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ARIES

You may feel empty, and completely down-and-out today. Ganesh says that this may make you feel a bit more inclined to spirituality. Meditation and prayer will engage more of your attention. You will also make considerable material progress.

TAURUS

You are likely to be in a mood to get away from the daily grind and take a much needed break. You would naturally try to stay free from future concerns and commitments and keep all your woes and worries aside for the day.

GEMINI

Today, you may encounter unusual challenges, says Ganesh. You will come up with new thoughts and tactics, which will bring about positive changes and results. Avoid any confrontation with those living around you. Ganesh advises you to keep your cool during the day.

CANCER

Financially, you may be in a bit of a bother today. Payment of bills, taxes and loans may keep you busy for most part of the day. You may even contemplate borrowing money to meet the demands. However, you are likely to receive one of your pending payments, which will be enough to get you out of the fix.

LEO

Today, Ganesh advises you to keep the Bhagavad Gita's verses in mind, and persist in fulfilling your duties without bothering about the fruits of your labour. Put in some extra effort to finish off whatever you undertake today. Patience bears its fruits and they are always sweet.

VIRGO

You better identify your worth in the realms of emotions, feelings and sentiments. You shall warm up to and about everything - from play to colleagues to family. Simultaneously, you may realise where your limitations are. Ganesh predicts that the artist in you will flourish beginning today.

LIBRA

Well, today is just not your day. The prospects sure aren't looking too good. However, there's no point in getting anxious over this triviality. Remember, 'not good' does not necessarily mean bad. In any case, if it's a stressful day you have had, be sure to have an equally enjoyable evening.

SCORPIO

A creative thought or an innovative idea may spice up your routine work. Apparently, you may seem all worked up and disorganised, but actually you may be quite systematic when it comes to your work. Keep the enthusiasm in you alive to make life happier, tips Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS

Going to private parties is a high probability today. All in all, make the most of it as you get nostalgic with old friends and make plans with new ones. Moreover, relatives will be pleased to meet you after a long time.

CAPRICORN

Whatever field you are in, your career matters will top your priority list. You will put your personal life on the back burner for a while. This change of places will surely bring you great rewards as your performance will drastically improve and everyone will appreciate your efforts. Credit goes to your family members and well-wishers for believing in you in the toughest of times and supporting you along the way, says Ganesh.

AQUARIUS

Aim. Shoot. Achieve. Today, you will concentrate your energies to execute your plans with precision. Naturally, your work progresses by leaps and bounds. By sundown, you will achieve far more than everyone's estimation. That's the way to go, says Ganesh.

PISCES

You will have difficulty in interpreting the behaviour of your life partner today. It is better to bring transparency in your relationship rather than to doubt it. Speak freely about your problems and communicate with your spouse. Business relationships will also face rough weather.



P DIDDY SUED BY 4TH WOMAN FOR ALLEGED SEXUAL ASSAULT

Another woman has filed a lawsuit against rapper Sean 'Diddy' Combs for sexual assault. This is Combs' fourth sexual assault lawsuit in three weeks. The victim claims that in 2003 she was 'sex trafficked' and 'gang raped' by Combs, Harve Pierre, the then-president of Bad Boy Records and a third unnamed person.

SOFIA GETS RESTRAINING ORDER AGAINST STALKER

Actress Sofia Vergara has been granted a temporary restraining order against an alleged stalker. The 51-year-old sought protection for herself and her 32-year-old son to keep Gregory Brown away from them both after the TV star accused him of 'aggressive and harassing conduct', reports Female First UK.



Tejasswi opens up on love, temptations

Mumbai: Actress Tejasswi Prakash will be seen joining her boyfriend Karan Kundrra in the upcoming episode of *Temptation Island India*.

From the recent promo, the duo is finally making their debut together on the show in the upcoming episode.

Talking about her take on love and temptations, she said: "You can never train the heart to believe something;

what is right or wrong is only a thought that emerges in the brain. Our thought doesn't understand this. If you fall in love, you're just in love; there's no going back."

Previously, in his interviews for the show, Karan did not hesitate to express Tejasswi's positive, practical, and mature nature. He also shared that, at times, she takes on the role of the elder one in their relationship, offering useful and effective solutions.

Having been together for almost three years, the duo has garnered significant attention for their 'made for each other' appearance in their daily lives. All of this makes us anticipate how Tejasswi's inputs will affect the relationships in the villa.

Temptation Island India streams on JioCinema.

K-pop icon Aora to enter Bigg Boss 17

Mumbai: K-pop singer Aora will be the third wild card entrant after Samarth Jurel and Manasvi Mangai, who has been evicted, in the 17th season of *Bigg Boss*.

According to a source, Aora will be seen entering the show in the upcoming weekend episodes.

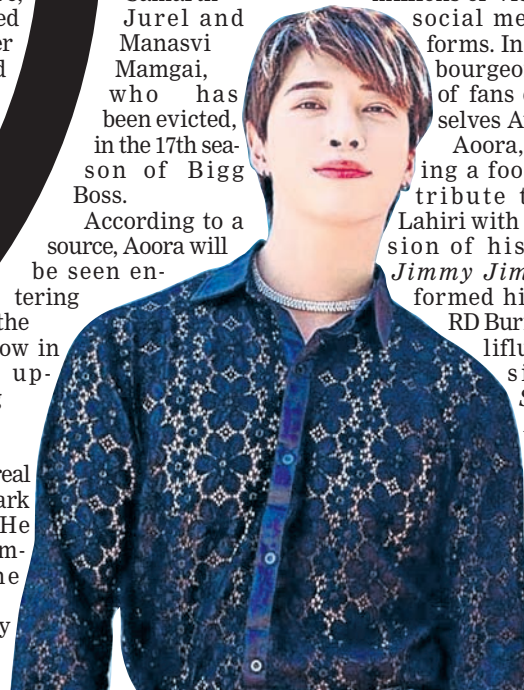
Aora's real name is Park Min-jun. He was a member of the South Korean boy band

Double-A and its subunit Aora&Hoik. He debuted September 4, 2009 with the song *Love Back*.

He has passionately shared his love for Indian culture, performing Korean renditions of popular Hindi film songs that garnered him millions of views on his social media platforms. In India, his burgeoning base of fans call themselves Aurians.

Aora, after paying a foot-tapping tribute to Bappi Lahiri with a new version of his cult hit *Jimmy Jimmy*, performed his take on RD Burman's mellifluous classic, *Yeh Shaam Mastani*.

He performed at a flash mob performance at Marine Drive August 23. IANS



'Cinema's about free artistic expression'

New Delhi: Actress Triptii Dimri, who has created a big impact with a small role in the blockbuster movie *Animal*, said that cinema is about free artistic expression and added that she submitted to the director's vision for the film, although it has been tagged misogynistic.

The actress said: "I think cinema is about free artistic expression, and it should be that way. When I did the rape scene and the suicide scene in *Bulbul* and *Qala*, there were a lot of people who reached out to me and said that I should not have performed that scene because it's not a pleasant scene because it can make people take that step in life."

The 29-year-old, who featured in *Forbes Asia's* 30 Under 30 list of 2021, added: "Even if your character is killing people or your character is doing something bad or harming someone, you have to feel everything that the character is supposed to feel because he's also coming from someplace, and in his head, the actions that he's taking are justified." IANS



Odia cine stars to salute Commissionerate Police

Bhubaneswar: In a bid to acknowledge the indomitable spirit of the Commissionerate Police, the Naman Foundation will organise its 2nd edition of Naman 2023 at the 7th Battalion Ground, Saturday.

The event will be a tribute to all the police personnel who everyday risk their lives for the safety of people, shared the organisers, adding, their families also sacrifice a lot.

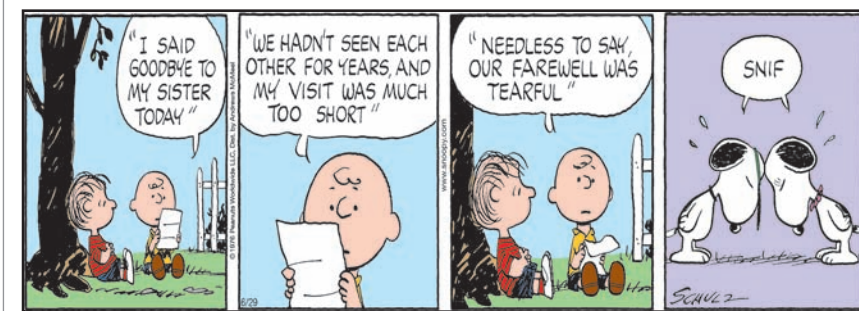
A press meet was held recently where the Vice-Chairman of the foundation and actor Sabyasachi Mishra, Chairman and music director Prem Anand, Managing Trustee Ullash Behera were present. This year several women police personnel will be felicitated for their contributions, it was learnt.

Sidhath Mohapatra, Archita Sahu, Arindam Roy, Sabyasachi Mishra, Elna

Samantaray, Sivani Sangita, Akash Das Nayak, Sheetal Patra, Jyoti Ranjan Nayak, Divya Mohanty, Papu Pom Pom, Pragyan Khatua, Krishna Beura, Sashank, Deepthirekha Pagu are among the Odia film celebrities who are set to perform during the event. PNN



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

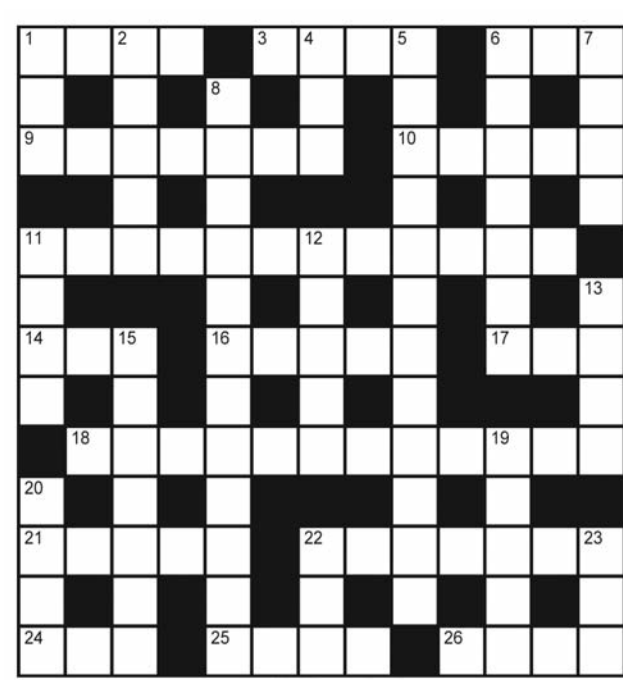


BREVITY



FUN post

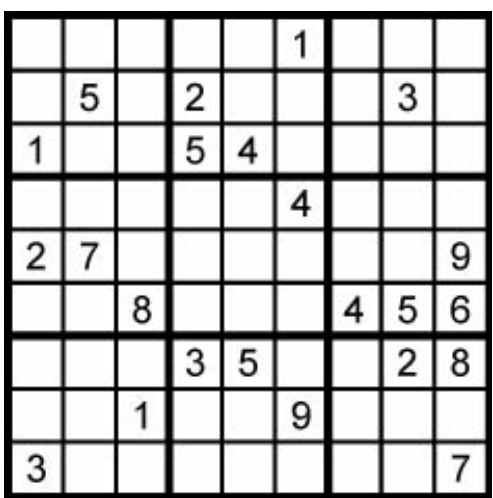
CROSSWORD



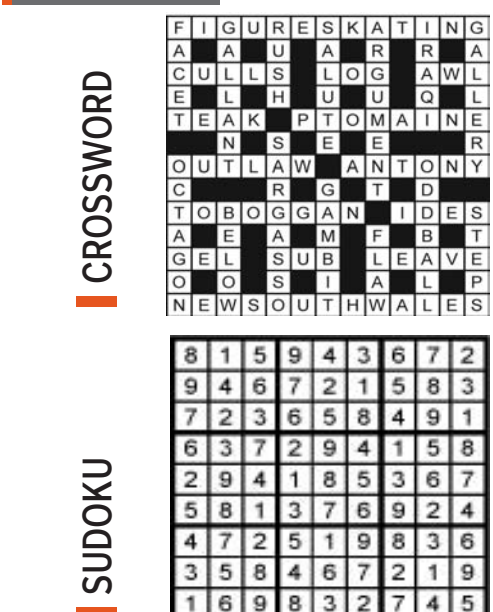
- Across
- 1 Machinist's tool
 - 3 Gyro meat
 - 6 Stein
 - 9 Witch's mate
 - 10 Sanctuary
 - 11 Tiger type of old (5-7)
 - 14 Shack
 - 16 Barks
 - 17 Beast of burden
 - 18 Some tennis matches (5,7)
 - 21 Wrath
 - 22 Brass instrument
 - 24 Long-jawed fish
 - 25 Highway hauler
 - 26 Henrik Ibsen's work
 - 6 Writing genre
 - 7 Burst of wind
 - 8 Type of club (6,6)
 - 11 London district
 - 12 Embrocated
 - 13 Hawaiian strings
 - 15 Revolver part
 - 19 Place for a pin
 - 20 Piquancy
 - 22 Balmoral cousin
 - 23 Give it a whirl
- Down
- 1 Solemn promise
 - 2 Chocolate substitute
 - 4 Tablet holder
 - 5 Sauropod dinosaur

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



HIGH-LEVEL PROBE

India announces 'high-level' probe on claims of a plot to assassinate Gurbatwant Singh Pannun

NATIONAL P7



FUNDING BILL BLOCKED

US Senate blocks emergency spending bill to provide billions of dollars in new security assistance for Ukraine and Israel

INTERNATIONAL P8



RAFA READY FOR RETURN

Tennis legend Rafa Nadal says he will return to competitive tennis in January next year at Brisbane

SPORTS BACK PAGE

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BHUBANESWAR | FRIDAY DECEMBER 8 | 2023

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SHORT TAKES

Arjun Munda new Agriculture min

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu Thursday accepted the resignations of Union ministers Narendra Singh Tomar, Prahlad Singh Patel and Renuka Singh Saruta, who successfully contested the recent Assembly polls, and assigned Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda the additional charge of the Agriculture ministry. As per a communiqué by the Rashtrapati Bhavan, the President gave additional charge of Agriculture Ministry and Farmer's Welfare to Munda, while Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar has been given additional charge of Jal Shakti as MoS.

Govt issues alert against Meftal

New Delhi: The Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) has issued a drug safety alert, advising healthcare professionals and patients to monitor adverse reactions of painkiller Meftal, commonly used for menstrual cramps and rheumatoid arthritis. The mefenamic acid painkiller is prescribed in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, dysmenorrhoea, mild to moderate pain, inflammation, fever and dental pain.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



There's no record of you giving hate speeches or indulging in violence. How can you be in the ministerial race?

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX			VIATION
SENSEX	69521.69	↓	132.04
NIFTY	20901.20	↓	36.50
DOLLAR	83.41	↑	₹0.04
EURO	89.94	↓	₹0.11
GOLD	₹62,422	↓	₹18
SILVER	₹74,400	↓	₹431

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
TEMP. MAX	23.9°C	23.4°C	
TEMP. MIN	18.8°C	19.0°C	
Humidity	89%	91%	Forecast
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	Light to moderate rain



RAIL FIRE: A minor fire breaks out in a coach of Bhubaneswar-Howrah Jan Shatabdi Express at Cuttack station, Thursday (Inset: Fire)

3-yr-old boy charred to death, 5 hurt

AGENCIES

Kendrapara, Dec 7: A three-year-old child was charred to death and five others, including a 14-year-old boy, suffered burn injuries when illegally-stored petrol exploded at Badapada village under Pattamundai rural police station in the district Thursday evening, police said.

Ratnakar Mallick of Badapada had stored petrol in a drum illegally for the marriage procession of his son. However, the drum, which was kept inside a

- Ratnakar Mallick of Badapada had stored petrol in a drum illegally for marriage procession of his son
- The drum, which was kept inside a thatched house, accidentally caught fire due to short-circuit and the explosion took place

thatched roof house, accidentally caught fire due to short-circuit and the explosion took place, a police officer said.

The three-year-old boy, identified as Gulu Mallick, was burnt to death and five others were

injured. Of them, the condition of the 14-year-old boy is stated to be serious and he is undergoing treatment at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, Pattamundai rural police station inspector-in-charge (IIC) Padmalaya Pradhan said, adding four others were undergoing treatment at the sub-divisional hospital here.

Fire tenders were pressed into service and the blaze was brought under control, Pradhan said, adding no one has been arrested so far.

Nod to ₹4,804cr projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 7: The State-Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA), chaired by Chief Secretary PK Jena, approved 19 investment projects worth ₹4,804.35 crore with a potential to create employment opportunities for 17,553 people, Thursday.

Welspun Living Limited's proposal to invest ₹200 crore for a textile facility in Kendrapara that would create 2,000 jobs and Tata Steel Downstream Products Limited's plan for a 10,00,000 MT steel service centre in Kalinga Nagar of Jajpur with an investment of ₹735 crore and promise of 335 jobs got the SLSWCA nod.

IMFA Limited will invest ₹977.43 crore in Jajpur to produce 2,20,000 MT Ferro Chrome and 20 MW WHRB Power, creating 1,190 jobs. Jindal Stainless Limited will establish a stainless-steel service centre unit at JSL Stainless Steel Park in Jajpur. With an investment of ₹150 crore, the project will generate 315 jobs. Crackers India Alloys Ltd is set to invest ₹101.50 crore to set up a 52,800 MT steel casting mill and rolling mill with ancillary facilities in Barbil, Keonjhar, creating 240 jobs.

Envirocare Infracore Pvt Ltd's proposal for a mild steel strips and pipes manufacturing unit in Sundargarh got approval. With an investment of ₹100 crore, the project will create 295 jobs.

Rungta Paints Private Limited plans to set up a manufacturing unit for paints, allied products and intermediate in Dhenkanal. With an investment of ₹991

INFRA BOOST

- Rungta Paints Pvt Ltd to set up manufacturing unit for paints and allied products in Dhenkanal with ₹991 crore investment, creating 700 jobs
- IMFA's ₹977.43 crore investment plan in Jajpur to produce 2,20,000 MT Ferro Chrome and 20 MW WHRB Power will generate 1,190 employment opportunities
- Kaibalya Logistics Pvt Ltd to invest ₹110 crore in a Multi-Modal ICD in Kendrapara, creating 480 jobs

crore, the unit will create 700 jobs. The SLSWCA approved the proposal of Modulus Oleochem and Surfactants Private Limited for a chemical manufacturing unit in Baliapal Industrial Estate of Balasore at an investment of ₹313.51 crore. It will create 300 jobs.

Transnova Express India Private Limited will invest ₹120.39 crore in a chemical hub in Khurda, setting up a bulk industrial chemical storage, re-packing and handling facility, offering 258 potential jobs. With paint giant Berger setting foot in Odisha, two of its ancillary companies will invest ₹54.55 crore in a manufacturing unit for plastic pails, lids, bottle and drum in Khurda, providing jobs to 152 individuals.

Among other companies, Kaibalya Logistics Private Limited will invest ₹110 crore in a Multi-Modal Inland Container Depot (ICD) in Mahakalapada block of Kendrapara. It will generate 480 jobs.

GRANT OF CITIZENSHIP TO ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

Why only Assam: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 7: The Supreme Court Thursday asked the Centre why did it single out Assam and exclude West Bengal from grant of citizenship under Section 6A of the Citizenship Act when the latter shares a much larger border with Bangladesh.

Section 6A of the Citizenship Act relates to illegal immigrants in Assam. While hearing as many as 17 petitions to examine the constitutional validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act relating to illegal immigrants in Assam, a five-judge Constitution bench, headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, observed that illegal immigration is a serious problem and asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, what is the Union government doing to safeguard the border.

"Why did you single out Assam when West Bengal shares a much larger border with Bangladesh? We want to know why was West Bengal excluded from the grant of citizenship...The argument cannot be that there was agitation in Assam...Why was West Bengal left alone...What is the position in West Bengal now?" the Bench also comprising Justices Surya Kant, MM Sundresh, JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra asked. As the hearing commenced,



Top court asks Centre, Assam to provide by December 11 detailed data on grant of Indian citizenship under Section 6A of the Citizenship Act

the Centre clarified that examination of the constitutional validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act has nothing to do with any other amendments in the Citizenship Act.

Mehta told the five-judge Constitution Bench that the application of Section 6A is limited to only a specific period of time. "I would like to begin with some factual clarifications. Your lordships are examining a limited question of constitutional validity of Section 6A. This is confined to a very few individuals during a particular period of time. This examination has nothing to do with any other amendment to Citizenship Act," he told the bench.

Mehta told SC that so far as the contentions as pointed out by the petitioners are concerned

like influx of immigrants from foreign countries, paucity of resources that were otherwise available to them, etc, all their concerns are true.

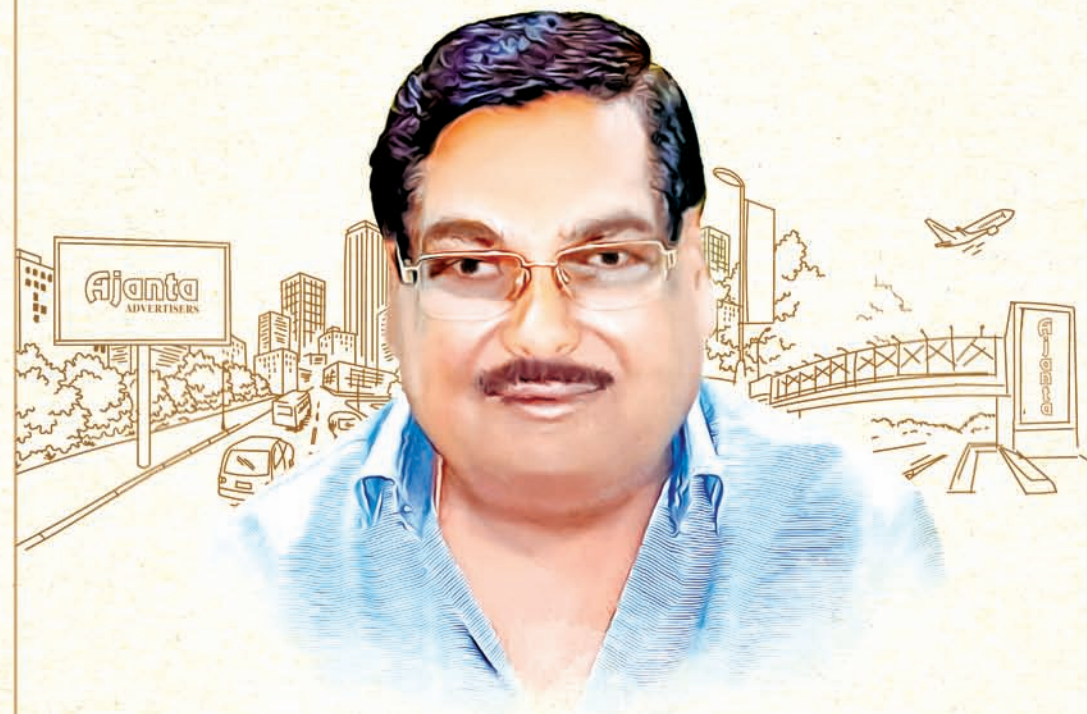
"Person is deemed citizen if his parents or any grandparents were born in undivided India. The category is very limited-it applies in Assam, a limited geographical area. The category from which persons are permitted is only Bangladesh, a very limited area," Mehta said.

During the hearing, the CJI remarked that there were people who benefited from the grant of citizenship under Section 6A.

"What happens to those who weren't granted the benefit of citizenship but are illegal immigrants. Nothing was done about them at all. Everyone who came between 1966 and 1971 did not get citizenship because for it they needed to be detected. So, within that larger circle, there is a smaller circle of people who came to India but never got citizenship. What happened to those people?" the CJI asked.

The top court directed the Centre and the Assam government to provide extensive data by December 11, including those on the number of Bangladeshi immigrants granted Indian citizenship in Assam between January 1, 1966 and March 25, 1971.

A LEGEND WHO LIVES ON



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FONDLY REMEMBERED AND DEEPLY MISSED BY FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND EMPLOYEES



Once a Maoist, Seethakka now T'gana min

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, Dec 7: From a gun-wielding Maoist to lawyer to MLA, and now a minister in Telangana. Meet Danasari Anasuya, popularly known as Seethakka.

It was an emotional moment when the 52-year-old MLA from Mulug constituency was invited to take oath as a minister at LB Stadium in presence of thousands of people, Thursday.

In the just-concluded Assembly elections, she was re-elected from Mulug constituency, reserved for STs.

Hailing from Koya tribe, Seethakka had joined Maoist movement at an early age and was heading an armed squad active in the same tribal belt. She participated in many gunfights with the police and lost her husband



and brother in encounters.

Disillusioned with the movement, she surrendered to the police under a general amnesty plan in 1994.

With this, life took a new turn for Seethakka, who pursued her studies and secured a law degree. She also practised as an advocate at a court in Warangal.

She later joined Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and contested from Mulug in 2004 elections. However, facing a Congress wave, she finished runner-up. However, in 2009, she won the election from

the same constituency. She finished third in the 2014 polls.

In 2017, she quit TDP to join Congress and made a strong comeback in 2018 by wresting the seat despite the statewide sweep by TRS (now BRS). Seethakka hit the headlines with her humanitarian work in remote villages in her constituency during Covid-19 pandemic.

Carrying a load of essentials on her shoulders,

she walked through the forests, rocky terrain and crossed rivulets to help the needy during the lockdown.

Last year, she completed her PhD in political sciences from Osmania University. The tribal MLA did her PhD in social exclusion and deprivation of migrant tribals of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh—a case study of Gotti Koya tribes in Warangal and Khammam.

REVANTH REDDY SWORN IN AS CM

Congress legislature party leader A Revanth Reddy was Thursday sworn in as Chief Minister of Telangana. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan administered the oath of office and secrecy to Revanth Reddy. Besides Revanth Reddy, Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka (Dy CM), N Uttam Kumar Reddy, Komatireddy Venkata Reddy, C Damodar Rajanarasimha, D Sridhar Babu, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Ponnamp Prabhakar, Konda Surekha, D Anasuya (Seethakka), Tummala Nageswara Rao and Jupally Krishna Rao took oath as ministers.





75
Azadi Ka
Amrit Mahotsav

Uttarakhand on the rise
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Peace To Prosperity

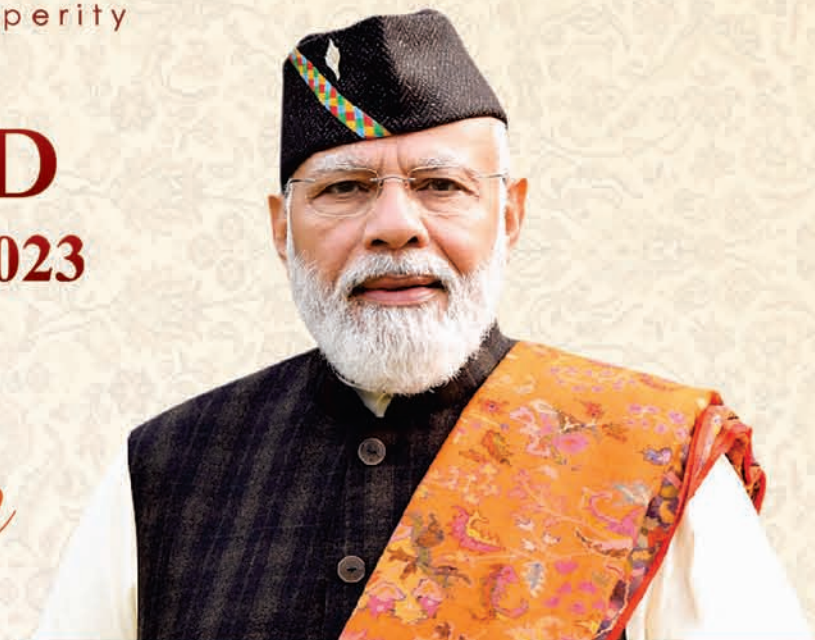


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Chief Minister of Uttarakhand

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THE MOTHER



Nature as Infra

For millennia, natural infrastructure – such as river systems, wetlands, coastal plains, sand dunes, and forests – supported the development of human civilisation. In fact, our ability to harness such infrastructure, for everything from food and drinking water to storm-surge protection and flood mitigation, has been central to our success as a species. And it will prove vital to our future survival.

Technological advances propelled the evolution of infrastructure. Green turned to grey, with concrete, cable, and steel delivering energy, communications, and transportation – and, with them, unprecedented growth and development. But while rapid modernisation produced once-unimaginable prosperity, it has had grave unintended consequences, not least the environmental degradation and greenhouse-gas emissions that are jeopardising our very existence.

The question now is how to meet urgent environmental goals – reducing emissions and protecting and restoring nature and biodiversity – while enabling developing economies to fulfill their legitimate growth aspirations. The answer, as a recent report from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank suggests, may well begin with an explicit acknowledgement of nature as infrastructure.

Viewing nature as infrastructure is transformative, because it forces us to think in a more systemic way. As we pursue growth and development, we must not only avoid damaging nature; we must also strengthen and enrich it through “nature-positive” investments – all while tapping its vast potential to deliver essential services.

Biologists already do this when they benchmark how to restore degraded land. But now economists must get on board and enhance their tools for capturing the value and complexity of natural capital. Biodiversity, for example, covers not just the number of species, but also their genetic diversity and diversity of functions. Yet another dimension of biodiversity is the complex evolutionary history of species – when they were separated on the “tree of life.” It is only by deepening our understanding of biodiversity that we will comprehend nature’s full potential – and our impact on it.

This knowledge is very site-specific, and acquiring it will require contributions from scientists and local populations. The good news is that there are already models for such collaboration. The massive Sanbei reforestation project, aimed at preventing two large deserts from merging in Northern China, was a flawed endeavour at the start, with only single tree types planted. But, over the course of two decades, deeper knowledge of the local environment and the participation of local communities transformed it into a success.

Governance and incentives are also crucial to protect and nurture natural infrastructure. In Indonesia, mangroves have long protected communities, particularly poorer households, from deadly tidal floods, but they are being depleted in regions with weaker state capacity. In Egypt, by contrast, efforts to restore mangroves have been aided by revenues from eco-tourism and beekeeping, which produces honey and supports the delivery of vital pollination services.

The nature-as-infrastructure approach demands that we assess what nature can deliver before considering grey solutions, and it can help countries close their infrastructure gaps in truly sustainable ways. But grey infrastructure will always be necessary for growth and development. This demands that we design it better, to minimise its impact on nature. For example, renewable-energy infrastructure has a large ecological footprint, and road infrastructure fragments and damages ecosystems. Solutions like co-locating infrastructure on brown sites and providing auxiliary infrastructure (such as wildlife highway crossings, green urban spaces, and nature-restoration offsets) can help mitigate these effects.

Of course, financing might pose a challenge. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, agreed a year ago, assumes that \$598-824 billion per year will be needed by 2030 to close the biodiversity funding gap. Such sums, needed to protect and then begin to restore nature, can be generated only by valuing nature properly and creating markets that will mobilise private and institutional capital.

To this end, “nature as infrastructure” must be developed as an asset class, using new tools and financial instruments. At the micro level, this will require better pricing of nature’s services – for example, usage charges or permits and taxes for damaging activities – and adaptive local regulations. Micro-level policies can support the development of other financial instruments and, eventually, markets – for performance-linked bonds, policy-based lending, debt-for-nature swaps, and nature credits, to name a few – to channel more finance into nature. Lessons from carbon markets should be heeded, to avoid repeating past mistakes.

Special attention must be paid to low-income economies, many of which are highly vulnerable to climate change and environmental degradation but have rich natural endowments that should be valued properly. Multilateral development banks can catalyze the nature-as-infrastructure approach, ensuring that it is incorporated into all aspects of their operations. Ultimately, this approach should also guide individual infrastructure projects and national growth strategies.

The consequences of the infrastructure decisions we make today will be felt for decades to come. Only by committing to invest in green – and to build grey better – can we ensure we lay the groundwork for a fairer, more sustainable, and inclusive global economy.

The writer is Chief Economist at the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Erik Berglöf

Only by committing to invest in green – and to build grey better – can we ensure we lay the groundwork for a fairer, more sustainable, and inclusive global economy



Avilash Roul

IT IS BEING ARGUED THAT WITHOUT BUILDING NEW NUCLEAR REACTORS THE WORLD CAN'T ACHIEVE 'NET ZERO' EMISSIONS BY 2050

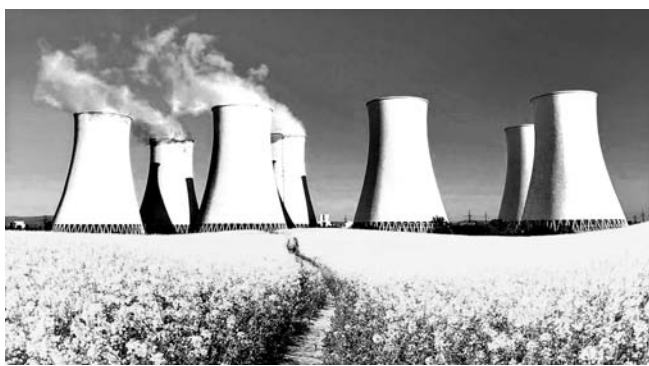
Nuclear is back. In a strange turn of events, nuclear energy received formidable backing as an alternative to reducing carbon emissions at a world climate summit hosted by a petro-state. During the ongoing COP28 in Dubai, 22 countries, led by the US, launched the Declaration to Triple Nuclear Energy by 2050. The argument is that nuclear energy is key to achieving global net-zero GHG emissions by 2050 and keeping the 1.5-degree Celsius goal within reach.

It's now a practice that world leaders, through their statements, a slew of pledges and a plethora of declarations, set the tone of the outcome of the COPs at the beginning of the conferences. One such announcement is to triple the world's renewable energy capacity by 2030 to cut the share of fossil fuels in the world's energy production. The Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge, initiated by the EU, the US and host UAE and signed by 118 countries, is claimed to be part of the final text as a global goal of COP28 outcome, aimed at decarbonising the energy sector that includes expanding nuclear power; reducing methane emissions, and cutting off private finance for coal power. Moreover, tripling renewable energy, as argued in the announcement, would help “phasing out” fossil fuels from the world's energy system by 2050. Despite India and China's reservation (yet to sign) on phasing out fossil fuel in the Pledge with climate-vulnerable countries (V20) categorising it as a half-solution, urging a complete ban on fossil fuel, can the expansion of nuclear capacity be the primary transition pathway for the world from unabated use of coal?

Following the nuclear pledge, it is being argued that without building new nuclear reactors the world can't achieve 'net

FOCUS ENERGY

NUCLEAR IS BACK



When world leaders fail to curb carbon dioxide emissions, they take refuge in expanding nuclear or pick up another gas from the GHG basket - methane

zero' emissions by 2050. Arguing for the upscaling of nuclear energy, the US climate envoy, John Kerry, stated during the launch that the “world can't get to net-zero 2050 without some nuclear, just as you can't get there without some use of carbon capture, utilisation and storage.” India may be against the provisions of complete phasing out of coal in the Declaration Pledge but endorses wholeheartedly the expansion of nuclear energy. India has the potential to generate up to 100 GW of power from nuclear, according to the Union Power Ministry. With 7,000 MW of installed nuclear capacity, India is expanding it to 15,000 MW.

Now, India must not worry about the so-called “invisible foreign hand” which has been stopping or delaying India's developmental progress by CSO, academicians and scholars from going nuclear. India is willing to be a comrade in the arms of Western countries in building nuclear reactors in other neighbouring countries.

Since the beginning of production commercially in 1950s, nuclear energy now provides 10% of the world's electricity (4th largest), which accounts for 26%

of low carbon energy and second-largest source of clean dispatchable baseload power, with benefits for energy security. The total installed nuclear capacity of around 375 GW in 2020 is forecast to rise to 458 GW in 2030, 549 GW in 2040 and 631 GW in 2050. Largest, 70% of France's electricity comes from nuclear energy. While 13 countries produced at least one-quarter of their electricity from nuclear in 2022, Ukraine, Slovakia, Belgium and Hungary get about half from nuclear. There are 436 nuclear reactors in operation, 62 reactors in construction and 213 were shut down.

In the climate negotiations history, fossil fuel-producing countries have so far kept nuclear energy away from the basket of renewable energy mix with hydro, solar, wind, and geothermal as it's not safe and sound. However, nuclear energy as renewable has been always in COPs as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) used to organise side events to influence the outcomes. Even the Chernobyl nuclear disaster (1986) didn't hinder the post-Kyoto Protocol negotiations including nuclear energy. However, the 2011 Fukushima nuclear

disaster compelled the nuclear lobby to maintain a low profile. Since COP25 (2019), the IAEA has persistently argued that nuclear energy is a mature and proven low-carbon source of electricity that would help the world to meet the 1.5-degree increase in temperature arguments put forward.

As John Kerry explained expanding nuclear is a scientific reality, no politics involved, no ideology involved. The scientific reality is getting out of fossil fuel as soon as possible but developed countries have failed so far. Now, the sluggish growth in the US and other Western economies, authoritarian regimes in developing countries looking to build nuclear reactors, and the prosecution of dissent against nuclear in both hemispheres are the reasons behind expanding nuclear. From Sri Lanka to Tajikistan to the Philippines, all developing countries want to access nuclear. Building a nuclear reactor, despite being a dangerous experiment, is easy now as there would be financial mechanisms, no protests by civilians and CSOs, and no international sanctions as it provides a profitable business model for lenders. Multilateral Development Banks are being advised to include nuclear energy, not so far, in their energy lending portfolio and policies through the nuclear declaration.

The scientifically feasible, economically profitable, politically implementable but socially and environmentally sensitive, nuclear reactor would be the next big thing in climate talks. When world leaders fail to curb carbon dioxide emissions, they take refuge in expanding nuclear or pick up another gas from the GHG basket - methane.

The writer is a scientist at IIT-Madras. Views are personal.

SPECTRUM NATION

Addressing regional imbalance

The BJP's victory in three states appears to suggest the promise of development via 'double engine' sarkar has takers. And the timing should make the task of the 16th Finance Commission, recently recommended by the Union Cabinet to be set up, easier. It is to decide on sharing of taxes between the states and Centre. States are entitled to 41% share of the divisible pool, which comprises all taxes, excluding the cesses and surcharges. However, they have been demanding a larger share of the pie, arguing they are burdened by many schemes announced by the Centre. On its part, the Centre believes it's funding several schemes that areas such as health and education that part of the states' mandate. The difference of opinion may steadily disappear now.

The existence of regional imbalance in India cannot be denied as there has not been balanced development. As in the case of literacy and educational attainment, where states of southern India are far ahead of others, similarly in financial matters, states in the western part as well as Tamil Nadu and Karnataka in south are stronger than other

parts. The pace of growth in the two southern states and in Maharashtra and Gujarat has been phenomenal in recent years and experts believe their performance may be even better in coming years.

The per capita income of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha is far below the national average, whereas in Telangana, Karnataka and Haryana it's more than double. The Centre's strategy of tackling regional imbalance has not been successful enough.

Prior to liberalisation, the Centre's efforts yielded some results with the economic emergence of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh (undivided), and Haryana and helped the hilly and smaller states to stand on their own. But presently, the government has hardly any means of restricting regional imbalances. If is left on the market forces and in all likelihood imbalances in the standard of living of people in different states shall reach a crisis proportion. By 2047, some states will be as prosperous as some East European nations while most others will be comparable to some central African nations. The present determination

to make India the third largest economy is obviously a positive development. India's per capita GDP increased from \$442 in 2000 to \$2389 in 2022, which is considered quite impressive. But what has been of great concern is the widening inequality in incomes along with regional, spatial and gender disparities. Unless the laggard states can increase their incomes, even if the achievement becomes a reality, the development would not be balanced.

Thus, the importance of the 16th Finance Commission comes into play. Obviously, the poorer states would be given a larger chunk of funds compared to the performing ones but this strategy, adopted by the earlier Finance Commission, hasn't yielded expected results. The high growth states continue to make rapid strides in their incomes while only Odisha has shown some promise among the poor states.

Economic justice demands that the Finance Commission allocate tax proceeds in such a way that rich states subsidise the poor ones. Then there is the Backward Region Grant Fund which is implemented in 272 identified backward districts in

all states to redress regional development imbalances.

India's geographical diversity and different levels of development across regions mean that location specific targeted action would be required in less prosperous regions to ensure a minimum acceptable level of prosperity. The belief that giving more funds to the poor states would result in a shift in the composition of India's GDP away from agriculture has not become a reality as movement of labour from agriculture and from rural to urban areas has not taken shape. Thus, the inequality among states remains a big challenge, which needs to be seriously looked into and, it would be better, if the responsibility is given to the Finance Commission to suggest ways of improving the per capita income of the laggard states.

Economists and financial analysts are unanimous that merely providing funds will not help, unless it's supported by a plan, which the laggard states may be advised to follow. Accordingly, there's an urgent need to frame some mechanism to boost incomes of non-performing states and bridge the gap.



Dhurjati Mukherjee

ECONOMIC JUSTICE DEMANDS THAT THE FINANCE COMMISSION ALLOCATE TAX PROCEEDS IN SUCH A WAY THAT RICH STATES SUBSIDISE THE POOR ONES

WISDOM CORNER

- Love has no age, no limit; and no death. JOHN GALSWORTHY
- You can't depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus. MARK TWAIN
- Life is something to do when you can't get to sleep. FRAN LEBOWITZ

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1978:** The American classic film *The Deer Hunter*—starring Robert De Niro and Christopher Walken, among others—had its world premiere; an emotionally shattering look at the effects of the Vietnam War on the young American men sent to fight in it, the movie later won an Oscar for best picture.
- 1980:** John Lennon fatally shot by fan. British musician John Lennon—who rose to fame with the Beatles and had a successful solo career—was fatally shot by Mark David Chapman in New York City, causing a global outpouring of grief.
- 1987:** First Intifada begins. The Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories began after an Israeli army truck attacked a car and killed 4 Palestinians. The Intifada ended in 1991 after the Madrid Conference.

Trading on terror

Sir, Determining whether Hamas profited from short-selling Israeli shares before an attack is a complex and contentious issue, lacking a clear-cut resolution. The research paper “Trading on Terror?” by Robert Jackson Jr and Joshua Mitts presents compelling evidence of a substantial surge in short-selling of Israeli shares preceding the Hamas attack, hinting at possible insider knowledge. However, attributing this spike exclusively to Hamas necessitates a more thorough investigation and concrete evidence directly linking them to these trades. Market dynamics are multifaceted, and various factors beyond insider trading could contribute to such fluctuations, emphasising the need for cautious scrutiny before drawing definitive conclusions. Currently, Israeli authorities are actively investigating these claims, although no official findings have been disclosed. Unveiling the truth requires access to comprehensive financial records and verified identities of those involved in the suspicious short-selling activities. While the research paper raises pertinent questions, making direct associations with Hamas without conclusive evidence can lead to misinformation and potentially harmful assumptions. Therefore, exercising prudence and ensuring diligent investigation are essential steps in arriving at a more accurate understanding of this intricate scenario. Even if Hamas did benefit financially, it doesn't mitigate the ethical implications or validate their actions. Israeli shares. Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

Combating corruption

Sir, Corruption is a significant global challenge, threatening prosperity and stability across borders. Its impact spans regions, communities, and nations, highlighting the urgent need for awareness and transparency. International Anti-Corruption Day, observed annually on December 9, serves as a reminder of corruption's disheartening prevalence and its threat to democracy. Tackling corruption requires a collective effort from individuals, governments, civil servants, law enforcement agencies, media, the private sector, civil society, academia, and the youth. Reaffirming dedication to collaborative initiatives is vital in the pursuit of confronting and eliminating corruption. Imagining a world where equality and sustainable development thrive without the influence of corruption remains crucial in this endeavour. Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

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

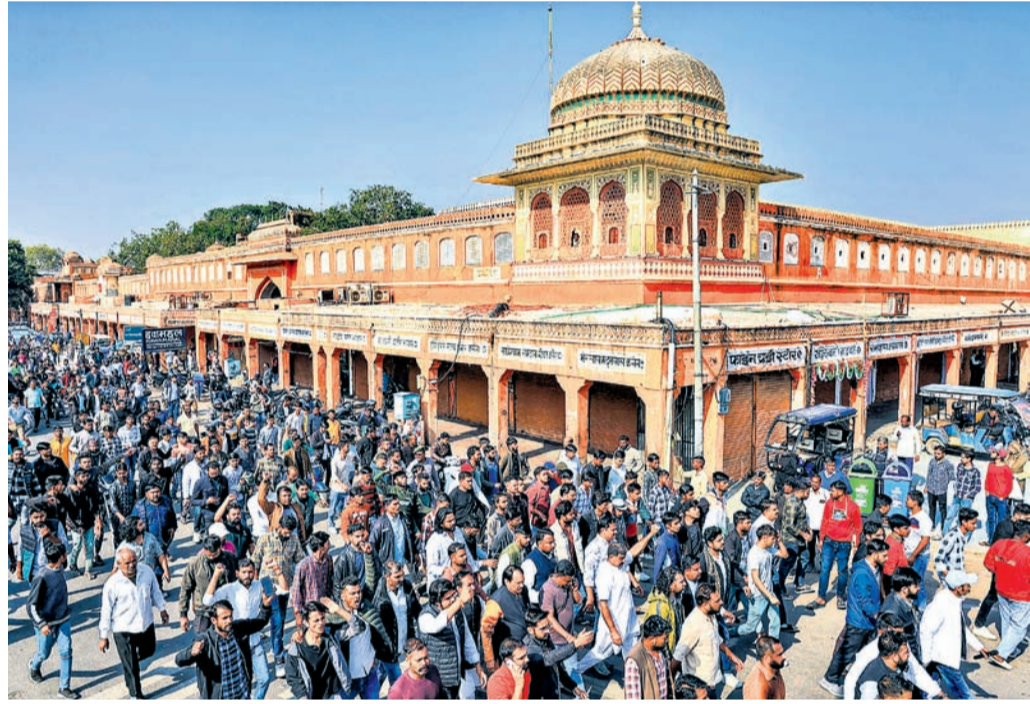
OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010



Dragon dance and parade on the streets of Yuen Long on the second day Yuen Long Jiao Festival 2023. The Yuen Long Jiao Festival marks its 100th anniversary in 2023. It has been held once every 10 years in the town centre of Yuen Long since 1923 and is one of the biggest and community-wide religious events in the district. The ritual involves praying and requesting deities to bestow peace and harmony in the neighbourhood



Israeli soldiers take part in trainings at the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights amid ongoing cross-border hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah at Israel-Lebanon border



Rashtriya Rajput Karni Sena supporters shout slogans during a protest against the killing of their leader Sukhdev Singh Gogamedi in Jaipur, Rajasthan



West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee during her visit to the Makaibari Tea Estate at Kurseong in Darjeeling, West Bengal



A biologist studies plastics and micro plastics in increasingly contaminated waters as part of a volunteer group that works to clean the sea



Commuters cross a road during rain, in Kolkata. Intermittent rain and chilly wind greeted the denizens of Kolkata and adjoining districts in south Bengal Thursday morning hampering normal life



A volunteer offers food to a resident after his house got partially submerged following heavy rains due to Cyclone Michaung in Chennai, Tamil Nadu AP/REUTERS/PTI/SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST



national



We have to bring some changes in the education system of our management institutions for more effective and inclusive development of the country
DROUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT OF INDIA

122 YT-BASED NEWS CHANNELS BLOCKED

The Centre Thursday said that since December 2021 it has issued directions to block 122 YouTube news channels for carrying content related to the "sovereignty and integrity" of the country



of the day quote

Our objections to the bill are on two issues. The first is that the Supreme Court has not announced its decision on the reorganisation and they (government) are bringing changes after changes

OMAR ABDULLAH | NATIONAL CONFERENCE (NC) VICE PRESIDENT

Garba is an age-old dance form that brings the community together with its rhythmic harmony. Its inscription on the Intangible Heritage List is an accolade for the beauty and resilience of our culture

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

The merciless bombing of Gaza continues with even more savagery than before the truce. Food supplies are scarce, medical facilities have been destroyed and basic amenities have been shut down

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

Probe panel formed: EAM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 7: Days after Washington alleged an Indian link to a conspiracy to kill a Sikh separatist, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Thursday said India instituted an inquiry committee to look into the inputs received from the US in the case as the matter has a bearing on national security.

However, at the same time, Jaishankar told Rajya Sabha that there will be "no equitable treatment" to Canada's allegations of a potential involvement of Indian agents in the killing of a Khalistani extremist as no specific evidence or inputs were provided to India by Ottawa.

Asked why there was no equitable treatment with regard to charges made by the Canadian government, Jaishankar said: "Insofar as Canada is concerned, no specific evidence or inputs were provided to us. So the question of equitable treatment to two countries, one of whom has provided input and one of whom has not, does not arise."

The US federal prosecutors have charged Nikhil Gupta of



PANNUN CASE

working with an Indian government employee in the foiled plot to kill Sikh separatist Gurbatwant Singh Pannun, who holds dual citizenship of the US and Canada.

In September, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made an explosive allegation of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Canadian soil in June. India has strongly rejected the allegations.

Meanwhile, External Affairs

Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said at a media briefing that US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Christopher Wray's upcoming visit to India should be seen in the context of overall cooperation between the two countries in areas of cyber-security, counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics.

Bagchi said the details for the FBI director's visit had been worked out with the US side over the course of the last few months.

To a question if the Pannun case will come up during Wray's visit, he said it is part of the ongoing dialogue process.

Pannun, a leader of so called Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), last month released a video threatening passengers of Air India flights on November 19.

Asked about reports of some new threats including Pannun's new video threatening to attack India's Parliament, the MEA spokesperson said: "I don't want to amplify or give too much credence to such extremists who make threats and get a lot of (media) coverage."

DEATH ROW IN QATAR Indian envoy met 8 ex-Navy men: MEA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 7: The Indian ambassador to Qatar met December 3 eight former Indian Navy personnel who were handed death sentence by a Qatari court in October; the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Thursday.

MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said two hearings on the appeal against the death sentence have already taken place. "We are closely following the matter and extending all legal and consular assistance... Our ambassador got consular access to meet all eight of them in prison December 3," Bagchi said at a media briefing.

The Indian nationals were given consular access earlier as well. The Navy veterans were on October 26 given death sentence by Qatar's Court of First Instance. India described the ruling as "deeply" shocking and vowed to explore all legal options in the case. The Indian nationals, who worked with private company Al Dabra, were arrested in August last year reportedly in an alleged case of espionage.

Neither the Qatari authorities nor New Delhi made the charges against the Indian na-

tional public. In its reaction to the ruling by the Qatari court, the MEA last month said that it

is attaching "high importance" to this case and is exploring all legal options.

Rajnath conducts aerial survey of TN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Dec 7: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has directed the Union Home Ministry to release ₹450 crore, the second instalment to Tamil Nadu for cyclone relief. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said here on Thursday.

Following an aerial survey and a hi-level meeting with Chief Minister M K Stalin at the Secretariat, Singh said the first instalment of ₹450 crore had been released earlier to the state. The release of two instalments to Tamil Nadu is the Centre's share in the State Disaster Response Fund.



"PM Modi is distressed by the loss of lives in TN due to rains, flood," he said. After the meeting with Singh, Stalin said a team from the Centre would soon visit the state to assess damage due to the cyclone.

He termed as 'unseen before,' the rains here and nearby areas and outlined the state's relief initiatives on war-footing. In view of the government's preventive measures, loss of lives and damage has been avoided to a large extent.

The CM said relief work would continue to go on in full swing to bring normalcy in all the affected areas. The Union Minister said the problem of urban floods has become repetitive in Chennai in recent years and the Government of India has approved a Central funding of ₹500 crore for urban flood management activities.

PM to inaugurate 'Uttarakhand Global Investors Summit' today



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 7: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 'Uttarakhand Global Investors Summit 2023' in Dehradun December 8 as the hill state looks to boost investment in the coming years, his office said in a statement.

Modi will also address the gathering on the occasion, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in its statement.

The 'Uttarakhand Global Investors Summit 2023' is a step towards establishing Uttarakhand

as a new investment destination and the theme of the two-day event is 'Peace to Prosperity'.

The summit will be attended by thousands of investors and delegates from across the world. It will witness participation of Union ministers and ambassadors of various countries along with leading industrialists, among others, the statement said.

This time the theme of the Global Investors Summit is "Peace to Prosperity".

Chief Minister Shri Pushkar Singh Dhami said that all prepara-

tions for the Global Investors Summit have been completed by the state government. This event is being organised by the government with the aim of establishing Uttarakhand as a new investment destination.

The state government had set a target of investment of ₹2.5 lakh crore in the Global Investors Summit. Before organising the Global Investors Summit, 4 international and 5 domestic road shows were organised by the Uttarakhand government. Four international road shows have been held outside the country in London, Birmingham, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, while the state government has conducted road shows across the country in Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Mumbai.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will launch groundings of projects worth ₹44,000 crore during the inaugural session of the Global Investor Committee.

ED files chargesheet against Vivo, others

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 7: The Enforcement Directorate has filed its first charge sheet in connection with its money laundering probe against Chinese smartphone maker vivo-India and some others, official sources said Thursday.

The prosecution complaint was filed before a special court here Wednesday under the criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and vivo-India has been named an accused apart from those arrested in this case, the sources told PTI. The federal probe agency arrested four people, including



mobile company Lava International's MD Hari Om Rai, in October as part of this investigation. The others who were taken into custody were Chinese

national Guangwen alias Andrew Kuang and chartered accountants Nitin Garg and Rajan Malik.

Vivo-India did not respond to an email sent in this regard. The ED had claimed in its remand papers before a local court here that the alleged activities of the four arrested accused enabled vivo-India to make wrongful gains that were detrimental to the economic sovereignty of India. The ED had then alleged that a whopping Rs 62,476 crore was "illegally" transferred by vivo-India to China to avoid payment of taxes in India. The company had said that it "firmly adheres to its ethical principles and remains dedicated to legal compliance".

TMC protests against Giriraj's remarks

Kolkata: The TMC orchestrated protests across West Bengal Thursday, calling for an apology and the immediate removal of Union Minister Giriraj Singh from the union cabinet, following his "misogynistic" remarks targeting party supremo and state Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Govt issues health alert on painkiller Meftal

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 7: The Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) has issued a drug safety alert advising healthcare professionals and patients to monitor adverse reactions of painkiller Meftal, commonly used for menstrual cramps and rheumatoid arthritis.

The mefenamic acid painkiller is prescribed in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, dysmenorrhoea, mild to moderate pain, inflammation, fever and dental pain.

The commission, in its alert, stated that a preliminary analysis of adverse drug reactions from the Pharmacovigilance Programme of India (PvPI) database revealed drug reactions with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms (DRESS) syndrome. "Healthcare professionals, patients/consumers are advised to closely monitor the possibility



of the above adverse drug reaction (ADR) associated with the use of the suspected drug," according to the alert, issued on November 30.

If such reaction is encountered, the alert advised, people should report the matter to the national coordination centre of the PvPI under the commission by fil-

ing a form on the website - www.Ipc.Gov.In - or through android mobile app ADR PvPI and PvPI Helpline No. 1800-180-3024. An autonomous institution of the Ministry of Health, the IPC sets standards for all drugs that are manufactured, sold and consumed in India.

DOCTORS ADVISE NOT TO TAKE PARACETAMOL: Children undergoing Covid vaccination must not take paracetamol, a common pain reliever, without first consulting, city doctors advised on Friday. The advice was issued in response to growing concerns that some immunisation centres are advising children to take three paracetamol 500 mg tablets after receiving the Covid vaccine. Taking paracetamol without consulting a doctor can harm children, the health experts warned.

"Paracetamol is not recommended as prophylaxis, before and after any Covid vaccination as we don't know how it alters the immune response of the vaccine," said Dr. Akshay Budhraj, Sr. Consultant, Respiratory and Sleep Medicine, Aakash Healthcare.

ceiving Covid vaccines is not recommended. It is because it has the potential to cause hepatotoxicity (liver damage caused by drug exposure) in them," added Dr. Col. Vijay Dutta, Senior Consultant - Internal Medicine, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre.

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OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RWS&S DIVISION, BARIPADA. Govt. of Odisha e-procurement Notice Bid Identification No.23 of 2023-24. Date: 05.12.2023.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No.A-960: e-Procurement Notice Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division, Angul Bid Identification No.- 09 OF 2023-24

FOREST, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE DEPARTMENT, ODISHA OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER KORAPUT DIVISION

Government of Odisha DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, LOWER INDRRA CANAL DIVISION, KHARIAR

international

of the day quote

The world is probably much closer to a point where the average temperature rise will reach 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial (1850-1900) levels

ELENA MANAENKOVA | WMO DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL

The upcoming state visit to the Netherlands will help strengthen semiconductor cooperation between the two countries and contribute to the development of South Korea's defence industry and exports

YOON SUK YEOL | SOUTH KOREA PRESIDENT

The world is witnessing this killing of women, of children, of babies (in Gaza). This has to stop

JUSTIN TRUDEAU | CANADA PM

SHORT TAKES

Pak court to hear Nawaz appeal

Islamabad: In some relief to former Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif, the Islamabad High Court Thursday decided to hear on merit an appeal by him against his conviction in the Al-Azizia Steel mill corruption case as he eyes a record fourth term as premier in the next elections. Sharif, 73, was sentenced to seven years in jail and imposed a heavy fine by an anti-corruption court in December 2018 after he failed to convince the court that he had nothing to do with the steel mill set up by his father in 2001 in Saudi Arabia.

Lanka arrests 21 Indian fishermen

Colombo: At least 21 Indian fishermen have been arrested for allegedly poaching in Sri Lanka's territorial waters, the island nation's Navy has said, taking the total number this year to 195. The Indian fishermen were arrested and their four trawlers were seized on Wednesday in the northeastern waters off Mannar and Kovilan.

Dr Samir selected as new BBC chairman

London: Dr Samir Shah, an India-born media executive with over 40 years of experience in TV production and journalism, has been named as the UK government's preferred candidate to take over as the new BBC chairman. The 71-year-old, who was honoured with a CBE (Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) by Queen Elizabeth II in 2019 for services to television and heritage, will replace Richard Sharp, who was forced to resign after his communication with former prime minister Boris Johnson came under scrutiny.



Sri Lanka has won the respect of its international partners for maintaining neutrality in practising foreign policy and this helped the country in striking a much-needed bailout package with the IMF

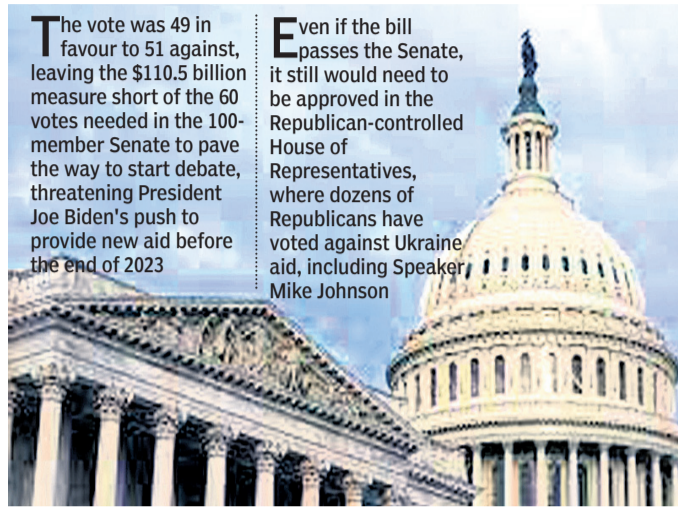
ALI SABRY | SRI LANKA FOREIGN MINISTER

CHINA UNVEILS DESIGN

China has unveiled a conceptual design to build what could potentially become the world's largest nuclear-powered container ship, official media reported Thursday. According to the design, the vessel, which is yet to be named, will be powered by molten salt reactors and will have the capacity to carry 24,000 standard containers



Senate Republicans block funding bill



REUTERS

Washington, Dec 7: An emergency spending bill to provide billions of dollars in new security assistance for Ukraine and Israel was blocked in the US Senate Wednesday as Republicans pressed their demands for tougher measures to control immigration at the U.S. border with Mexico.

The vote was 49 in favour to 51 against, leaving the \$110.5 billion measure short of the 60 votes needed in the 100-member Senate to pave the way to start debate, threatening President Joe Biden's push to provide new aid before the end of 2023. The

vote was along party lines, with every Senate Republican voting no along with Senator Bernie Sanders, an independent who generally votes with Democrats but had expressed concerns about funding Israel's "current inhumane military strategy" against Palestinians.

The bill would provide about \$50 billion in new security assistance for Ukraine, as well as money for humanitarian and economic aid for the government in Kyiv, plus \$14 billion for Israel as it battles Hamas in Gaza. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a Democrat, also voted "no" so that he could introduce the measure again in

the future. After the vote, Schumer noted the risks if Ukraine falls, saying it was a "serious moment that will have lasting consequences for the 21st century," risking the decline of Western democracy.

Republicans said it was essential to make their case for tighter immigration policies and control of the southern border. "Today's vote is what it takes for the Democratic leader to recognize that Senate Republicans mean what we say," Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell said in a floor speech earlier on Wednesday. "Then let's vote. And then let's finally start meeting America's national security priorities, including right here at home."

Even if the bill passes the Senate, it still would need to be approved in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives, where dozens of Republicans have voted against Ukraine aid, including Speaker Mike Johnson. Congressional Republicans and Democrats have been debating for months how to address Biden's request for billions of dollars in funding for Ukraine as it fights Russian invaders, for Israel following the October 7 attacks by Islamist Hamas militants, for U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific, and for international humanitarian relief.



Cracks along a road in the aftermath of a massive explosion at an industrial area on the main island in Mahe, Seychelles, Thursday. Authorities in Seychelles declared a state of emergency Thursday after a blast at an explosives store caused massive damage in an industrial area also facing flooding amid heavy rainfall, according to the presidency

Fighting between Israel, Hamas rages

The ground offensive has sent tens of thousands of Palestinians fleeing to the territory's southernmost edge and prevented aid groups from delivering food, water and other supplies



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rafah (Gaza Strip), Dec 7: Israeli troops battled Hamas militants Wednesday in the centre of the Gaza Strip's second-largest city, the military said.

The ground offensive has sent tens of thousands of Palestinians fleeing to the territory's southernmost edge and prevented aid groups from delivering food, water and other supplies. Two months into the war, Israel's offensive into southern Gaza was bringing to Khan Younis the same fierce urban fighting and intensified bombardment that obliterated much of Gaza City and the north of the territory in recent weeks.

But in the south, the areas where Palestinians can seek safety are rapidly shrinking. Ahead of the assault, Israel urged residents to evacuate Khan Younis, the childhood home of two top Hamas leaders.

But much of the city's population remains in place, along

with large numbers who were displaced from northern Gaza and are unable to leave or wary of fleeing to the disastrously overcrowded far south.

Late Wednesday, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres used a rarely exercised power to warn the Security Council of an impending "humanitarian catastrophe" in Gaza and urged members to demand a cease-fire.

He invoked Article 99 of the UN Charter, a step no UN chief has taken in half a century, which says the secretary-general may inform the council of matters believed to threaten international peace and security.

Israel accused the UN chief of "a new moral low" and "bias against Israel". The United States signalled it would not support Security Council action.

Earlier Wednesday, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said, "Palestinians in Gaza are living in utter, deepening horror".

SIGNIFICANT STEP

REUTERS

Athens, Dec 7: Greece and Turkey Thursday agreed to reboot their relations, establishing a roadmap designed to usher in a new era of ties between the two NATO allies but historic foes.

In a landmark visit of Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan to Greece, the long-time sparring partners agreed to focus on pursuing good neighbourly relations, keep open channels of communication, boost trade volumes and work on issues which have kept them apart, notably in the Aegean Sea.

"There is no issue between us that is unsolvable. So long as we focus on the big picture and don't end up being like those who cross the sea and drown in the river," Erdogan said after a meeting with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in Athens. The meeting went on longer than expected.

The NATO allies wanted to raise bilateral trade volume to \$10

Greece, Turkey agree to mend ties



billion, while Erdogan said both countries could benefit from high-level meetings held annually. "Geography and history has dictated that we live in the same neighbourhood... But I feel a historical responsibility to utilise this opportunity to bring the two states side-by-side, just as our borders are," Mitsotakis said.

More accustomed to verbal jousting in recent years, chilly relations between the two neighbours thawed markedly after Greece swiftly dispatched aid in the wake of a devastating

earthquake in Turkey in February. Greece and Turkey have been at odds for decades over issues including where their continental shelves start and end, energy resources, over-fights of the Aegean Sea, and ethnically-split Cyprus.

They came to the brink of war in the 1990s, and in recent years have argued over energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean, defence issues, migration and the acquisition of fighter jets, which interrupted co-operation talks.

But 'earthquake diplomacy' - similar to another thaw under similar circumstances in 1999 - has turned the tide, again. Striking an upbeat tone, Erdogan earlier said the two countries should focus on the positives, and less on the negatives.

"It will be much more beneficial for the future if we look at things from a glass half-full perspective," Erdogan said during a meeting with Greek President Katerina Sakellaropoulou earlier. Greece got permission from the European Union to re-activate a seven-day tourist visa for Turkish visitors for 10 islands close to the Turkish coast.

Both countries want to show they are willing to mend ties. Turkey has been seeking EU membership for more than two decades. Following a debt crisis that rocked the euro zone, Greece wants to regain its footing and appear as a pillar of stability in a changing geopolitical landscape due to the war in Ukraine and the Gaza conflict.

RUSSIA SETS 2024 ELECTION DATE

Putin moves a step closer to fifth term

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moscow, Dec 7: Lawmakers in Russia set the country's 2024 presidential election for March 17, moving Vladimir Putin a step closer to a fifth term in office.

Members of the Federation Council, Russia's upper house of parliament, voted unanimously to approve a decree setting the date. "In essence, this decision marks the start of the election campaign," Valentina Matviyenko, the chamber's speaker, said.

Putin, 71, hasn't yet announced



his intention to run again, but he is widely expected to do so soon now that election day is scheduled. Russia's Central Election Commission plans to hold a meeting Friday on the presidential campaign.

Asked whether Putin had decided to seek reelection, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov urged reporters to "be patient". Under

constitutional reforms he orchestrated, Putin is eligible to seek two more six-year terms after his current term expires next year, potentially allowing him to remain in power until 2036.

The tight control over Russia's political system that he has established during more than 20 years in power makes his reelection in March all but assured. Prominent critics who could challenge him on the ballot are either in jail or living abroad, and most independent media have been banned.

BORIS DENIES HE WANTED TO LET COVID 'RIP'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Dec 7: Former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson Thursday rejected suggestions that he wanted to let COVID-19 "rip" through the population as he defended his handling of the pandemic during a second day of testimony at a public inquiry into the crisis.

Johnson shook his head and responded "No, no, no" as he was confronted with a series of diary entries by his chief scientific adviser that indicated he had argued in favour of letting the virus spread rapidly to increase immunity to COVID-19 rather than imposing further restrictions on the people of Britain.

The former prime minister, who is testifying under oath, said he was simply pushing scientists to explain why such a strategy wouldn't work as the government debated whether to impose a second national lockdown in the autumn of 2020 when infection rates were rising and vaccines weren't yet available.



FACEBOOK RESEARCHERS TEST AI'S INTELLIGENCE

A team of researchers at Facebook's parent company Meta has come up with a new benchmark to gauge the abilities of AI assistants like OpenAI's large language model GPT-4. And judging by current standards, OpenAI's current crop of AI models are all... still pretty stupid.

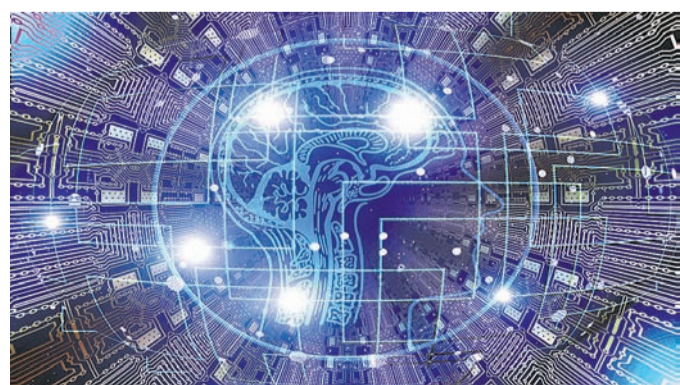
The team, which includes "AI godfather" and Meta chief scientist Yann LeCun, came up with an exam called GAIA that's made up of 466 questions that "are conceptually simple for humans yet challenging for most advanced AIs," per a yet-to-be-peer-reviewed paper.

The results speak for themselves: human respondents were capable of correctly answering

92 percent of the questions, while GPT-4, even equipped with some manually selected plugins, scored a measly 15 percent. OpenAI's recently-released GPT-4 Turbo scored less than ten percent, according to the team's published GAIA leaderboard.

It's unclear, however, how competing LLMs like Meta's own Llama 2 or Google's Bard fared. Nonetheless, the research demonstrates that we're likely still a long way away from reaching artificial general intelligence (AGI), the state at which AI algorithms can outperform humans in intellectual tasks.

That conclusion also flies in the face of some lofty claims made by notable figures in the AI industry. "This notable perform-



ance disparity contrasts with the recent trend of LLMs outperforming humans on tasks requiring professional skills in e.g. law or chemistry," the researchers write in their paper.

Case in point, in January OpenAI competitor Anthropic claimed its AI dubbed Claude got a "marginal pass" on a blindly graded law and economics exam at George Mason University. In

its GPT-4 documentation, OpenAI also claimed that its model "exhibits human-level performance on various professional and academic benchmarks, including passing a simulated bar exam with a score around the top ten percent of test takers."

But how to actually gauge the intelligence of these systems has remained a thorny debate. Tools like GPT-4 still have plenty of inherent flaws and still can't reliably tell the truth from fiction. In other words, how could an algorithm really pass the bar if it can't even tell whether Australia exists?

LeCun has long been an outspoken critic of AI doomsaying and has repeatedly downplayed comments alleging that we're

facing an existential threat in the form of a rogue AGI. "LLMs obviously have 'some' understanding of what they read and generate," he tweeted over the weekend. "But this understanding is very limited and superficial. Otherwise, they wouldn't confabulate so much and wouldn't make mistakes that are contrary to common sense."

That, however, may not always be the case. If recent rumors are to be believed, OpenAI is working on a next-generation model dubbed Q*, pronounced Q star, that could introduce a level of deductive reasoning and "planning." But whether it'll manage to score a higher mark on Meta's brutal GAIA test remains to be seen.

business

of the day quote

India will add another 38 gigawatt (GW) of renewable energy capacity by March 2025 to touch 170 GW-mark, aided by moderation in solar module prices

We gladly welcome the initiative to be transparent on GHGs. Hindalco has been a leader in sustainable metal manufacturing for years. Because of its infinite recyclability

Interestingly, average rental values across the top 7 cities witnessed a 7 per cent growth in H1 FY24, as compared to the same period in FY23, essentially due to increased construction and input costs

SHORT TAKES

Hyundai joins price hike race

New Delhi: Automaker Hyundai Motor India Ltd Thursday said it will hike the prices of its vehicles from next month citing rising input cost, adverse exchange rate and increase in commodity prices. The company, which sells a range of vehicles starting from Grand i10 Nios to electric SUV IONIQ5, priced between Rs 5.84 lakh to Rs 45.95 lakh, however, did not specify the quantum of the proposed price increase to be effective from January 1, 2024. The company joins the likes of Maruti Suzuki, Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Honda and Audi among others which have also announced plans to increase vehicle prices in January.

SpiceJet to raise upto \$100mn

Mumbai: No-frills carrier SpiceJet Thursday said its board of directors will meet December 11, to consider various options to raise fresh funds on preferential basis. The announcement comes amid reports that SpiceJet promoter Ajay Singh was in discussions with a bunch of global private credit funds to raise up to \$100-million. "... The board of directors of the company in its meeting scheduled on December 11, 2023 will discuss and consider, inter-alia, options for raising fresh capital through issue of equity shares and/or convertible securities on preferential basis. ..." SpiceJet said in a regulatory filing.

TAKING ON TESLA

DOMESTIC CAR INDUSTRY IS LOBBYING HARD AGAINST TESLA'S PLAN FOR INDIA TO LOWER TAXES, AS THEY BELIEVE THIS MOVE WILL BE CONTRARY TO GOVERNMENT'S MAKE-IN-INDIA PUSH

make its proposed \$24,000 car, while importing its more expensive models with lower tax. Tesla's strategy is a departure from its failed plan last year when it just pushed India to lower duties. In meetings with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's office and other departments, Tata has opposed the plan, arguing that its investors made decisions assuming the tax regime favouring locals will remain unchanged, two sources with knowledge of talks said. Tata is also arguing that India's EV players need more government support in the early growth stage of the industry, pointing to imported gasoline or diesel cars which are still taxed at

FEB '24 BUDGET

No big announcement

Upcoming Budget just a vote on account as elections loom, says Finance Minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 7: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Thursday ruled out any "spectacular announcement" for her sixth budget February 1 next year, saying it would just be a vote on account before the general elections.

A full Budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year will be presented in July next year by the new government elected after the April-May general elections, she said at the CII Global Economic Policy Forum. "I am not going to play a spoilsport, but it is a matter of truth that the February 1, 2024, budget that will be announced will just be a vote on account because we will be in an election mode. So the budget that the government presents will just be to meet the expenditure of the government till a new government comes to play," she said. "No spectacular announcements come in that time (in a vote on account). So you will have to wait till after the new government comes in and presents the next full Budget in July 2024," Sitharaman said in reply to a question on whether she would announce a "supercharged budget" in February. Piyush Goyal, who was holding additional charge of the Ministry of Finance after Arun Jaitley fell ill, had presented the last interim budget in 2019. After the Narendra Modi-led



I don't want to be a spoilsport, but the 1st February Budget is just a vote on account; a budget to meet expenditure till the next government comes to power

government swept to power for the second straight time, Sitharaman was appointed as the finance minister and she presented the full budget July 5, 2019. Traditionally, a vote on account is an authorisation for incurring certain expenditures required till a new government takes office. Governments in the past have refrained from making any major policy announcement during the vote on account, but there is no constitutional bar from making big announcements. Goyal had announced a Rs 6,000 per year cash dole to 12 crore farmers in the interim Budget 2019. Goyal had also announced tax sops for the middle class, including hiking the standard deduction available to the salaried class to Rs 50,000, from Rs 40,000. Also, a full tax rebate was announced for individual taxpayers having taxable annual income of up to Rs 5 lakh. The 2019 interim budget had proposed that such taxpayers would not be required to pay any income tax

India has potential to grow at 8 per cent as the country is labour-rich with enough institutional maturity of a functioning democracy

SUMAN BERY | VC, NITI AAYOG

Adani Ports may buy SP Group's Gopalpur port

REUTERS

Bangalore, Dec 7: India's largest private port operator Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone is in early talks to acquire real-estate conglomerate Shapoorji Pallonji Group's (SP Group) Gopalpur port in Odisha for about Rs 11-12 billion (\$132-\$144 mln), The Economic Times reported Thursday.

The deal could potentially be Adani Ports' sixth acquisition of a port along India's eastern coast, where it already has about 247 million tonne of capacity, the newspaper daily added. The Gopalpur port's enterprise value is Rs 50 billion, and due diligence for its buyout is in process, the ET report said citing people aware of the talks. The buyout is part of the Gautam Adani-led group's strategy to own ports across the western and eastern water margins. In August, Deloitte resigned as auditor of Adani Ports, the first such move since US short-seller Hindenburg Research flagged high debt levels and alleged irregularities at the group. The conglomerate's seven listed firms lost about \$150 billion of their combined market capitalisation after the Hindenburg report and have recovered only a part of those losses after paying down some debt. The Adani Group has denied allegations from Hindenburg.



PROFIT BUYING

EQUITIES BREAK SEVEN-DAY RALLY



Mumbai, Dec 7: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty snapped their seven-day winning streak Thursday due to profit taking by investors after recent sharp gains triggered by negative cues from Asian markets. The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 132.04 points, or 0.19 per cent, to close at 69,521.69. The gauge hit the lowest intra-day level of 69,320.53. Broader index Nifty also declined 36.55 points, or 0.17 per cent, to settle at 20,901.15. Analysts said crude oil prices in international markets failed to boost sentiment amid selling pressure from foreign institutional investors even as traders stayed on the sidelines ahead of RBI's monetary policy decision. The Reserve Bank of India is expected to maintain the status quo on the interest rate in its bi-monthly monetary policy decision to be announced Friday. Major laggards among Sensex constituents included Bharti Airtel, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Steel and ITC. Power Grid, UltraTech

TIDBITS

EV sales on fast lane; up 25.5% in November

Mumbai: Electric vehicle total retail sales, including passenger and commercial vehicles, grew 25.5 per cent to 1,52,606 units in November, according to data released by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association (FADA) Thursday. The total EV retail sales in November 2022 were recorded at 1,21,596 units, according to FADA. The e-two-wheeler sales were 18.82 per cent higher at 91,243 units during the previous month from 76,791 units in November 2022. The e-three-wheeler volume rose 32.37 per cent to 53,766 vehicles in the reporting month as compared to 40,619 units retailed in the year-ago period, the data showed. Electric passenger vehicles retail sales in November this year stood at 7,064 units, a growth of 77.35 per cent over 3,983 units in the same month of last year. The electric commercial vehicle (e-buses) retail sales were reported at 533 units in the previous month as against 203 units retailed in November 2022, registering a year-on-year growth of 162 per cent, it said.

1K outlets: India fastest growing mkt for KFC

New Delhi: Food services chain KFC has reached a store count of 1,000 outlets in India, among its fastest growing markets worldwide, the quick service chain said Wednesday. KFC global chief executive Sabir Sami said in a statement that the chain is looking to grow "in every market it operates." Yum Restaurants in India are operated by three franchisees - Devyani International Limited and Sapphire Foods which operate KFC and Pizza Hut, and Burman Hospitality which operates Taco Bell. KFC, which debuted in India in 1995, said it will add over a lakh jobs across the country. Yum Restaurant's other brand in India, Pizza Hut, however, trails KFC and operates a little over 800 stores in the country.

BIZ BUZZ

PPL bags FAI awards

Bhubaneswar: Paradeep Phosphates Limited (PPL) was once again recognised for its overall effort in maintaining the plant site and achieving desired production performance. PPL was conferred with prestigious Fertiliser Association of India - Best Performing Phosphoric Acid Plant and Best Environment Management in NPK plant. Nitesh Desai, Chief Manufacturing Officer & Unit Head received the award from Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister for Chemical & Fertilizers and Health & Family Welfare at the Annual Seminar of Fertiliser Association of India at New Delhi December 6. Rajat Kumar Mishra, IAS Secretary, Department of Fertilisers, Suresh Krishnan, Chairman, Fertiliser Association of India were also present. The award will inspire PPL to scale new milestones in industrial safety.



Vedanta wins best exporter award from Govt of Odisha

Jharsuguda: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, has been conferred with the 'Best Exporter' Award at the Odisha State Export Awards for its Jharsuguda smelter's exceptional performance as the largest exporter of the state, for two consecutive fiscal years 2020-21 and 2021-22. The coveted award was presented by Pratap Keshari Deb, Minister of Industry, MSME (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprise), and Energy, Government of Odisha. On behalf of the company, Ashok Kumar Patro, Head Indirect Taxation, and Karan Kumar Agarwal, Deputy Head Taxation Direct and Indirect, received the award. Notably, Vedanta Aluminium, Jharsuguda received the same award in fiscal years 2018-19 and 2019-20. Speaking about the award, Sunil Gupta, COO, Aluminium Business said, "I thank Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister of Odisha, and the Directorate of Export Promotion & Marketing for awarding us with the prestigious Best Exporter Award. Vedanta Aluminium has been a longstanding partner to state's socio-economic advancement with substantial contributions towards the state's GDP, employment, and quality of life. Our Jharsuguda smelters play a pivotal role, single-handedly producing over one-third of India's aluminium, bolstering the state government's 'Make in Odisha' initiative. We take great pride in being Odisha's partner in progress, committed to leveraging our assets to establish the state as a global hub for aluminium production."



Tata lobbies India not to slash EV import taxes

around \$9 billion, and the second source said lower duties for foreign players could risk future fundraising. India's EV market is small, but 74% of the 72,000 electric cars sold so far this year are made by Tata. Tesla, which is losing share in an increasingly crowded US market, has its sights set on the potential of India's auto market, one of the world's biggest where more than 3 million cars are sold each year. EVs still account for a tiny share in India, but Modi's government is promoting the use of clean cars and the sector is rapidly growing. Modi has been directly over-seeing talks with Tesla since his meeting with CEO Elon Musk in New York in June. **INDIAN GOVERNMENT'S VIEW** Another Indian player, Mahindra & Mahindra, which has raised around \$400 million from Singapore's Temasek and British International Investment, has also raised concerns with officials about the lower EV tax plan, said a third source, a senior federal official involved in policymaking. New Delhi, said the third source, is trying to soothe concerns of local automakers, but India remains determined to make EV sector entry for foreign players easier to help meet its goals. Modi wants 30% of annual car sales in India to be electric from 2030 compared to the current 2%. Charging infrastructure is in its infancy too. "We will come out with a policy that addresses everyone's fears," said the official, adding one option was to lower import taxes only above a certain price point. India's current EV import tax of 100% is for cars priced above \$40,000 - which applies to most Tesla models. Tata has three EV offerings, priced \$10,400 to \$24,000. "If India needs to be an EV hub, we need more manufacturers ... Local industry need not fear that Tesla or anyone else will wipe them out," said the Indian official. India's talks with Tesla come as other countries are courting the US giant.

