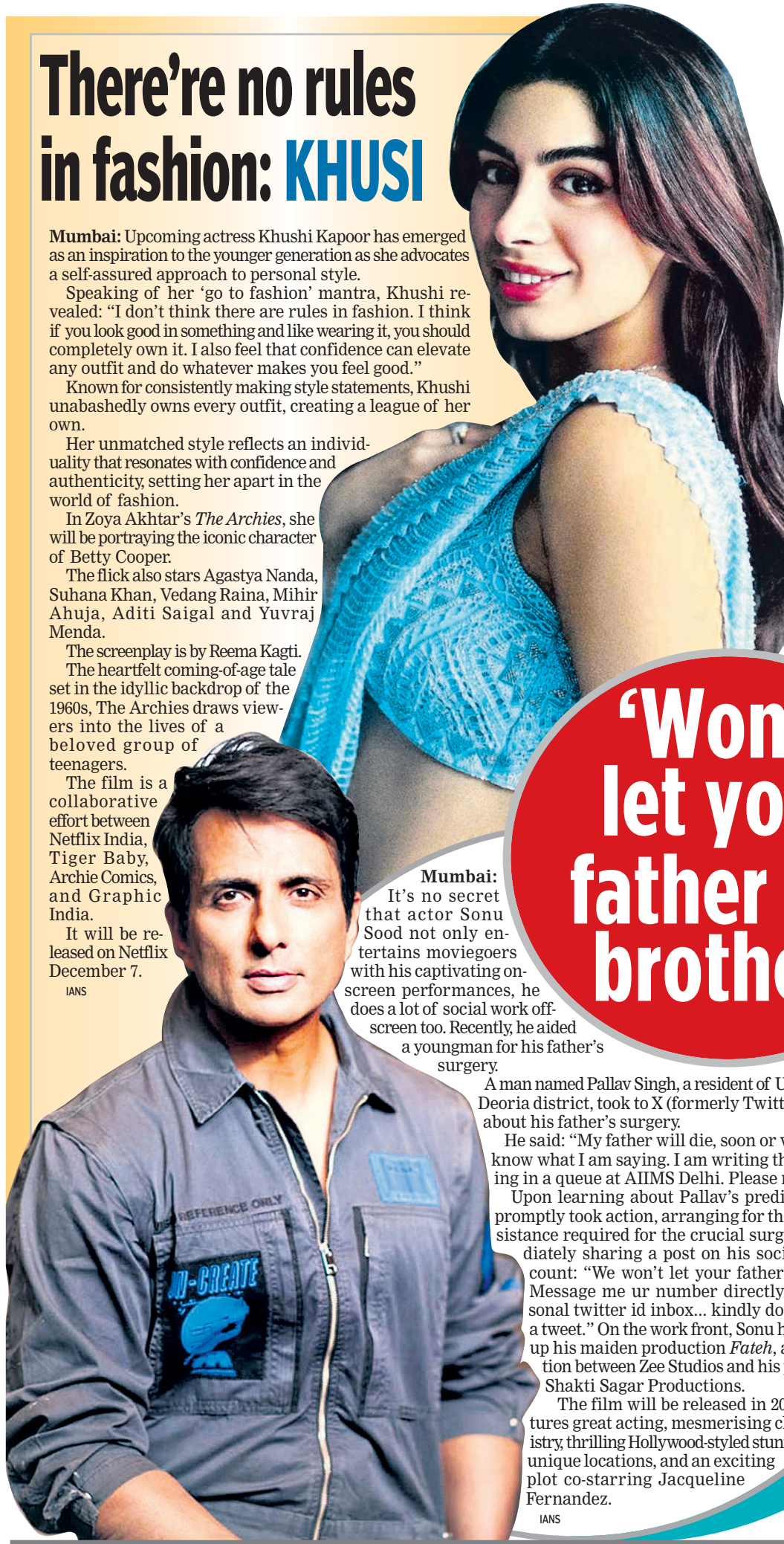
The screenplay is by Reema Kagti.

The heartfelt coming-of-age tale set in the idyllic backdrop of the 1960s, *The Archies* draws viewers into the lives of a beloved group of teenagers.

The film is a collaborative effort between Netflix India, Tiger Baby, Archie Comics, and Graphic India.

It will be released on Netflix December 7.

IAN S



## 'Won't let your father die brother'

**Mumbai:** It's no secret that actor Sonu Sood not only entertains moviegoers with his captivating on-screen performances, he does a lot of social work off-screen too. Recently, he aided a youngman for his father's surgery.

A man named Pallav Singh, a resident of Uttar Pradesh's Deoria district, took to X (formerly Twitter) and wrote about his father's surgery.

He said: "My father will die, soon or very soon. Yes, I know what I am saying. I am writing this while standing in a queue at AIIMS Delhi. Please read."

Upon learning about Pallav's predicament, Sonu promptly took action, arranging for the financial assistance required for the crucial surgery by immediately sharing a post on his social media account: "We won't let your father die brother. Message me ur number directly on my personal twitter id inbox... kindly don't share on a tweet." On the work front, Sonu has wrapped up his maiden production *Fateh*, a collaboration between Zee Studios and his production Shakti Sagar Productions.

The film will be released in 2024, features great acting, mesmerising chemistry, thrilling Hollywood-styled stunts, unique locations, and an exciting plot co-starring Jacqueline Fernandez.

IAN S

## AKADEMI'S 5-DAY DRAMA FEST ON ODISA LEGENDS KICKS OFF



Artistes of Adrushya Natya Ashram of Sambalpur presented Odia play *Utkalmani*, on the life of Pandit Gopabandhu Das, at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Tuesday. Written by Panchanan Dash the play was directed by Atish Kumar Satpathy. The play was the first enactment of the event being organised by Odia Language, Literature and Culture (OLL&C) Department in collaboration with Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi to create awareness on works of legends and social reformers of the state. This will also help in fostering harmony between people of various regions and the popularity of Odia theatre, claimed the officials. OLL&C Secretary Sujata R Kartikeyan, Director Dilip Routray, OSNA Vice-President Manmath Kumar Satpathy graced the occasion as guests, while OSNA Secretary Prabodh Rath coordinated the event.

OP PHOTO

## When Katrina was in tears

**Mumbai:** *Tiger 3*, featuring Salman Khan, Katrina Kaif and Emraan Hashmi, released in theatres on November 12 and successfully went on to become one of the commercially viable films of the year.

One of the many talked-about elements from the film was the Turkish hamam towel fight scene between Katrina Kaif and Hollywood star Michelle Lee. The actress recently said that she was in tears when her body double fell sick during the shoot and she ended up doing it herself.

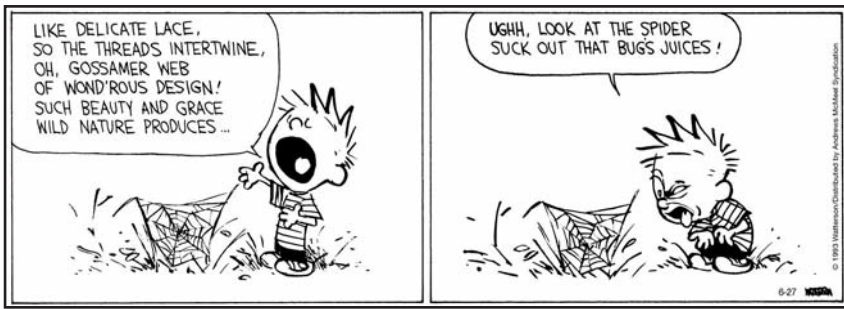
Katrina Kaif recently attended the Red Sea International Film Festival in Jeddah. There, she spoke about *Tiger 3* and mentioned that "some of the action sequences in *Tiger 3* were definitely phenomenal". She also added, "I lost my body double in the 'hamam' sequence. She got sick. I went up to my director and producer and I was crying. Because I'd worked so hard and I was like 'no no', and he was like 'you are going to do it'." Talking about Katrina Kaif, she said, "Katrina was as graceful and professional as can be. She worked really hard on getting the movements precise and making sure all the movements flow. It was clear she had experience in choreography so it was super easy to work with her. We worked up a sweat."

IAN S

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

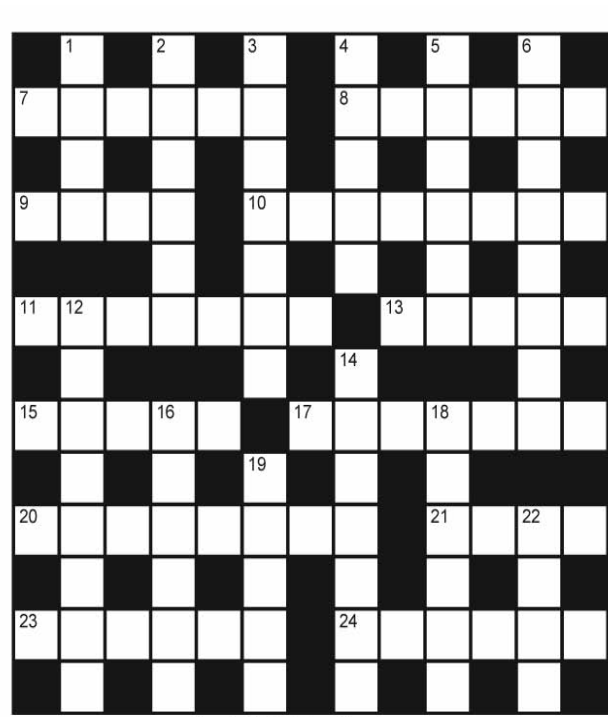


### BREVITY



### FUN post

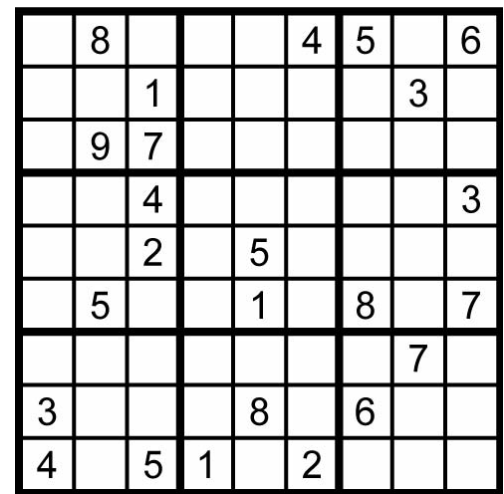
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Ox, for one
  - 8 Chewy candy
  - 9 Wine holder
  - 10 Schemer
  - 11 Peccadillo
  - 13 Cut off
  - 15 Hit the books
  - 17 Island economy, usually
  - 20 Volcano happening
  - 21 Arrangement holder
  - 23 Made like an owl
  - 24 Gossip result
  - Down**
  - 1 Exploding star
  - 2 Ripped off
  - 3 Educator
  - 4 Mindless
  - 5 Abrasive
  - 6 Like some accusations
  - 12 Midland
  - 14 Sporting dog
  - 16 Second-in-command
  - 18 Avon and Yukon, e.g.
  - 19 Given to frivolity
  - 22 Render speechless

### 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.

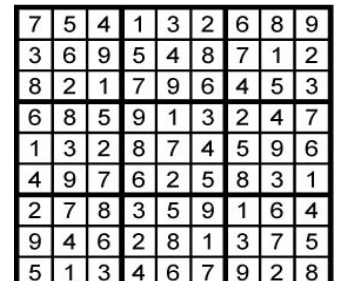


### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

## CURTAINS DOWN ON KONARK FEST

Artistes perform Odissi during the concluding day of 34th Konark Festival-2023 in Puri district, Tuesday



# Cybercrimes against women highest in state



- ❖ Odisha reported the highest victims of cyber morphing in the country, followed by Uttarakhand and Tamil Nadu
- ❖ The eastern state also reported the maximum number of trafficked people in the country in 2022
- ❖ With eight murders stemming from political rivalry in 2022, Odisha was ranked second behind Jharkhand (17) in the country

ODISHA REPORTED 224 CASES OF RIOTS OVER POLITICAL RIVALRY, WHICH WAS ALSO THE SECOND HIGHEST AFTER KERALA'S 301 IN 2022

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** Odisha witnessed 542 cases of cyber-crime against women in 2022, which is the highest in India, according to the latest report released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).  
Of the 542 cases, 269 were recorded for publishing or transmitting sexually-explicit material and the remaining 273 were registered under other cyber-crimes, including blackmailing, defamation, morphing and fake profiles, the report said.  
Odisha also reported the second-highest cases of publishing or transmitting sexually-explicit material in the country, while Uttar Pradesh topped the list with 450 cyber pornography crimes against 455 women.  
Similarly, Odisha reported the highest victims of cyber morphing in the country, followed by Uttarakhand and Tamil Nadu.  
The eastern state reported the

**6,140 died by suicide**  
Odisha has witnessed 8.65 per cent rise in incidents of suicides last year, as per the latest data shared by NCRB. According to NCRB statistics, 6,140 persons in Odisha ended their lives in 2022 against 5,651 in 2021, an 8.65 per cent rise. As many as 1,70,924 persons died by suicide across the country last year against 1,64,033 in 2021, registering a 4.2 per cent rise. Maharashtra topped the list with 22,746 suicides. 'Family problems' and 'illness' were the major causes of suicides which accounted for 31.7 per cent and 18.4 per cent of such incidents respectively during 2022. Odisha saw 3,031 dying by suicide over family problems.

maximum number of trafficked people in the country in 2022. As many as 1,120 people, including 502 women, were traf-

ficked in Odisha last year, followed by Maharashtra (805 victims).  
At least 353 of the trafficked victims in Odisha were below 18 years and of them 140 were girls. The state rescued 1,816 victims, who were trafficked before and during 2022, the report said.  
Crimes against senior citizens and children have increased in the state last year.  
Altogether 8,240 cases of crime against children were reported in Odisha in 2022, up from 7,899 in 2021 and 6,330 in 2020.  
Similarly, offences against senior citizens saw an alarming increase to 551 cases in 2022, more than double from 210 in 2021.  
However, the state witnessed a decline in cases of crime against women in 2022.  
As many as 23,648 cases of crime against women were reported in the state last year, down from 31,352 in 2021.  
With eight murders stemming from political rivalry in 2022, Odisha was ranked second behind Jharkhand (17) in the country.  
Odisha reported 224 cases of riots over political rivalry, which was also the second highest after Kerala's 301 in 2022.  
Moreover, the eastern state registered 85 cases relating to disproportionate assets against corrupt public servants in 2022, which is also the highest in the country.  
Karnataka and Bihar ranked second and third by registering 56 and 48 such cases during the year, the report added.



**NATURE'S BOUNTY:** Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Pradip Kumar Amat during the inaugural session of 16th State-level Kalinga Herbal Fair 2023 at Idco Exhibition Ground in Unit III area of Bhubaneswar, Tuesday. Among others, Additional Chief Secretary Satyabrata Sahu is also seen

## Man held for attack

**Bhubaneswar:** The Commissionerate Police Tuesday arrested a man on charges of attacking a person over non-payment of money. The accused was identified as Chitrasen Pradhan who runs a car remodelling shop in Khandagiri area here. According to Khandagiri police, Sunil Paikray got his car remodelled at Pradhan's shop. When Pradhan overcharged Paikray, the latter refused to pay. "Irrked over the refusal, Pradhan attacked Paikray and also threatened to kill him," an official said, quoting Paikray's complaint. On the basis of a complaint lodged by Paikray, Pradhan was booked under Section 294, 324, 326, 307 and 506 of the IPC and arrested.

## ₹65cr for Tusura airstrip makeover

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday approved a proposal for modernisation of Tusura airstrip in Bolangir and sanctioned Rs 65 crore for the project.



It may be mentioned here that 5T and Naveen Odisha Chairman VK Pandian had visited Bolangir August 5 and 6 and received many proposals including development of Tusura airstrip. He had directed the Bolangir Collector for preparation of a detailed project report.  
The airstrip in Tusura which is about 30 km away from Bolangir was inaugurated October 2, 1967 by the then Chief Minister Maharaja Rajendra Narayan Singhdeo. Built on a sprawling 50-acre land, the airstrip has a 1,200-metre long runway.

**The airstrip in Tusura which is about 30 km away from Bolangir was inaugurated October 2, 1967 by the then Chief Minister Maharaja Rajendra Narayan Singhdeo**

to include Tusura airstrip in Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAAN) scheme. In 2021, the Centre had included 19 unserved and underserved airstrips and airports of Odisha including Tusura airstrip under UDAN scheme.  
Accordingly, Air Odisha had also conducted surveys of Tusura and Utkela airstrips. The inspection team had opined that the development of infrastructure can boost the chances of commercial air connectivity in the region.

# Workshop highlights declining child sex ratio in state

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** Child sex ratio in Odisha has been declining since 1961. This was revealed during a State Level Consultative Workshop on Addressing Low Sex Ratio at Birth organised by Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department in collaboration with United Nations Population Fund

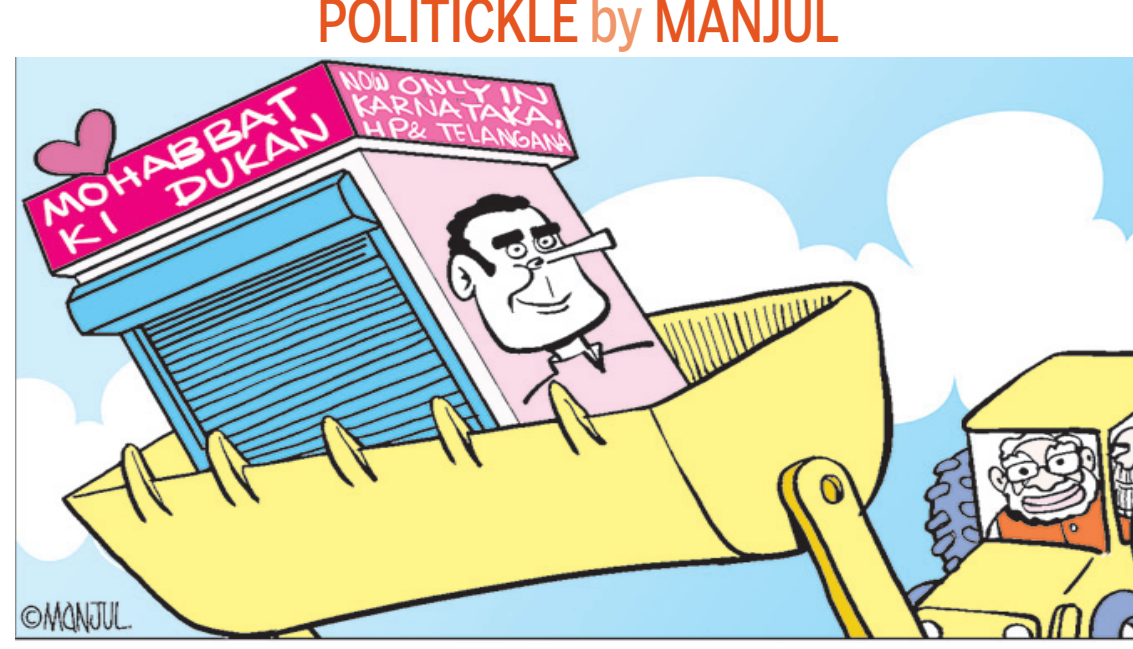
(UNFPA) here, Tuesday.  
The workshop was conducted in view of decline in sex ratio at birth (SRB) in the state to find out strategies to improve SRB. Some of the reasons commonly put forward to explain the low levels of SRB are preference for sons, sex selective abortions and female foeticide.  
During the workshop, officials said the child sex ratio of Odisha

has been showing a declining trend since 1961. In 1961 census, Odisha's ratio was 1,035 which declined to 1,020 in 1971, 995 in 1981, 967 in 1991, 953 in 2001 and 941 in 2011. The National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-2021) had estimated Odisha's child sex ratio at 894, a sharp decline from 932 in NFHS-4 (2015-2016).  
The statistical report estimated a fall of 23 points by Odisha in five

years from 948 in 2014-16 to 925 in 2018-20.  
The workshop was inaugurated by Mission Director, NHM Odisha in presence of Bijaya Kumar Panigrahi, Director, Family Welfare, Md Nadeedm Noor, Head of Office, UNFPA, Odisha, Director, I & PR department, Director, Social Welfare, W&CD department, Director, Health Services.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	63142.96 ↑ 350.08
NIFTY	18726.40 ↑ 127.40
DOLLAR	82.54 ↑ ₹0.14
EURO	88.35 ↑ ₹0.11
GOLD	₹59,955 ↓ ₹30
SILVER	₹71,918 ↓ ₹38

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	28.8°C	28.0°C
TEMP MIN	21.5°C	21.5°C
Humidity	69%	77%
Rainfall	0.5	Nil
Forecast	Light to moderate rain	



# 2023's most-viewed articles on Wikipedia

CHATGPT MOST POPULAR; WC CRICKET, IPL AND PATHAAN AMONG THIS YEAR'S TOP 25 ARTICLES ON INTERNET'S ENCYCLOPEDIA

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**New York, Dec 5:** Remember what you searched for in 2023? Well, Wikipedia has the receipts.  
English Wikipedia raked in more than 84 billion views this year, according to numbers released Tuesday by the Wikimedia Foundation, the non-profit behind the free, publicly edited online encyclopedia. And the most popular article was about ChatGPT (yes, the AI chatbot that's seemingly everywhere today).  
Since its launch just over a year ago, OpenAI's ChatGPT has skyrocketed into the public's consciousness as the technology makes its way into schools, healthcare, law and even religious sermons. The chatbot has also contributed to growing debates about the promise and potential dangers of generative AI, much of which is documented on its

TOP 25 ARTICLE	PAGEVIEWS
ChatGPT:	49,490,406
Deaths in 2023:	42,666,860
2023 Cricket World Cup:	38,171,653
Indian Premier League:	32,012,810
Oppenheimer (film):	28,348,248
Cricket World Cup:	25,961,417
J. Robert Oppenheimer:	25,672,469
Jawan (film):	21,791,126
2023 Indian Premier League:	20,694,974
Pathaan (film):	19,932,509
The Last of Us (TV series):	19,791,789
Taylor Swift:	19,418,385
Barbie (film):	18,051,077
Cristiano Ronaldo:	17,492,537
Lionel Messi:	16,623,630
Premier League:	16,604,669
Matthew Perry:	16,454,666
United States:	16,240,461
Elon Musk:	14,370,395
Avatar: The Way of Water:	14,303,116
India:	13,850,178
Lisa Marie Presley:	13,764,007
Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3:	13,392,917
Russian invasion of Ukraine:	12,798,866
Andrew Tate:	12,728,616

also garnered significant interest this year, including pages for Matthew Perry and Lisa Marie Presley.  
Meanwhile, the highly anticipated 2023 Cricket World Cup took third place — alongside three other cricket-related entries in Wikipedia's top 25 articles this year, including the Indian Premier League at #4, marking the first time a cricket article has made the list since the Wikimedia Foundation started tracking in 2015.  
"Barbenheimer," Taylor Swift and more also appeared to sway our 2023 internet-reading habits. Here are this year's top 25 articles on English Wikipedia.  
According to the Wikimedia Foundation, this top 25 list was created using English Wikipedia data as of November 28. Numbers for the full year are set to be updated by the nonprofit January 3, 2024.

Wikipedia page.  
The second most-read article on Wikipedia in 2023 was the annual list of deaths, which sees high traffic year after year — taking the #4 and #1 spots in 2022 and 2021, respectively. Individual entries for notable figures who passed away

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FOCUS PMJAY

# VIEW FROM FRONTLINES



Hospitals and entire health systems can respond to controlled pricing by innovating, bringing down costs, shedding unnecessary frills, and keeping quality high

hospitals. A fixed package approach has persuaded hospitals to pay particular attention to this and control it so patients can be discharged quickly.

The low package rates offered by PMJAY have come in for much criticism. However, there is global evidence which suggests that merely because package rates are low, it does not mean that quality needs to be low. Hospitals and entire health systems can respond to controlled pricing by innovating, bringing down costs, shedding unnecessary frills, and keeping quality high.

While the scheme has many empanelled hospitals, over 25% are inactive, and the number varies significantly across the country - from over 500 active hospitals per crore population in Karnataka to only about 60 per crore in Bihar. As a result, hospitalisations under the scheme have been mainly concentrated in the southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala and range from almost 16,000 admissions per lakh population in Kerala to only about 600 in Bihar. The case of Uttar Pradesh is particularly noteworthy - at over 18,500 cards

per lakh population, it has issued nearly as many cards as Kerala's 21,500. However, it has only about 1200 hospitalisations per lakh population compared to Kerala's 16,000.

These large differentials are a reflection of the lack of availability of hospitals in lower-income states. This can also be seen from the fact that in over 200 districts of India, all based in the north and the northeast, total C-section rates are well below 10% - these low rates are now the principal reason why pregnant women and their newborns are dying in these districts. In order to address this, there is a need to build and staff more public sector hospitals in these districts and, where appropriate, devise incentives for the private sector to set up facilities in these remote regions. The UDAN ("Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik") scheme of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, which has done something similar with private airlines, could provide an excellent learning model.

Putting aside concerns relating to low rates, while the move towards package rates within PMJAY has been a helpful development, it still falls within the ambit of what is referred to as a fee-for-service payment model. The danger of insurance schemes funded in this way, as the US discovered with its own version of PMJAY, Medicaid and Medicare after it was too late, is that it leads to massive price inflation in the healthcare sector. The only durable way to address this is, with adequate funding, to move towards total health system financing based

on population norms, as Thailand has done with the public sector and Israel has done with the private sector. Research suggests that in several states, including Delhi, Goa, Kerala, and Himachal Pradesh, current government expenditures are already adequate to finance all necessary healthcare. If, in these states, the independent State Health Authorities could be given charge of the entire state health budget, they would have sufficient funding to implement district-level total health systems financing strategies and take responsibility for overall district and state-level health outcomes.

The durability of tax-financed purchasing schemes for health like PMJAY both at Central and state levels speaks to the continued political and mass appeal of such an approach towards financing healthcare. Over time, stable structures like the National and State Health Authorities, which now run these schemes, have evolved, albeit with varying levels of capability. These schemes have also successfully built navigation capability, allowing them to purchase services from the private sector without getting embroiled in one or the other corruption scandals. This durability, stability, and ability to navigate is rare in the healthcare sector in India. It has set the stage for the next big move - the complete transfer of state health budgets to their State Health Authorities, which will pay the public sector and, where necessary, the private sector, based on defined outcomes and do away entirely with automatic-budget-based financing of public sector.

More than two decades of experience with tax-financed insurance schemes in India has indicated that the availability of insurance schemes is a necessary but insufficient condition for a robust supply response from the hospital sector.

**Dr Nachiket Mor is Visiting Scientist at The Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health, Chennai. Dr Shuchin Bajaj is founder of Ujala Cygnus.**  
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Nachiket Mor & Shuchin Bajaj

**ONE OF THE CHALLENGES OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR, NOT JUST IN INDIA BUT GLOBALLY, IS ITS NON-RESPONSIVENESS**

Just over five years have now passed since the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), launched in 2018, came into being. During this period, it has issued over 27 crore insurance cards and has financed over 5.75 crore hospital admissions with an average payout of about ₹12,250 per admission, with almost 27,000 empanelled hospitals nationwide. This is an impressive track record and needs to be celebrated. However, any programme or scheme, no matter how well-designed and executed, has both strengths and weaknesses. Five years is an excellent time to review some of them so that the scheme builds further on its strengths and works towards filling any gaps that may exist.

Of the 27,000 hospitals that are empanelled and about 20,000 that are active, 15,000 are in public sector. While this has not yet been formally evaluated, anecdotal evidence suggests that these public sector hospitals outperform those not part of the scheme. One of the challenges of the public sector, not just in India but globally, is its non-responsiveness. Starting in the 80s with the UK, governments worldwide, including Thailand, Turkey, and, most recently, Vietnam, have moved to finance the public sector based on outcomes. They have gradually moved away from automatic financing based on annual expenditure budgets. This change has allowed them to improve the performance of the public sector, and it is not surprising that something similar is being seen in India when PMJAY pays the government hospitals based on outcomes. Over time, the full power of this can be realised if all financing to the public sector moves in this direction, including at the primary care level.

Given its funding limitations, PMJAY has not yet moved towards total health system financing in any part of the country, but its move towards paying hospitals on a package basis and not on a procedure-by-procedure basis has shown beneficial impacts. For example, increasing the length of stay after a successful surgery in a hospital is often due to poor infection control at



There is no greater courage than that of recognising one's own mistakes.

THE MOTHER



## Bungling Spies

It appears to be a season of Indian spies getting nabbed or identified for messing up with their espionage work in foreign countries. Spies, often masquerading as diplomats the world over, gather intelligence while working in different countries presumably to serve the interests of their own country. They also are mandated to foil attempts to destabilise or harm their countries. As such their work is recognised as legitimate and normal diplomatic activities and the host nations are usually aware of who all are into it and from which embassies. But, when protocols are breached or diplomats engaged in subversive activities bordering on criminality are caught, problems begin.

The issue has attracted global attention and Indian diplomats are at the centre of alleged shady operations. It all started with the charge levelled by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau that an Indian spy working in the diplomatic services in Canada had a hand in the killing of Khalistani activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Canadian soil. Before the hue and cry and allegations and counter-allegations by both sides subsided, a no less serious complaint was made by the US which accused an Indian spy working in the diplomatic services in America of plotting to kill a Sikh, supposedly a separatist, with the help of operatives. Now, it is the turn of the US itself to have egg on its face after a sensational revelation that one of its spies had, for the past four decades, been working as a double agent for Cuba.

US prosecutors termed it one of the most brazen and long-running betrayals in the history of the US foreign service after Manuel Rocha was charged in Miami federal court that he had engaged in clandestine activity on Cuba's behalf since at least 1981. As he sat handcuffed and wept in the courtroom, prosecutors revealed he had been meeting Cuban intelligence operatives and providing false information to US government officials about his contacts.

The complaint is short on specifics of how Rocha may have assisted Cuba. But it provides a vivid case study of what American officials say are long-standing efforts by Cuba and its sophisticated intelligence services to target US government officials. This action exposes one of the highest-reaching and longest-lasting infiltrations of the United States government by a foreign agent, Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a statement. The 73-year-old Rocha was arrested by the FBI at his Miami home late last week.

The American spy's case appears rather straightforward compared to the alleged activities of Indian spies and their agents. It is a commonplace occurrence the world over that spies of different countries act as double agents. This is done for their private gains which come when they betray the interests of their own countries. What is not so infrequent is spies killing or plotting to kill supposed enemies of their country on foreign soil where the latter have taken shelter as citizens of those countries. This is the reason why the 15-page indictment filed by the US Department of Justice against an Indian national, believed to be directed by an Indian government official for attempting an assassination plot against US-based Khalistani separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, is so disturbing. The indictment is based on details of communications between the accused, an illicit drugs and arms dealer, Nikhil Gupta, with a serving senior and identified Indian government intelligence officer and two men in the US, who were allegedly engaged to kill Pannun.

As the incident came to light soon after Canada had accused India of engineering the killing of Nijjar, the credibility of India's foreign services has come under a cloud. What is even worse is the different responses of the Indian government to Canada and the USA. The foreign ministry dismissed outright the involvement of any of its diplomats in the killing of Nijjar and took retaliatory action against the Canadian diplomatic corps in India. But, when the US levelled similar charges, India pleaded ignorance and announced a probe. The irony is both the USA and Canada belong to the "Five Eyes" group of countries that share intelligence with one another and act in tandem in such situations. Canadian allegations will directly impact India's ties with all these intelligence partner countries.

India's credibility as a country that claims to take principled approach on international issues is under a question mark for what appears to be needless adventurism. The US needs India in dealing with China for its own strategic reasons. That seems to have injected into New Delhi a false sense of pride and importance in the international arena. It appears to believe it can get away with whatever it does. Some of the utterances and conduct of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar have of late created such an impression.

India needs to watch out and not misstep.

### WISDOM CORNER

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

STEPHEN HAWKING

Selfishness must always be forgiven you know, because there is no hope of a cure.

JANE AUSTEN

When you choose your friends, don't be short-changed by choosing personality over character.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

**1865:** Georgia became the 27th U.S. state to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery and involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime.

**1917:** Finnish Declaration of Independence. The declaration ended 109 years of Finland being a Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire. The Northern European country came under the control of the Russian Empire in 1809. After the October Revolution in Russia, which created the Soviet Union, the Finnish Parliament declared independence on this day.

**1921:** Irish Free State established. The British government and Irish leaders Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins, and others signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty, establishing the Irish Free State as an independent member of the British Commonwealth this day in 1921.

**1933:** In what was considered a landmark ruling, a US federal judge held that James Joyce's Ulysses was not obscene, thus allowing for greater freedoms in literary works.

**1992:** The Babri Masjid in Ayodhya was destroyed by Hindu fundamentalists, leading to Hindu-Muslim riots throughout India and the other parts of the sub-continent.

### LOL

#### KNITTING & DRIVING

A policeman spots a woman driving and knitting at the same time. Driving up beside her, he shouts



"Pull over!"

"No," she shouts back, "a pair of socks!"

### IN JEST THIS

## Some record holders make me envious

Some people are so lucky. No, I'm not talking about the ones who win the lottery, although they're extremely lucky. I'm talking about the ones who've been blessed with too much of a good thing.

For example, while many people do not have enough teeth in their mouths, some people have too many teeth.

If you don't believe me, then you haven't heard about Kalpana Balan. The Indian woman has 38 teeth - six more than the typical adult.

Balan, a 26-year-old mother of one, recently claimed a Guinness World Record for the most teeth in a person's mouth (female).

She has four extra mandibular (lower jaw) teeth and two extra maxillary (upper jaw) teeth.

I'm thinking of writing a letter to her: "Dear Kalpana, I heard that you six extra teeth. Would you mind donating a few of them to me?"

Dental implants are very popular these days, but I would like

to have a dental transplant. Why get fake teeth when you can have real teeth?

Of course, I could never afford Balan's teeth. Her teeth must be very valuable because they're part of a Guinness World Record.

"I am so happy to get the Guinness World Records title," Balan told the Guinness website. "It's my lifetime achievement."

Lifetime achievement? She's only 26. I think her lifetime achievement will be something more significant, such as becoming the first woman to successfully donate her extra teeth to a desperate man.

Balan's extra teeth are known as supernumerary teeth. They started growing during her teenage years. She initially wanted to remove them, but changed her mind later, since they weren't causing any pain. Having set a world record, she's quite happy about her decision. And she may be even happier in a few years, when she gets

even more teeth.

Yes, according to Guinness, there are two more teeth in her jaw that haven't come out yet. These teeth are evidently waiting until someone else breaks the world record with 37 teeth, at which point they will pop out of her gums and say, "Ha ha! Kalpana still has the record!"

In case you're wondering, about one in every 25 people has one or more supernumerary teeth. While Balan has the record for females, the male record is held by a Canadian man named Evano Mellone, who has 41 teeth. He has nine extra teeth!

How lucky can some people get? I wish I could get a tooth transplant from these record holders, but if that's not possible, I'd settle for getting a hair transplant from Smita Srivastava of Uttar Pradesh.

The 46-year-old recently set a Guinness World Record for longest hair on a living person. Her hair measures 236.22 cm. If she were seven feet tall, nine

inches of her hair would still be touching the ground.

I'm envious of anyone with so much hair, partly because I've been losing hair for the last decade and have a prominent bald spot. I haven't tried any of the popular hair-growing lotions, but I'd be willing to get some help from Srivastava.

She's been growing her hair since she was 14. Three decades later, she gets a lot of attention when she's out in public and her hair is loose.

"People come to me, touch my hair, take pictures, take selfies with me, and they often enquire about the products I use, as my hair is beautiful," she told the Guinness website.

I met Srivastava, I'd ask her only one question: "Would you donate one strand of hair to me?"

Yes, all I'd need is one strand of 236-cm hair. I'd curl it many times over my bald spot. And then I'd try to claim my own Guinness World Record: longest hair on a balding male.

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

**OrissaPOST**  
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

### Opposition in disarray

Sir, This refers to "Opposition in peril," Orissa Post, Dec 5. The INDIA alliance, a group of 28 political parties, has been formed to stop the BJP's juggernaut in 2024. After its formation, the alliance moved quickly and held three back-to-back meetings. However, the momentum fizzled out as Congress pressed the wait-and-watch button, hoping wins in three states may solidify its top place and secure the leadership role in the alliance. With the Assembly poll result in three heartland states being a huge drubbing for the Congress, some rumblings have begun among the constituents of the INDIA opposition bloc, with many leaders alleging that the grand old party ignored others, but was unable to win elections on its own. As the results pushed the Congress further back, leaving it in power in only three states on its own, some opposition parties are questioning whether the grand old party is the weakest link within the alliance. The Congress may not win the parliamentary seats even in three states where it is in power as in the past, where voters have thrown different results for assembly and general elections. The ambitious regional satraps like Mamata Banerjee, Aravind Kejriwal and Nitish Kumar may upset the applecart of the Congress, leaving the Opposition in disarray.  
**N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE**

### Remarkable advancements

Sir, India's commendable double-digit year-on-year growth in the bioeconomy over the last 9 to 10 years underscores significant progress. Union Minister Jitendra Singh's emphasis on India's substantial strides in the bioeconomy signals a notable shift toward establishing the nation as a robust bio-manufacturing hub. The consistent growth and international acknowledgment underscore a deliberate emphasis on biotechnology, positioning India as a pivotal force in shaping the trajectory of bio-manufacturing. The initiation of the 'Zero Waste Life on Campus' initiative demonstrates a proactive approach to sustainability. With the Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council aligning with PM Modi's vision, India seems well-positioned to capitalise on its abundant bioresources and take a leading role in critical sectors such as healthcare, food, and energy. This not only emphasises economic progress but also underscores a steadfast commitment to innovation, marking a compelling phase in India's biotechnological landscape.  
**Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD**





Eminent Odissi dancer Dona Ganguly's troupe performs during the inauguration of the 29th Kolkata International Film Festival at Netaji Indoor Stadium in Kolkata, West Bengal



Captain Geetika Koul, from the Snow Leopard Brigade, with Indian Army personnel, in Siachen. Koul became the first woman medical officer of the Indian Army to be deployed at Siachen after successfully completing the induction training at Siachen Battle School



People wear helmets as they are evacuated from a building following an earthquake in Manila, Philippines



Devotees walk on burning embers during Sri Veerbhadreshwara Swamy Kendotsava in Chikmagalur, Karnataka



AAP MPs Ashok Mittal, Raghav Chadha and Sandeep Pathak stage a protest during the Winter Session of Parliament, in New Delhi



Activists protest against fossil fuels at the COP28 UN Climate Summit



People help an elderly woman shift to a safer place from a flooded area after heavy rainfall owing to cyclone Michaung in Chennai, Tamil Nadu





Why has the Peace Committee constituted by the Union Government not done any visible work to restore peace, normalcy and harmony in Manipur

INDIA, KENYA INK 5 PACTS

India Tuesday announced a USD 250 million line of credit to Kenya for modernisation of its agricultural sector as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Kenyan President William Samoei Ruto agreed to shore up bilateral ties in areas of defence, trade, energy, digital public infrastructure and healthcare



of the day quote

Following the Prime Minister's guidance, the Haryana government has been organising the International Gita Mahotsav in Kurukshetra since 2016, which has gained tremendous success and popularity over the past seven years

Prepare case studies of all the patients you see and actively encourage research in medical education

The government of India is committed to making Haj inclusive and accessible towards all segments of society, especially women and specially abled persons

SHORT TAKES

Oppn presses for early polls in J&K

New Delhi: Opposition members in the Lok Sabha sought a timeline from the government Tuesday for holding Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir, with the Centre asserting that it is ready and it is up to the Election Commission (EC) to take a decision in the matter.

NIA raids in 7 districts in J&K

Srinagar: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Tuesday carried out raids at several locations across Jammu and Kashmir in connection with the terror conspiracy hatched and operationalised by offshoots of the banned Pakistan-backed terrorist organisations, the investigating agency said.

7 labourers die as machine collapses

Vijayapura (K'taka): Seven labourers from Bihar were killed after a gigantic processing machine collapsed, trapping them under a heap of about 100 tonnes of corn at a godown of a private food processing unit in Aliyabad industrial area here, police said Tuesday.

Court grants bail to former IAF official

New Delhi: A Delhi court has granted bail to a former Indian Air Force official who allegedly shared secret information with Pakistan's ISI-backed intelligence operatives after being "honeytrapped" in 2015.

Fire breaks out in train

Saharsa: A fire broke out inside a sleeper class coach of a train coming from Delhi on Tuesday evening, while it was on its way to the final stop at Saharsa in Bihar, though nobody was hurt in the incident, a senior official said.

Rashtriya Rajput Karni Sena chief shot dead



Supporters of Shri Rashtriya Rajput Karni Sena's president Sukhdev Singh Gogamedi stage a protest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Dec 5: Right-wing group Shri Rashtriya Rajput Karni Sena's president Sukhdev Singh Gogamedi was shot dead in the living room of his house here on Tuesday by three armed men, one of whom was also killed in retaliatory firing, police said.

historical facts about the Rajput community. Jaipur Police Commissioner Biju George Joseph told reporters, "Three men went to Gogamedi's house and told his security guards that they wanted to meet him. The guards took them inside and the men talked to Gogamedi for 10 minutes before opening fire at him."

BJP, CONG SPAR

The BJP and the Congress sparred over Gogamedi's killing, with both parties claiming that the law-and-order scenario deteriorates under the other's dispensation.

formation, Shekhawat used to run a shop, he said. Soon after the news of the attack on Gogamedi broke, his supporters and members of the Rajput community started reaching his house and the hospital where he was taken.

One of Gogamedi's relatives told reporters outside the hospital that he had been receiving threats for a long time and feared an attack. He claimed police had been informed about the threats.

Revanth Reddy to be next T'gana CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Congress soldiers who stood by us through thick and thin," Reddy posted on X.

New Delhi, Dec 5: Telangana Congress chief A Revanth Reddy, who switched from the TDP in 2017 and spearheaded the successful electoral campaign against the BRS, was Tuesday named as the new Chief Minister of the state.

Announcing the decision at the party headquarters here Tuesday, AICC general secretary K C Venugopal said the swearing-in of the 54-year-old leader will take place December 7 in Hyderabad.

"I wholeheartedly express my gratitude to honourable AICC president Shri Kharge ji, Mother of Telangana our beloved Soniamma, ever inspiring leader Rahul Gandhi ji, charismatic Priyanka Gandhi ji, AICC General Secretary (Org) K C Venugopalji, Deputy CM of Karnataka D K Shivakumar ji and Incharge General Secretary-Telangana Manikrao Thakare and last but not the least our

Cong to hold another round of parleys in late Dec

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



New Delhi, Dec 5: A meeting of the top leaders of the INDIA opposition bloc has been deferred to the third week of December after some of them expressed their inability to attend it due to their preoccupations.

Another meeting convened by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge at his residence here Wednesday with the floor leaders of the INDIA constituents in Parliament will, however, go ahead according to its schedule to formulate the opposition strategy for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

The decision was taken as some leaders of the bloc, including Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo Mamata Banerjee and Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav, said they will not be able to attend Wednesday's meeting.

Surdeep Sappal, Congress Working Committee (CWC) mem-

ber and coordinator of the Congress president's office, said on X: "A coordination meeting of parliamentary party leaders of INDIA alliance will be held at 6 pm on December 6 at the residence of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge."

Sources said Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is unwilling while his Tamil Nadu counterpart, M K Stalin, is unable to attend Wednesday's meet due to a cyclone that has hit the southern state. Banerjee, the

chief minister of West Bengal, is busy with a family wedding, the sources said.

Shiv Sena leader Priyanka Chaturvedi said the meeting has not been postponed as some chief ministers were unable to attend it. She said the meeting will take place December 6 and coordination and seat sharing will be discussed among the leaders.

Subsequently, the top leadership of various opposition parties will endorse the same

during their meeting later in December, Chaturvedi added.

Rubbing speculation that the recent Assembly poll results have created fissures within the INDIA bloc, Congress leader Naseer Hussain said the election outcome would have no bearing on the opposition unity and its alliance is intact. SP spokesperson Rajendra Chaudhary said Akhilesh Yadav has no plans to attend the meeting Wednesday.

Asked if the decision was taken after the declaration of Assembly poll results in five states, he said there was no information about the meeting earlier. In Delhi, SP leader Ramgopal Yadav said his party will attend the meeting, although Akhilesh Yadav may not be present.

Talking to reporters, Akhilesh Yadav said the recent Assembly poll results will make the INDIA bloc even stronger in the coming days.

Govt reviews social networks' progress on curbing deepfakes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 5: Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar Tuesday met social media platforms to review progress made by them in tackling misinformation and deepfakes, and asserted that advisories will be issued in the next two days to ensure 100 per cent compliance

by platforms. New, amended IT Rules to further ensure compliance of platforms, and the safety and trust of online users are actively under consideration, Chandrasekhar said in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

"Held the 2nd #DigitalIndiaDialogues on Misinformation and #Deepfakes with intermediaries today, to re-

view the progress made since the Nov 24 meeting."

"Many platforms are responding to the decisions taken last month and advisories on ensuring 100 per cent compliance will be issued in the next 2 days," Chandrasekhar, who is Minister of State for IT and Electronics, said in the post.

Meanwhile, sources said that

the government has talked tough with the digital platforms at Tuesday's meeting. Platforms have been reminded that 11 areas of "user harms" or "illegalities" flagged under IT Rules are also mapped to equivalent provisions in the IPC (Indian Penal Code) and hence criminal consequences can follow even under the current laws.

DMK MP's 'gaumutra' states remarks trigger row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 5: DMK Lok Sabha member DNV Senthil Kumar Tuesday triggered a row by describing Hindi heartland as "gaumutra states", drawing instant condemnation from the BJP as well as its ally Congress, whose leaders asked him to tender an apology.

Sabha Speaker later, the remarks sparked a controversy with several members across party lines condemning the DMK leader and the video of his speech going viral on social media.



DNV Senthil Kumar, while taking a jibe at the BJP over its election victories in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, said Tuesday that the saffron party can win elections in only those states and not in South India

While participating in a discussion on J&K Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill in the House, he said the BJP can win elections only in the Hindi heartland states and not in south India.

BJP leaders termed Senthil Kumar's remarks as "hate speech" and said the voters will "wipe out" the India bloc from southern India as well in the next

elections. Senthil Kumar's comments come in the backdrop of some referring to the recent assembly election results as reflective of the 'North-South divide' after the BJP trounced the

Nadu in the next five years by defeating the DMK. Earlier this year, Congress had wrested Karnataka from the BJP, while other southern states are ruled by non-BJP par-

ties including Tamil Nadu where Congress ally DMK is in power. Speaking in Lok Sabha, Senthil Kumar said, "You (BJP) cannot come to South India. You see all the results of what happens in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka ... We are very strong over there."

In Tamil Nadu, state BJP chief K Annamalai condemned the "insensitive" remarks of the MP, saying the level of the party's discourse is "sinking" like Chennai and the "arrogance" of DMK will be the prime reason for its downfall.

# international

## of the day quote

The tourism fund, set to be launched in early 2024, would manage an initial fund at 2 trillion rupiahs (\$129 million) to support the promotion of tourism events and improve the nation branding of Indonesia's tourism in the global market

**SANDIAGA UNO** | MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CREATIVE ECONOMY OF INDONESIA

The conditions required to deliver aid to the people of Gaza do not exist

**LYNN HASTINGS** | UN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR FOR THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

Our mutual desire, both China and the United States, is to create a level playing field and ongoing, meaningful and mutually beneficial economic relations. That is our main focus

**JANET YELLEN** | US TREASURY SECRETARY

## SHORT TAKES

### 85 dead in Nigeria

**Abuja:** At least 85 people have been confirmed dead after a "mistaken" army drone attack on a religious gathering in northwest Nigeria, authorities said. The president Tuesday ordered a probe into the latest in a series of mistakes in Nigeria's conflict zones. "Eighty-five dead bodies have so far been buried while (a) search is still ongoing," Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) said in a statement that listed children, women and the elderly among the victims. At least 66 people were injured, the agency added.

### ₹17.4 bn for polls

**Islamabad:** The Pakistan government said Tuesday that it has released Rs 17.4 billion to the election commission for the upcoming general elections, a day after the poll body raised concerns over the non-provision of funds. Cash-strapped Pakistan, which is facing both political and economic instability, is going to the polls on February 8. In a statement Tuesday, the Finance Division said it has released Rs 17.4 billion to the Election Commission of Pakistan in addition to Rs 10 billion released in July 2023 for the conduct of general elections in the country.

### Bill approved

**Paris:** France's National Assembly unanimously approved a bill to ban single-use, disposable electronic cigarettes, in an attempt to protect young people drawn to their flavours and mitigate the environmental impacts of the disposable products known as "puffs." Lawmakers adopted the bill in a late-night vote on Monday by 104 in favour, zero against.

# Israel's forces storm Khan Younis



**Gaza, Dec 5:** Israeli forces stormed the main city in the southern Gaza Strip Tuesday and hospitals struggled to cope with scores of Palestinian dead and wounded.

In what appeared to be the biggest ground assault since a truce collapsed last week, residents said Israeli tanks had entered the eastern parts of Khan Younis for the first time, crossing from the Israeli border fence and advancing west.

Some took up positions inside the town of Bani Suhaila on Khan Younis' eastern outskirts, while others continued further and were stationed on the edge of a Qatari-funded housing development called Hamad City, residents said.

After days of ordering residents to flee the area, Israeli forces dropped new leaflets Tuesday with instructions to stay inside shelters during the assault. "In the coming hours, the IDF (Israel Defence Forces) will begin launching an intensive

**AFTER DAYS OF ORDERING RESIDENTS TO FLEE THE AREA, ISRAELI FORCES DROPPED NEW LEAFLETS TUESDAY WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO STAY INSIDE SHELTERS DURING THE ASSAULT**

**ISRAELI BOMBARDMENTS HAVE DRIVEN 80% OF GAZA'S 2.3 MILLION RESIDENTS FROM THEIR HOMES, MOST FLEEING SOUTH**

attack on your area of residence to destroy the terrorist organization Hamas," said the leaflets, addressed to residents of six districts amounting to around a quarter of Khan Younis.

"For your safety, stay in the shelters and the hospitals where you are. Don't get out. Going out is dangerous. You have been warned." The Israelis, who seized the northern half of Gaza last month before pausing for the week-long truce, say they are now extending their ground campaign to the rest of the enclave as they try to annihilate its Hamas rulers.

"We're moving ahead with the second stage now. A second stage that is going to be diffi-

cult militarily," government spokesperson Eylon Levy said. Israel is open to "constructive feedback" on reducing harm to civilians as long as the advice is consistent with its aim of destroying Hamas, he added.

Israel started its campaign in retribution for an October 7 attack by Hamas fighters who rampaged through Israeli towns, killing 1,200 people and seizing 240 hostages, according to Israel's tally. According to Gaza health officials, more than 15,900 Palestinians are confirmed to have been killed in Israeli air strikes and other actions, with thousands more missing and feared buried under rubble.

Israeli bombardments have driven 80% of Gaza's 2.3 million residents from their homes, most fleeing south. The enclave is more densely populated than London and crowded southern areas are now sheltering triple their usual population.

At Khan Younis' main Nasser hospital, the wounded arrived by ambulance, car, flatbed truck and donkey cart after what survivors described as a strike on a school being used as a shelter for the displaced. Inside a ward, almost every inch of floor space was taken up by the wounded, medics hurrying from patient to patient while relatives waited.

A doctor carried the small limp body of a dead boy in a track suit and placed him in a corner, arms splayed across the blood-smeared tile. On the floor next to him, surrounded by discarded bandages and rubber gloves, lay a wounded boy and girl, their limbs tangled with the stands holding the IV drips in their arms.



The world is in a state of turbulence and is undergoing a radical transformation. An underlying trend however is the fact that the previous unipolar system is being replaced with a fairer multipolar world order

**VLADIMIR PUTIN** | RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

## DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION

China has become the first country to confer diplomatic status to a Taliban-nominated official as Afghanistan's Ambassador to Beijing, thereby formally recognising the Taliban-run administration as a legitimate government in Kabul



People are dwarfed by the 22 metre high statue "Hammering Man" in Santa Claus costume, to celebrate upcoming Christmas on a street in Seoul, South Korea, Tuesday

# Prince Harry challenges UK govt's decision

**London, Nov 5:** Prince Harry has been subjected to "unlawful and unfair treatment" by the British government over the decision to take away his police protection when he is in Britain, his lawyer told London's High Court Tuesday.

Harry, along with other senior royals, had received full security protection provided by the state before he decided to step back from his royal duties and move to California with his American wife Meghan in 2020.

But the Home Office — the ministry responsible for policing, immigration and security — decided in February that year that Harry would cease to automatically receive personal police security while in Britain even if he were to cover the cost himself. The younger son of King Charles was given permission last year to challenge that decision.

Shaheed Fatima, the lawyer for Harry — who was not in court, said he had been subjected to unlawful and unfair treatment. "This case is about the right to security and safety of a person," she said. "There cannot be a right of greater importance to any of us."



She said the Executive Committee for the Protection of Royalty and Public Figures, known as RAVEC, had not followed its own policy or treated Harry as it treated other figures. It had also failed to tell him why it had made its decision. Harry's "consistent position has been — and remains — that he should be given state security in light of the threats/risks he faces," she said in her written submission.

The government's lawyer James Eadie said Harry had been treated in a "bespoke" manner, and would "occasionally" be included within the cohort of individuals receiving protection. "RAVEC does consider (Harry's) position when he comes to GB," he said in a written submission.

# Tougher visa rules unveiled

High levels of legal migration have dominated Britain's political landscape for more than a decade and were a key factor in the 2016 vote to leave the European Union

**REUTERS**

**London, Dec 5:** Britain announced plans to slash the number of migrants arriving by legal routes on Monday, raising the minimum salary they must earn in a skilled job by a third, amid pressure on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to tackle record net migration figures.

High levels of legal migration have dominated Britain's political landscape for more than a decade and were a key factor in the 2016 vote to leave the European Union. Sunak has promised to gain more control after lawmakers in his Conservative Party criticised his record ahead of an election expected next year, with the opposition Labour Party far ahead in opinion polls.

But businesses and trade unions both attacked the measures as counterproductive and challenging for the private sector and state-run health serv-



ice, both dogged by labour shortages.

Figures last month showed annual net migration to the United Kingdom hit a record of 745,000 in 2022 and has stayed at high levels since, with many migrants now coming from places like India, Nigeria and China instead of the EU.

Home Secretary (interior minister) James Cleverly said the new measures could reduce that number by 300,000. "Immigration is too high. Today we're taking radical action to bring it down," said Sunak, who is also trying to deport migrants who arrive illegally to Rwanda.

Cleverly said the government would raise the minimum salary threshold for foreign skilled workers to 38,700 pounds (\$48,900), from its current level of 26,200 pounds, though health and social

workers would be exempt.

Other measures included stopping foreign health workers bringing in family members on their visas, increasing a surcharge migrants have to pay to use the health service by 66%, and raising the minimum income for family visas.

The measures could spark new disputes with business owners who have struggled to hire workers in recent years given Britain's persistently tight labour market and the end of free movement from the EU since Britain's 2020 exit from the bloc.

In October, the government's independent migration adviser recommended abolishing the so-called shortage occupations list, one of the main routes for businesses to hire migrant workers in sectors where there are severe staff shortages.

# Indonesia volcano death toll rises to 22

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**

**Batu Palano (Indonesia), Dec 5:** Rescuers searching the hazardous slopes of Indonesia's Mount Marapi volcano found 11 more bodies of climbers who were caught by a surprise weekend eruption, raising the number of confirmed dead to 22, officials said Tuesday.

One person remained missing. More than 50 climbers were rescued after the initial eruption Sunday, and 11 others were initially confirmed dead. New eruptions on Monday and Tuesday spewed more hot ash as high as 800 metres (2,620 feet) into the air, reducing visibility and temporarily halting search and recovery operations, said Abdul Malik, chief of the Padang Search and Rescue Agency.

The bodies of two climbers were located on Monday and nine more on Tuesday, the National Search and Rescue Agency said. One climber remained missing and was presumed dead because of being very close to the eruption site, said Eddy Mardianto, the deputy police chief in West Sumatra province.

The recovered bodies will be taken to a hospital for identification, he said. The rescuers contended with bad weather and difficult terrain, along with winds that brought heat from the eruptions. A video released by West Sumatra's Search and Rescue Agency showed rescuers carrying an injured climber on a stretcher off the mountain and into a waiting ambulance to be taken to a hospital.

Marapi has stayed at the third highest of four alert levels since 2011, indicating above-normal volcanic activity under which climbers and villagers must stay more than 3 kilometres (1.8 miles) from the peak, according to Indonesia's Centre for Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation.



# Mathematics, reading skills in unprecedented decline in teenagers: OECD

ON AVERAGE ACROSS THE OECD, ONE OUT OF FOUR 15-YEAR-OLDS TESTED AS A LOW PERFORMER IN MATHS, READING AND SCIENCE, WHICH MEANS THEY COULD NOT USE BASIC ALGORITHMS OR INTERPRET SIMPLE TEXTS, THE STUDY FOUND

**REUTERS**

**Paris, Dec 5:** Teenagers' mathematics and reading skills are in an unprecedented decline across dozens of countries and COVID school closures are only partly to be blamed, the OECD said Tuesday in its latest survey of global learning standards.

The Paris-based Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development said it had seen some of the steepest drops in performance since 2000 when it began its usually triennial tests of 15-year-olds reading, maths and science skills.

Nearly 700,000 youths took the two-hour test last year in the

OECD's 38 mostly developed country members and 44 non-members for the latest study, closely watched by policymakers as the largest international comparison of education performance.

Compared to when the tests were last conducted in 2018, reading performance fell by 10 points on average in OECD countries, and by 15 points in mathematics, a loss equivalent to three-quarters of a year's worth of learning.

While more than half of the 81 countries surveyed saw declines, Germany, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway and Poland saw particularly sharp drops in mathematics scores, the OECD said.

On average across the OECD,



one out of four 15-year-olds tested as a low performer in maths, reading and science, which means

they could not use basic algorithms or interpret simple texts, the study found. "COVID probably

played some role but I would not overrate it," OECD director of education Andreas Schleicher told a news conference.

"There are underlying structural factors and they are much more likely to be permanent features of our education systems that policymakers should really take seriously." Countries that provided extra teacher support during COVID school closures scored better and results were generally better in places where easy teacher access for special help was high.

Poorer results tended to be associated with higher rates of mobile phone use for leisure and where schools reported teacher

shortages. The OECD said the decline was not inevitable, pointing to Singapore, where students scored the highest in maths, reading and science, with results that suggested they were on average three to five years ahead of their OECD peers.

After Singapore, Macau, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea also outperformed in maths and science, where Estonia and Canada also scored well.

In reading, Ireland, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan earned top marks, and was all the more notable in Ireland and Japan because their spending per student was no higher than the OECD average.



# Eves aim for better returns

# Kartik, bowlers help Odisha sink Mumbai

# Araijeet hat-trick secures India win over South Korea

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Dec 5:** India will look to draw confidence from recent performances and improve their disappointing bilateral record against England when the two teams face-off in a three-match women's T20 series, starting here Wednesday.

The Harmanpreet Kaur-led India have had a successful year in the shortest format so far, winning the gold medal in the Asian Games, an away series against Bangladesh by 2-1 and also making it to the final of the triangular series in South Africa, with West Indies as the third side.

On the other hand, World No.2 England will look to overcome the disappointment of losing to Sri Lanka 1-2 at home.

World No.4 India have a poor record at home in T20Is as well as against England in general and the hosts will hope to come up with something special.

At home, in nine matches against England, India have only two wins to show with their most recent victory coming more than five years ago in March 2018 when they won by eight wickets at the Brabourne Stadium.

In fact, it is India's overall record against England which is also concerning given they only have seven wins to show from 27 matches.

Additionally, India women's last win at home in T20Is came more than two years ago in March 2021 when they defeated South Africa in Lucknow by nine wickets. Since then, India have lost four and tied one game while playing at home.

The series also presents India an opportunity to improve their disappointing overall home record as they only have 19 wins from 50 T20Is at home with 30 losses and one tied game.

Both India and England were the semifinalists of the last T20 World Cup held in South Africa earlier this year.

With the next showpiece event



Smriti Mandhana

Harmanpreet Kaur

### THE SQUADS

**INDIA:** Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Yastika Bhatia (wk), Richa Ghosh (wk), Amanjot Kaur, Shreyanka Patil, Mannat Kashyap, Saika Ishaque, Renuka Singh Thakur, Titas Sadhu, Pooja Vastrakar, Kanika Ahuja, Minnu Mani.

**ENGLAND:** Lauren Bell, Maia Bouchier, Alice Capsey, Charlie Dean, Sophia Dunkley, Sophie Ecclestone, Mahika Gaur, Danielle Gibson, Sarah Glenn, Bess Heath (wk), Amy Jones (wk), Freya Kemp, Heather Knight (C), Nat Sciver-Brunt, Danielle Wyatt.

### MATCHDAY

**India Women vs England Women**  
1st T20 International  
Time: 7:00 pm  
Telecast: Sports 18 Network  
Stream: Jio Cinema

slated for September-October 2024, this series presents an opportunity to fine-tune their preparations for the edition in Bangladesh.

While Deepti Sharma has been India's most successful bowler with 19 wickets in 16 matches with a strike rate of 15.89, it is the batters who have done a commendable job this year in the shortest format, led by Harmanpreet, who has averaged 35.88 to make 323 runs in 13 T20Is with three fifties.

Jemimah Rodrigues has struck 342 runs in 16 matches at 34.20 with one fifty, while India's vice-captain Smriti Mandhana has topped the charts with 369 runs in 15 matches with three fifties while averaging 28.08.

Mandhana also finished as the sixth-highest run-getter in 'The Hundred' Women's competition with 238 runs in nine matches, playing a vital role in

Southern Braves' title win. Harmanpreet is also coming off a decent run with the bat in the recently-concluded Women's Big Bash League where she garnered 321 runs in 14 matches.

India have three new faces for this series with right-arm Karnataka spinner Shreyanka Patil, Punjab's left-arm spinner Mannat Kashyap and Bengal's Saika Ishaque — another left-arm spinner — being roped in.

The series between the senior women's sides was preceded by a three-match contest between their respective 'A' teams, wherein Issy Wong's all-round brilliance handed the visitors a 2-1 win.

On spin-friendly and slow surfaces, batters from both the teams struggled largely which indicates this could be a series dominated by spinners and both India and England have plenty in their ranks.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 5:** Odisha had a stunning outing Tuesday in the Vijay Hazare Trophy one-day cricket tournament as they pulled off a sensational 86-run win their Group A match at the KSCA Cricket Ground in Alur.

It was a result anyone would have expected after Odisha, who were invited to bat first by Mumbai skipper Ajinkya Rahane, managed only 199/9 in their 50 overs. And the credit must go to Kartik Biswal (64, 98b, 6x4), who was magnificent with the willow when it mattered the most.

Odisha were struggling at 16/3 at one stage and later 60/4 in 19 overs. However, the middle-order comprising Kartik, seasoned Govind Poddar (39, 54b, 2x4, 1x6) and Abhishek Raut (35 n o, 37b, 2x4, 2x6) helped the team total go close to 200. In response, the bowlers complemented the batters' efforts and bundle the Indian cricket powerhouse for a paltry 113 in 32.3 overs.

Odisha were 16/3 by the end of the seventh over losing their skipper Shantanu Mishra (1), experienced Shubhanshu Senapati (0) and Prabin Luha (3) cheaply. However, Kartik and the opener Sandeep Pattnaik (35, 68b, 3x4, 1x6) held their nerves and steadied the ship guiding

the team past 50 in the process.

Just when it was looking like both the batters are set, Sandeep got out putting Odisha in a spot of bother. Former captain Poddar then joined Kartik at the middle and the duo stitched together 89 runs for the fifth wicket, which was later proved to be the turning point.

Kartik's wicket brought Odisha down to 149/5 before Poddar too perished a couple of overs later. Odisha then kept losing wickets at regular intervals. However, Raut remained unbeaten at one end to take the team close to a competitive total giving the bowlers something to fight for.

However, the Odisha bowlers turned the 200-run target into a 400-run one. They didn't give any chance to Mumbai batters to free their arms. The domination of Odisha bowlers was such that the top score for the team was 24 not out and it was by their No.11 batter Royston Dias. The second best was Hardk Tamore (23).

Debabrata Pradhan (2/20), Rajesh Mohanty (2/21), Poddar (2/26) and Abhishek Yadav (2/28) bagged two wickets apiece, while skipper Shantanu too bagged a scalp in his 2-over spell. Despite being wicketless, Tarini Sa was excellent throughout his 6-over spell where he conceded only 12 runs.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kuala Lumpur, Dec 5:** Araijeet Singh Hundal struck a hat-trick as India dished out a dominant display to beat South Korea 4-2 in their opening pool match of the FIH junior men's hockey World Cup here Tuesday. India will next play against Spain.

Hundal scored in the 11th, 16th and 41st minutes while Amandeep found the target for India in the 30th minute in the Pool C match. Dohyun Lim (38th) and Minkwon Kim (45th) were the goal scorers for Korea.

India, who had lost to France in the bronze-medal match in the last edition in 2021 in Bhubaneswar, made a strong start with Hundal scoring in the first quarter off a penalty corner.

The Indians continued their domination by pumping in two goals in the second quarter through Hundal and Amandeep — both field goals — as they were 3-0 up at the half time.

Korea pulled one back though Dohyun midway in the third quarter but India replied soon after with Hundal completing his hat-trick with another field goal.

With a 4-1 lead in the match, the Indians appeared to have slowed down a bit. The Koreans pressed for goals and they were able to reduce the margin with Minkwon finding the target.

# Ashwini-Tanisha moves up to 28th

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 5:** Indian women's doubles pair, Ashwini Ponnappa and Tanisha Crasto, jumped four places to reach World No.28 in the latest BWF rankings.

Ashwini, 36, and her 20-year-old partner Tanisha, who started playing together only in January this year, finished runners-up at the Syed Modi International Super 300 tournament in Lucknow Sunday. The duo ear-



lier won the Nates International Challenge and Abu Dhabi Masters Super 100.

Priyanshu Rajawat, who had reached the semi-finals in men's singles, also gained a place to break into the top-30. All other Indian singles players stayed static with HS Prannoy (8) remaining the top ranked shuttler from the country, followed by PV Sindhu (12), Lakshya Sen (17) and Kidambi Srikanth (24). Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty occupied the world number 2 spot, while Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand stayed at 19th position.



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