



CANDID ADMISSION

Actress Sanjana Sanghi shares that she finds it unnatural to doll up for her characters

LEISURE P2



23 PAK SOLDIERS KILLED

23 Pakistani soldiers die as six terrorists ram explosive-laden truck into a security post in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province

INTERNATIONAL P10



IMPRESSIVE TURNAROUND

Hockey colts script a come-from behind victory against the Dutch to enter the semis of Jr World Cup

SPORTS P12

Biden not visiting India for R-Day celebrations

New Delhi: US President Joe Biden is not travelling to India next month to grace the Republic Day celebrations as the chief guest, and New Delhi is looking at holding the next Quad summit later next year instead of its earlier plan to host it in January, people familiar with the matter said Tuesday. In September, US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti said PM Narendra Modi invited President Biden to be the Chief Guest for the Republic Day celebrations on January 26 next year. However, there was no official word from India on the invitation to Biden. It is learnt that Washington has already conveyed to New Delhi that Biden would not be able to visit India.

Archana Nag walks out of Jharpada jail

Bhubaneswar: High-profile honey trap case prime accused Archana Nag Tuesday walked out of Jharpada jail here after remaining behind the bars for around 14 months. Immediately after her release, she went to a law college to appear for her law examination, for which she had prepared inside the prison. The Orissa High Court had December 5 granted her bail in an Enforcement Directorate (ED) case registered against her, paving the way for her release from prison. The court had earlier granted her bail in two other cases filed against her by Bhubaneswar city police. Nag's latest bail application was allowed by the court with a bond of Rs 2 lakh.



NAVY DAY PREP: Indian Navy sailors during rehearsals for Navy Day celebrations at the Gateway of India, in Mumbai, Tuesday

RS nod for Bill to regulate appointment of CEC, ECs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 12: Rajya Sabha Tuesday passed a Bill to regulate the appointment and service terms of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and election commissioners (ECs) with key amendments like retaining their status as par with Supreme Court judges, upgrading the search committee and inserting a new clause to protect them from court cases while discharging their official duties. While the Bill was passed by a voice vote, Opposition members alleged the proposed measure subjugates the poll authority to the Executive and violates the Constitution and later walked out of the House. They also alleged that it was an attempt to circumvent the Supreme Court order on the appointment of CEC and ECs. When the Bill was introduced in the Upper House in August this year, opposition parties and some former CECs had objected to the members of the poll panel being equated to the Cabinet Secretary. They had claimed that the move would compromise the inde-

Opposition members alleged the proposed measure subjugates the poll authority to the Executive and violates the Constitution

pendence of the institution. At present, the CEC and fellow ECs enjoy the status of a judge of the Supreme Court. By bringing the amendment, the government has retained that status. Replying to the debate, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said some amendments have been brought in for rectification in the structure of the search committee, which was earlier proposed to be under the chairmanship of the cabinet secretary. Instead, it will be under the chairmanship of the law minister with two Union secretaries as members, he added. He pointed out that under another amendment moved by him, the CEC and other commissioners shall be paid a salary that is equal to the salary of a judge of the Supreme Court. **More P4**

Unsafe Bhubaneswar

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 12: In yet another instance of deteriorating law and order situation in the Capital City, unidentified burglars struck at five flats in one night at an apartment in Gadakana area, under Mancheswar police limits here, before decamping with gold ornaments, cash and other valuables with impunity, in the wee hours of Tuesday. Police said the incident took place at Spacetown apartment when the occupants of all flats were away. The flats are located in different wings of the five-block housing complex, police said. The burglars gained entry into the flats after breaking the door locks open. Interestingly, the watchman of the building complex was on duty when the incident occurred, police said, adding he is being questioned at present. Sources said the miscreants are believed to have struck between 1 am to 3 am. They locked the doors of other flats from outside in order to prevent any interference. An official from the Mancheswar police station, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said forensic teams are busy collecting evidence which might provide clues about the identity of the criminals. Debasish Nayak, whose flat has been burgled, said he received a call from his neighbour at around 6.30 am, informing him about the burglary at his flat. "I was briefly present in my flat in the evening and went to



SPATE OF BURGLARIES

- OCT 17:** Miscreants loot valuables worth Rs 2 crore from four flats at Rajbatia apartment under Infocity police station limits
- OCT 17:** Criminal loots gold jewellery and cash from a house under Chandaka police station limits
- NOV 5:** Miscreants loot valuables from a flat in the absence of the inmates under Bharatpur police station limits
- NOV 25:** Masked men assault and lock a family while committing robbery at Maruti residence under Nandankanan police limits

another flat in Nandankanan area. I was away when the incident occurred," he said. He said the manner in which the objects in the cupboards of the flat had been rummaged through, it seems many people were involved in the burglary. Another victim said he left the

flat around 10 pm Monday as he was on nightshift at his office. Upon returning early in the morning, he found the flat burgled. Residents alleged that developer and security personnel were the major conspirators in the incident. One of them said despite several requests to deploy an additional security guard, only one has been provided so far. Nevertheless, the incident came barely hours after miscreants looted an ATM kiosk at a busy marketplace in Old Town area here, Sunday. Meanwhile, a retired senior cop, expressing concerns about the incident, said, it highlights the inefficiency of Commissionerate Police to prevent unabated house burglaries in the City. "Earlier, the incidents of burglary and theft used to be scarce inside gated communities such as flats. However, the Capital city is witnessing a spike in such cases now, with at least one case being reported every 5-7 days," he said, requesting not to be named.

CBSE Class X, XII exams from Feb 15

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 12: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Tuesday announced the date sheets for Class X and XII board exams with the examination for both classes beginning from February 15. The Class X exams will conclude March 13 and the Class XII exams April 2. "While preparing the date sheet, the board has kept in mind that there is a sufficient gap between the two subjects. Dates of competitive exams like JEE have been kept in mind while deciding the

schedule for Class XII," Examination Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj said. "The date sheets have been prepared by avoiding more than 40,000 subject combinations to ensure that no two subject exams fall on the same date," he added. For Class X, February 15, exams for five subjects are scheduled—Painting, Rai, Gurung, Tamang and Sherpa. Similarly, on the first day, exams for four subjects are scheduled for Class XII. They are -- Entrepreneurship, Kokborok, Capital market operation and Physical activity trainer.

While Class X examinations will conclude March 13, tests for Class XII will end April 2

1st-time MLA Sharma to be Rajasthan CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Dec 12: The BJP Tuesday picked first-time MLA Bhajan Lal Sharma as Rajasthan's new chief minister, ending days of speculation that followed its victory in the assembly polls. The surprise choice was announced after BJP MLAs met here and elected the 56-year-old legislator from Sangner as the leader of its legislature party. He is at present a Rajasthan BJP general secretary. Diya Kumari and Prem Chand Bairwa will be the deputy chief ministers and Vasudev Devnani the speaker of the state assembly, said senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh, who led a team of three party central observers to oversee the meeting. **P9**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



JNU students want to volunteer for our 'Indian on the moon' mission, saying it's the only safe space to hold protests

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	69551.03 ↓ 377.50
NIFTY	20906.40 ↓ 90.70
DOLLAR	83.41 ↓ ₹0.01
EURO	90.15 ↑ ₹0.22
GOLD	₹61,279 ↑ ₹162
SILVER	₹72,160 ↑ ₹296

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	27.7°C	26.5°C
TEMP MIN	14.6°C	14.5°C
Humidity	74%	81%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Dry weather very likely	

Odisha SHGs key to food security during Covid

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 12: A government-backed women self-help group (SHG) program in Odisha was key to ensuring food security during the March Covid-19 lockdown, new research has found. The research from the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Italy, showed that these SHGs, called "Veg on Wheels", were crucial to mitigating fractures in the fresh fruit and vegetable value chains during the lockdown. These groups are known to be women-only rotating savings and credit associations with a long

history in India. The researchers said that the SHG system provided a 'third force' and model for rethinking and re-engineering current development models by leveraging existing institutions and grass root networks to build resilience in food systems. In March of 2020, the government announced a lockdown with just four hours of notice. The lockdown included a ban on the informal and traditional food outlets that 80 to 90 per cent of Indians relied on for their main source of food, threatening their food security. The women in these SHGs procured fresh fruits and vegetables from farmers, hired transport, purchased more vegetables from



wholesalers, and sold the food to people in local and urban markets via truck, cart, or motorbike, explained Jonathan Mockshell, an agricultural economist and the first author of the study published

in the journal World Development. "They were meeting every night," said Thea Ritter, an agricultural economist and second author of the study. "There were women who were vegetable and fruit producers themselves or had close links with others outside the group; this helped because they were familiar with the supply chain," said Ritter. Ritter added that some groups received government funding for training in areas like accounting, which some members would later use to start their own businesses. The number of people in or at risk of acute food insecurity surged from 135 million across 53 countries before the Covid-19 pandemic, to

345 million across 79 countries in 2023, the researchers said quoting the World Food Programme Statistics. The researchers said that two critical dimensions of food security came into play in the program they looked at - agency and sustainability/resilience. "In terms of the value chain, agency means being able to sell your fruit and vegetables if you want to and having a say in policies and laws," said Ritter. The researchers said that with over a billion members of such rotating credit and saving associations, especially in Africa and South Asia, the SHG model had global applications.

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ANNE HATHAWAY GLAD THAT BARBIE DIDN'T GET MADE

Actress Anne Hathaway was considering playing Barbie for Sony Pictures back in 2017 with Alethea Jones circling to direct. However, that didn't materialise and the actress is glad. The Oscar-winner said in hindsight, it's a "lucky thing" that never happened, reports *Deadline*.

SWIFT DONATES \$1MN TO VICTIMS OF TORNADES

Singer-songwriter Taylor Swift has donated \$1 million to help victims of the tornadoes in Tennessee. Several people in the state have been confirmed to have died and 50 were left injured as multiple tornadoes swept the state.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Your dream to make it big may culminate this evening and you will have to make a dash for it. However, you will also do your utmost to resist quick choices. Ganesha says whatever the consequences, you will choose wisely.

TAURUS

Physical and mental fitness will top your priority list today. You are likely to take special interest in working out and doing mental exercise, predicts Ganesha. Keep up the hard work and the efforts of today will pay rich dividends in future. You will have a fabulous time with your loved one tonight, hopes Ganesha.

GEMINI

You are likely to throw a small treat for your relatives. Though the rest of the day will be spent cleaning the utensils and putting the place in order, you will manage to get some time for your friends, maybe by arranging a slumber party.

CANCER

Today, you are likely to exhibit tremendous patience while dealing with your loved ones. Giving them a patient ear is your way of saying that you care. Some may, however, think otherwise. But that's their problem, says Ganesha. At work, you will make plans and ensure a smooth implementation of those plans.

LEO

The stars bring out the best in the artist hidden inside you. It may not be a Picasso or a Rembrandt, but nonetheless, today, your work shall stand out as exceptional. Ganesha foresees an afternoon spent in making use of the excellent communication and oratorical skills that you possess.

VIRGO

A day to don both - those trainers and that thinking cap. Exercise those muscles and that mass of grey cells, says Ganesha. Work hard and you'll get paid rich dividends for it. A romantic tryst with your loved one promises to end the day on a high note.

LIBRA

Today, it's a straight path to success, thanks to your straightforward manner. Ganesha foresees some small things that may trouble you in a big way early on in the day. But negotiate around them, and then it's all smooth sailing from there on. On the business front, expect to roll in money from diverse sources. It's all thanks to your own abilities and efforts that you are getting this positive reception.

SCORPIO

Ganesha advises you to practice caution today. There may be a lot of people who may be green with envy as you are better than them in every way. Words of wisdom by you may not only change their opinion about you, but also win you accolades in social circles.

SAGITTARIUS

Those into aerobics and calisthenics will find themselves on the top of their game today. Expect a sudden turn of events sometime from afternoon. Ganesha sees you prowling the corridors of power at work today. You shall synchronise your career and family superbly.

CAPRICORN

The heaps of files waiting to get disposed of may finally reach your desk. You will be prompt in dealing with pending work, and will get all the support you need from your subordinates, says Ganesha. For those engaged in business, keep your vigil, especially while dealing with your competitors. You have the potential to beat them in their own game.

AQUARIUS

Life reveals itself to you in the simplest of things today. It will dawn upon you that you have a lot going for yourself, personally and professionally. This appreciation reflects in the small considerations that you show to your loved ones. This is perfection, asserts Ganesha.

PISCES

You will be in pursuit of educational and intellectually stimulating activities today, says Ganesha. Novel business proposals are likely to crop up in the afternoon. Your magnetism is likely to net you a date later in the evening.

New Delhi: Kamal Haasan, Dhanush, Jackie Shroff and Kajol were among some of the cinema personalities who greeted superstar Rajinikanth on his birthday Tuesday.

The celebrities took to social media to wish the actor on his 73rd birthday.

"I sincerely wish you to live a happy life reaping success today and forever," Kamal wrote on X.

Rajinikanth's former son-in-law, Dhanush mentioned, "Happy birthday Thalaiva @rajinikanth."

Jackie Shroff shared a video of himself with Rajinikanth on X and captioned it as: "Happiness Always @rajinikanth."

"Wishing the Thalaivar many more years of bending bullets and breaking walls in every way possible! @rajinikanth #HBDSuperstarRajinikanth," Kajol wrote.

Malayalam stars Mohanlal and

Rajini @73, wishes pour in from Showbiz



Mammootty also extended their wishes to Rajinikanth.

"Wishing my dear Rajinikanth sir a blessed birthday! As a true embodiment of kindness and humility that inspires millions," Mohanlal wrote on X.

"Happy Birthday Dear @rajinikanth! Wishing you a super successful year ahead. Stay healthy and blessed as always," Mammootty said.

"Wishing the one & only Thalaivar @Rajinikanth sir, a very Happy Birthday. May your charisma continue to inspire for generations," wrote RRR star Jr NTR.

According to viral photos on social media, Rajinikanth celebrated his birthday with his wife Latha and daughters Aishwarya and Soundarya.

The makers of the actor's 170th film will today announce the title of the project.

PTI

Katrina always cross-checks herself

New Delhi: Actress Katrina Kaif has shared that she constantly cross-checks herself to ensure that what she is doing is excellent.

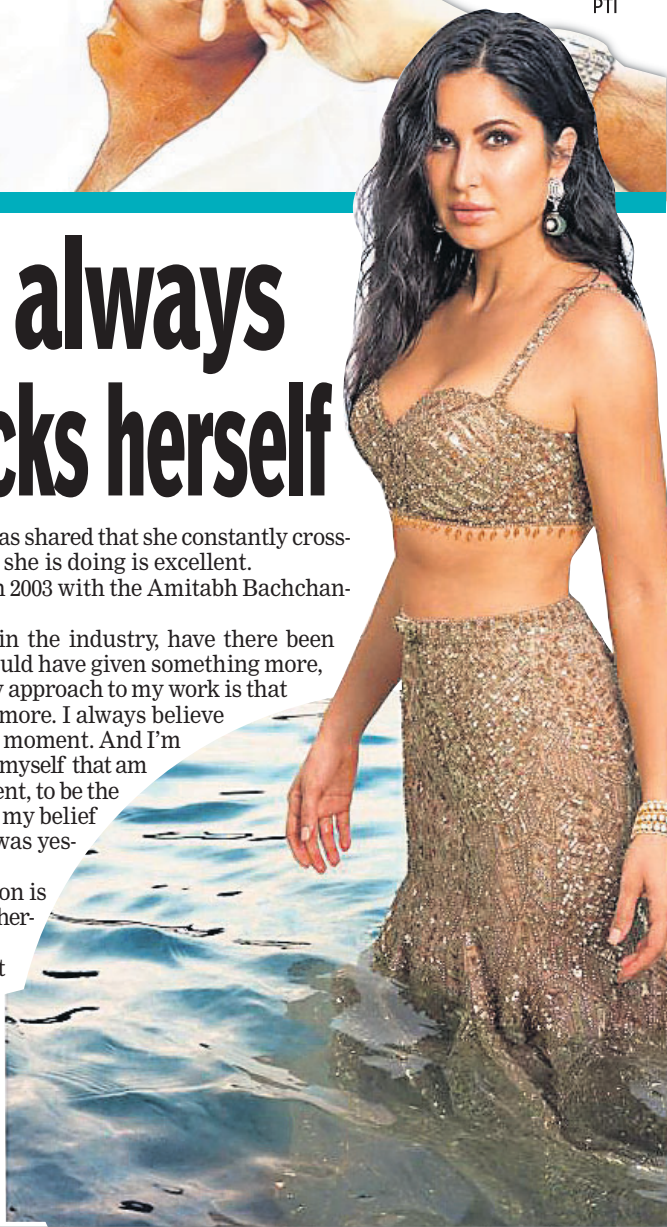
Katrina made her acting debut in 2003 with the Amitabh Bachchan-starrer *Boom*.

Asked, after spending 20 years in the industry, have there been moments where she felt that she could have given something more, the *Tiger 3* actress said, "I think my approach to my work is that I always believe that I have to give more. I always believe that I'm not giving enough in every moment. And I'm always checking and cross-checking myself that am I doing everything I can to be excellent, to be the best that I can be. You know, for me, my belief system is really, am I better than I was yesterday?"

The actress added that competition is healthy but her key focus is bettering herself.

She went on to add: "It's not about looking over my shoulder to see who's doing what around me. Of course, that's important. And of course, competition is healthy. But really, am I bettering myself? If I'm bettering myself and evolving as an artiste and as an actor, then I'm on the right path."

IANS



FUSION OF CULTURES AND CUISINES

Old Town Café launched in Temple City

The café aims to be an immersive journey through time, art, and the vibrant cultural tapestry that defines Bhubaneswar, claims owner Sarmistha Pattanayak



Actor Partha Sarathi Ray (R), Sarmistha Pattanayak (C) and TVARITA Production founder Deepti Upadhyaya at the event

Bhubaneswar: The Old Town Café, with an old-world charm and heritage touch to it, opened its doors to the City's avid food lovers here in Old Town area recently.

With a seating capacity of 70 patrons, it's not just a dining establishment, it aims to be an immersive journey through time, art, and the vibrant cultural tapestry that defines Bhubaneswar, claimed the café's owner, Sarmistha Pattanayak.

The café's architecture pays homage to the architectural simplicity and old-world charm of Ekamra Kanan.

Several dignitaries were present at the launching event.

Sharing his dining experience, *Hello Arsi* fame actor Partha Sarathi Ray said, "I found it to

be a doorway to the past with subtle aesthetics and a rich, warm vibe. It is not just a café, but an experience that one doesn't come across often in today's time. I loved the place and the food that I had, as among the best I've had in Bhubaneswar."

Eminent lawyer and war veteran Attorney Prasanta Kishore Ray, who was also present at the event, said, "Step inside the café, and you'll find yourself surrounded by the stories of Bhubaneswar's ancient rich history and the birth of the modern

town that would become this glorious state's capital."

"The café is a passion project to create a space where people can come together not just to enjoy the food but also engage in conversations about the vibrant cultural tapestry of Bhubaneswar. The food offered at the café is predominantly continental, but with an aim to infuse Odia and Indian flavours into the cuisine to give the young masses of today a blend of Indian and western flavours," Sarmistha further said.

PNN

'Being dolled up is unnatural for me'

New Delhi: Actress Sanjana Sanghi has shared that being dolled up for the characters is far more tedious for her, and said how she finds it more unnatural.

Sanjana made her acting debut as a child artist in *Rockstar*, and she had her breakthrough with the romantic drama film *Dil Bechara*, starring late actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

The actress said she is the happiest person if she has to perform completely 'raw' on the screen.

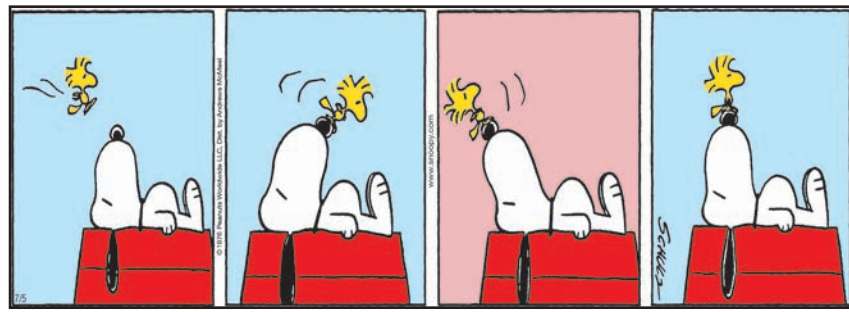
"Personally for me being dolled up is far more tedious. I find it more unnatural to me. If you tell me to turn up on set and not do hair and makeup, and just perform then I am the happiest person. That's really who I am," said Sanjana.

Sanjana was recently seen in the thriller film *Kadakh Singh*, starring Pankaj Tripathi in the lead.

Speaking about working with the acclaimed actor, Sanjana has called it beautiful. "There is an immense comfort, mutual respect, and I knew that this is going to be my adventure that can transform me as an actor. And it did. Doing workshops and spending so many months with Pankaj sir has made me view the world and acting so differently," she said. The movie is streaming on ZEE5. IANS



PEANUTS



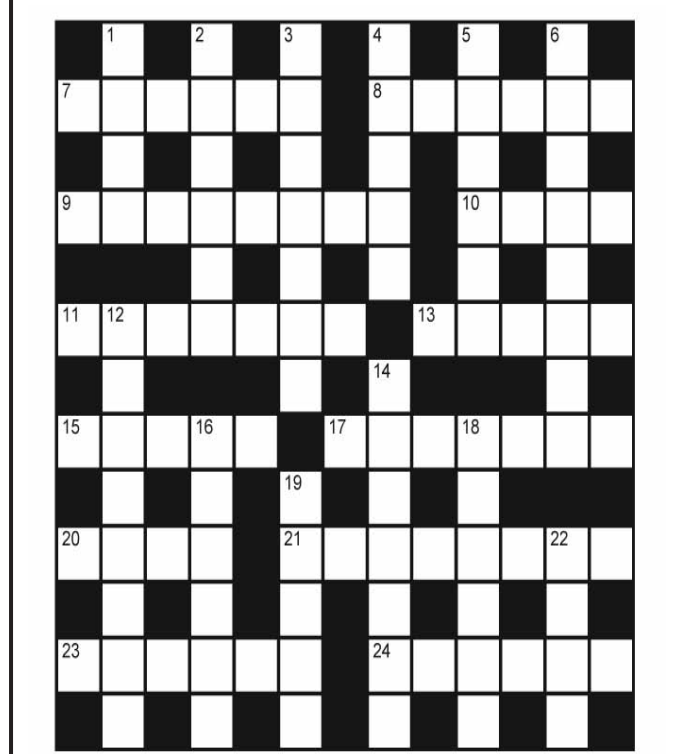
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



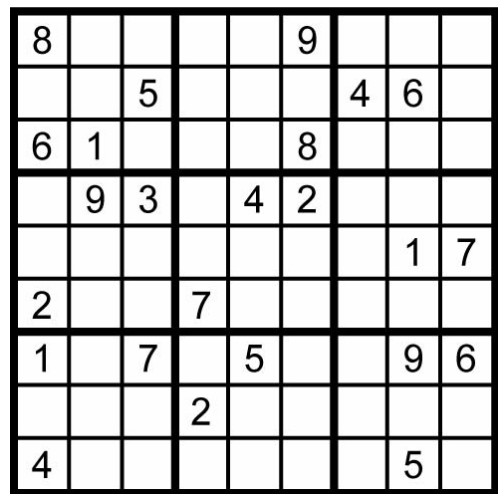
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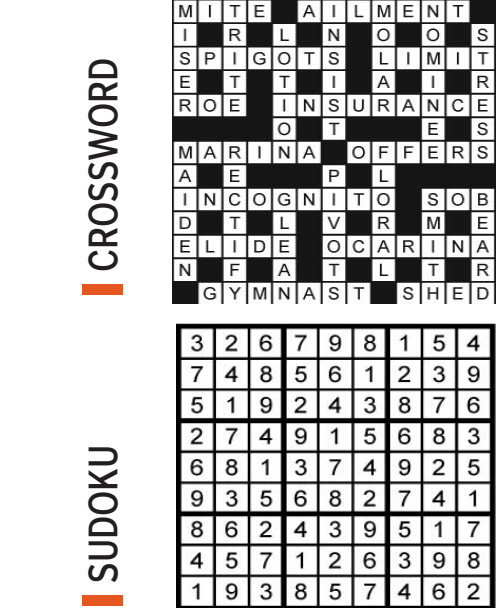
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- Across**
- 7 Auto body part
 - 8 Apparition
 - 9 Grotesque ornament
 - 10 Mystique
 - 11 Frenzied
 - 13 Photo tint
 - 15 Earth tone
 - 17 Buy, buy, buy
 - 20 Bread maker
 - 21 Barren ground caribou
 - 23 Typeface
 - 24 Accumulate
 - 4 Title holder
 - 5 Outbuilding
 - 6 Silver type
 - 12 Unearth
 - 14 Geysers
 - 16 Chafe
 - 18 News item
 - 19 Upright
 - 22 Former spouses
- Down**
- 1 Star in Lyra
 - 2 Saws
 - 3 Swiss cheese

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

downtown

I-T dept winds up liquor unit raids

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 12: The Income Tax (I-T) department Tuesday wound up its six-day search operation and left the country-liquor manufacturing unit in Bolangir district after recovering more than Rs 350 crore in unaccounted cash and about 3 kg gold, officials said.

As the raids were completed, the I-T team took two managers of the distillery located at Sudapada to an unknown location for interrogation, they said.

The company was owned by the family of Congress MP Dhiraj Prasad Sahu, a resident of Jharkhand.

The Odisha unit of the Congress, however, claimed that the party has no connection with the seizure of the huge unaccounted money, termed as the "highest-ever" haul in a single action by any probe agency in the country.

Following a tip-off regarding tax evasion, the I-T department officials launched a search operation at six locations in Odisha December 6. More than 200 people including bank employees were engaged in the search and counting of the cash in Bolangir and Sambalpur.

The raids were conducted in



Bolangir, Titlagarh, Boudh, Rourkela, Sundargarh and Bhubaneswar: I-T department DG Sanjay Bahadur camped in Bhubaneswar to monitor the raids.

Meanwhile, political parties intensified their protest and blamed each other over the I-T raids.

The opposition BJP's Mahila Morcha Tuesday held a demonstration in Bhubaneswar and burnt an effigy of Sahu. The party activists demanded a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into his links with the liquor traders and seizure of cash.

The BJP alleged that the country liquor business and tax evasion have taken place in Odisha due to patronage of the state's BJD government.

Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Sarat Pattanayak claimed in a press conference that his party

- I-T team took two managers of the distillery located at Sudapada to an unknown location for interrogation
The company was owned by the family of Congress MP Dhiraj Prasad Sahu, a resident of Jharkhand
Following a tip-off regarding tax evasion, the I-T department officials launched a search operation at six locations in Odisha December 6

has nothing to do with the black money generated through the country liquor trade in the state.

"The BJP leaders across the country have been making allegations against the Congress. However, the I-T department is silent so far. It has not yet issued any statement regarding the source of the money and the alleged involvement of the Congress," Pattanayak said.

Asked about Sahu's involvement, Pattanayak said: "We do not know regarding this. He might have a liquor business but it has nothing to do with the Congress. Above all, he does not belong to Odisha."

In a related development, officials said a three-member ED team visited the I-T department office in Bhubaneswar Tuesday.

However, there was no word on whether ED will take over the investigation.

G Udayagiri coldest in state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 12: Chilly weather conditions prevailed in parts of Odisha as mercury plummeted below 10 degrees Celsius mark Tuesday.

G Udayagiri in Kandhamal district recorded the lowest temperature in the state at 7.2 degrees Celsius, the Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre said.

Keonjhar and Kirei in Sundargarh district recorded a temperature of 9.4 degrees Celsius, followed by Daringbadi (9.5) and Phulbani (10), both in Kandhamal district.

Angul in central Odisha registered a temperature of 10.6 degrees Celsius, followed by Sundargarh (11), Koraput (11.2) and Balasore and Rourkela at 11.3 degrees Celsius each, the weather office said.

The mercury dropped below 15 degrees Celsius in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, which recorded night temperatures of 14.6 and 14.5 degrees Celsius respectively. The temperature in the state capital was 1.4 degrees below normal, the weatherman said.

In tribal areas in Kandhamal, Koraput, Sundargarh and Keonjhar districts, people were seen sitting around bonfires to beat the cold.

This year, the arrival of cold weather conditions in the state was delayed from November to the first week of December due to the influence of cyclonic rain, a met department official said.

SCINTILLATING SHOW

Students of St. Xavier's High School in Cuttack dance to the tune of a Sambalpuri number during a cultural event organised by the institution, Tuesday



POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Honey trap accused Nag walks out of jail, appears for law exam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 12: High-profile honey trap case prime accused Archana Nag Tuesday walked out of Jharpada jail here after remaining behind the bars for around 14 months.

Immediately after her release, she went to a law college to appear for her law examination, for which she had prepared inside the prison.

The Orissa High Court had December 5 granted her bail in an Enforcement Directorate (ED) case registered against her, paving the way for her release from prison. The court had earlier granted her bail in two other cases filed against her by Bhubaneswar city police.

Nag's latest bail application was allowed by the court with a bond of Rs 2 lakh. She has been warned to not commit any offence while on bail and asked to deposit her passport with the court. She has also been asked to appear before the courts as and when required.

"I am not the person who will keep mum against injustice. I am neither hiding nor leaving the state. I will fight till the end. The court will take action against all persons involved in the case," Nag told reporters after coming out of jail.

"I am a law student and abide by the law. Now, the case is sub-judice with the High Court and I have faith in the court. I will deposit all evidence and documents before the court," she added.



Nag and her associates had allegedly extorted crores of rupees from affluent people by blackmailing them of releasing their intimate videos, captured by the accused after honey-trapping them

After being released from jail, Nag went to a law college in Bhubaneswar to appear for her examination.

The honey trap case accused was arrested in October 2022 after three different cases were registered against her. Her husband Jagabandhu Chand, who was also arrested in the case, is on bail now.

The sensational case had come to light when a woman filed a complaint against an Odia film producer, accusing him of sexually exploiting her. Following this complaint, some purportedly obscene pictures of the producer with the woman went viral on social media.

Later, the film producer also lodged another complaint before Nayapalli police station, alleging that Nag and the woman, who had filed the complaint against him, had made extor-

tion demands of Rs 3 crore from him. Nag and her associates had allegedly extorted crores of rupees from affluent people by blackmailing them of releasing their intimate videos, captured by the accused after honey-trapping them.

Cases were registered against Nag with Nayapalli and Khandagiri police stations in Bhubaneswar in 2022. She was booked under sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Information Technology (IT) Act.

In the course of the police probe, the ED, alleging the commission of offences under Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA), instituted a complaint against Nag and seized a vehicle worth around Rs 40 lakh and a three-storey building with an approximate market value of Rs 3.6 crore.



STINKING WOES: People under the banner of CPI and BKMU stage a demonstration near BMC North Zone office in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday, to press for fulfilment of their demands, including shifting dump yard from Sainik School area in the City

Odisha tourism to touch newer heights: Mohanty

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 12: State's tourism sector is set to touch newer heights in near future under the guidance of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and 5T Chairman VK Pandian, Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) Chairman Lenin Mohanty said while inaugurating a 14-day workshop on tourism management at Odisha State Museum here, Tuesday.

Mohanty said Odisha has a rich cultural heritage and many picturesque tourist places. "The tourism sector in Odisha will touch newer heights in near future under the guidance of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, and 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman VK Pandian. This would enable the youth to get more job opportunities in this sector. Commanding over skills can



prove their mettle," he said, pointing out that punctuality and discipline has no alternate in life.

Odia Language, Literature and Culture Director Dilip Routrai, who joined the occasion as chief guest, said museum represents a mini Odisha.

"Students can learn about our rich culture and heritage. It would ultimately help in their profession. Confidence and tension-free lifestyle can bring all success," Routrai emphasised.

As many as 66 students of Franklin Institute of Hospitality and Management in Bhubaneswar attended the workshop. During the workshop, experts will impart training on various subjects. Institute's Principal Laxman Mantry and Odisha State Museum's Senior Curator Bharati Pal coordinated the programme.

Road safety drives will turn into people's movement: CM

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 12: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday said road safety efforts will be a people's movement with everyone's support and that Odisha will soon be able to make its roads safer. He said this while virtually addressing the Grand Finale of National Road Safety Short Film Festival-2023 at KIIT University here.

This is the second edition of the short film festival organised by state Commerce and Transport department. The festival was launched last year to sensitise people through short movies.

The film festival has received 247 entries in seven languages from eight states. "Biswasta Sathi", a film based on bondage between dogs and human beings, directed by Amrutanshu Mohapatra from Balasore, won the best film in Odia category. Likewise, short film 'IF' directed by Sreenath S from Kerala received the best film award in non-Odia category. The best film in both Odia and non-Odia categories got a cash award of Rs 1 lakh each.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said, "Movies create emotions. They help us become more empathetic. Movies allow us to connect to issues we often ignore."

He further said that these short films on road safety are an appropriate medium to engage society to solve one of its most challenging issues of the current times that is road safety.

"For us, every life is precious. Road safety is a high priority area for our Government," said Patnaik.

Thanking the Commerce & Transport department for hosting this short film festival, he said the endeavour, started last year, has also been appreciated by the Supreme Court, and was adjudged as one of the best practices for road safety awareness.



Mentioning the overwhelming entry of 247 films, the Chief Minister said, "It's truly encouraging."

NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

The short film festival received 247 short film entries in seven languages from eight states

Top 42 films were screened at Berhampur, Sambalpur and Angul with an enthusiastic response from about 5,000 citizens

Odia short film 'Biswasta Sathi' won the 1st prize while 'IF' directed by Sreenath S from Kerala received the best film award in non-Odia category



The top 42 films were screened at Berhampur, Sambalpur and Angul with an enthusiastic response from about 5,000 citizens. Patnaik expressed happiness for entries in Santali and Sambalpuri languages in addition to the entries in Odia language. He said that local languages will certainly have greater connect and can create lasting impact.

It may be mentioned here that other than Odisha there are entries from Punjab, Maharashtra, Kerala, Assam, Delhi, Madhya

Pradesh and West Bengal. The Chief Minister also expressed happiness as students from neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and Kenya who are studying in Bhubaneswar have also sent films for the festival.

Patnaik congratulated all the winners for spreading road safety awareness messages through their films. He hoped these films will be screened throughout the state and create awareness about road safety.

BJD backs Bill regulating service terms of CEC, ECs

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 12: The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Tuesday supported the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and other Election Commissioners (ECs)

Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office Bill, 2023, which regulates the appointment and service terms of CEC and ECs. The Bill was passed in Rajya Sabha with a voice vote after opposition's walkout.

The BJD termed the argument of opposition parties that the appointment process will impact the independence of the Election Commission as fallacious. The Bill lays provision for appointment of CEC and ECs by the President upon the recommendation of a selection committee consisting of the Prime Minister, a Union Cabinet minister and Leader of Opposition/leader of the largest opposition party in Lok Sabha.

While speaking on the Bill on behalf of the party in the upper house, BJD MP Amar Patnaik said that all the election commissioners have upheld the process of free and fair elections in the past. He also stated that the Chief Justice, being a part of the judiciary, cannot become a part of executive process.

"The independence of the election commission is more linked to the service conditions," Patnaik said and applauded the Union government for bringing the legislation.

The opposition parties opposed the Bill stating that it gives supremacy to the government in appointment of CEC and ECs.

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Raghav Chadha said that this Bill is going to destroy one of the few remaining independent institutions in India that is the Election Commission and

The Bill states that the salary and conditions of service of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs) will be equivalent to that of Cabinet secretary

thereby dislodge free and fair elections from India.

Meanwhile, Union Law minister (I/C) Arjun Ram Meghwal said that the Bill is not against the Supreme Court verdict. It is based on instructions provided by the apex court, the minister said.

Significantly, the Bill provides that the recommendations of the selection committee will be valid even when there is a vacancy in the committee. A holding or having held a post equivalent to secretary to the Union government will be eligible for

Exempt handloom sector from GST: Bishi

NEW DELHI: Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Niranjan Bishi Tuesday urged the Union government to exempt the handloom sector from Goods and Services Tax (GST).

While speaking during zero hour in Rajya Sabha, Bishi highlighted the impact of GST on the textile industry, particularly on the handloom sector. The BJD MP said that the imposition of GST has been putting an additional financial burden on weavers, encompassing GST payments for purchased yarn, colour dyes, printing and various other materials.

"This, in turn, has a detrimental effect on the marketing turnover of handloom products and subsequently affects the earnings of the weavers, comprising 43.32 lakh workers, constituting 14 per cent of the nation's total textile production," Bishi said.

Bishi requested the Union government to consider the exemption of GST from handloom products, signifying a pivotal step towards supporting these artisans and safeguarding cultural heritage.

appointment as CEC or EC. A Search Committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary will propose a panel of names to the Selection Committee. The Bill also states that the salary and conditions of service of the CEC and ECs will be equivalent to that of Cabinet secretary. Earlier, it was equivalent to the salary of a Supreme Court Judge.



ECO-FRIENDLY SOLUTIONS: Dignitaries attending a national conference on 'Novel Strategies and Advances in Crop Health Management' organised by Indian Phytopathological Society-Eastern Zone at MS Swaminathan Hall of OUAT in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

Committed to vision of healthy Odisha: CM

STATE GOVERNMENT, THROUGH SCHEMES LIKE BIJU SWASTHYA KALYAN YOJANA (BSKY) AND AMA HOSPITAL, IS PROVIDING THE AFFORDABLE AND QUALITY HEALTHCARE



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 12: Every life is precious to us and we are committed to realise the vision of a 'Sustha Odisha Sukhi Odisha,' said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik here, Tuesday on Universal Health Coverage Day. On the occasion, the CM reaffirmed his government's commitment to ensure affordable

and quality healthcare in all parts of the state for maintaining a healthy populace. Notably, the state government,

through schemes like Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) and Ama Hospital, is providing the affordable and quality healthcare.

Recently, it also brought 681 super-specialty hospitals under the fold of Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) to extend the ambit of the universal healthcare programme for the people staying in or outside the state.

"The government has also extended benefits of Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) to children under 5-18 years of age whose names are not in the list but their parents are enrolled under the scheme," informed a state Health and Family Welfare department official.

BSKY has saved 13 lakh poor families healthcare expenses of over ₹2,700 crore, the official informed. Under the Ama Hospital, an initiative that aims to strengthen public infrastructure to promote improved standards of healthcare, 1,858 hospitals of the state are being given an infrastructure boost with improved patient care facilities.

ECoR to extend spl train services

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 12: Keeping in view the demands from travelling public and to clear additional rush in regular trains, the East Coast Railways (ECoR) has decided to extend the services of nominated special trains from and through ECoR jurisdiction and extend the services of special trains for more time period.

08439 Puri-Patna Weekly Special Train leaving from Puri on every Saturday will run up to April 27, 2024. Similarly, 08440 Patna-Puri Weekly Special Train leaving from Patna every Sunday will run up to April 28, 2024.

Similarly, 02832 Bhubaneswar-Dhanbad Special Train leaving from Bhubaneswar daily will run up to April 29, 2024. Also, 02831 Dhanbad-Bhubaneswar Weekly Special Train leaving from Dhanbad daily will run up to April 30, 2024.

As per ECoR, 03230 Patna-Puri Special Train leaving from Patna every Thursday will run up to January 25, 2024. Similarly, 03229 Puri-Patna Weekly Special Train leaving from Puri every Friday will run up to January 26, 2024.

Sweater for boarders of ST, SC residential schools

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 12: To make winter comfortable for boarders in ST and SC Development, Minorities, and Backward Classes Welfare department-run residential schools and hostels across the state, the department has distributed sweaters and a pair of casual dress to over 5 lakh students.

"The initiative is being carried out from November under the 'entitlements and amenities guidelines' of the department and will help 3,28,171 boarders staying in hostels attached to the SSD Department Schools



and 1,76,748 boarders staying in the hostels attached to S&ME Department schools in the state," informed a department official.

Department commissioner-cum-secretary Roopa Roshan

Sahoo said, "In addition to other amenities and entitlements provided to the boarders during previous years, distribution of sweater and casual dress has been added during

the current year."

Manoharika Pradhan, a student of Class X at the Government Girls High School, Raikia in Phulbani said, "This initiative is a good gesture by the state government for students like me as the winter days in our region are quite challenging. This will help us all in a great way."

Another student Papu Kanhar of Class X at DM High School, Boida in Kandhamal said, "I am extremely happy with this timely gift from the government. This is going to help students like me in making our stay comfortable in these hostels during winter."

Prime Cure health plans by CureBay

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 12: In a bold stride towards revolutionizing healthcare in medically underserved areas, CureBay launched recently the Prime Cure membership annual health plans, offering a plethora of medical benefits at an astonishing rate of approx. ₹1 per day.

Designed with a focus on affordability, the program prioritizes preventive healthcare for more robust and healthier communities. It aims to reshape the healthcare landscape in Odisha and Chhattisgarh, ensuring that qualitative and reliable healthcare is accessible to everyone.



"The launch reflects our commitment to make healthcare affordable to everyone. We are now a step closer to build a healthier, more accessible future for everyone, irrespective of their location," said Sikha Suman, Head, strategic partnerships at CureBay.



CREATIVE ACT: Artistes enact a scene from a play 'Sesha Adhyaya' during the second day of Narayana Natya Mahotsav organised by Srujani at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

Kerala, Bihar teams pay visit to BMC

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 12: A delegation from Bihar visited the Capital city Tuesday to study the civic practices adopted by the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC). The members in the delegation comprised executive officers of Phulwari Sharif Nagar Parishad, Danapur Nizamat Nagar Parishad and Khagaul Nagar Parishad.

The members met with the BMC Commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange who presented them with a brief overview of the works undertaken by BMC.

Wednesday, the members will



visit various wealth centres and learn about solid waste management and treatment plant to

learn about liquid waste management. They will also study the works executed under MUKTA involving SHGs.

Earlier, the mayor TO Mohanan and corporators of Kannur Municipal Corporation of Kerala visited BMC's Basuaghai wealth centre to understand decentralised waste management model and integration of women SHGs into sanitation value chain. They appreciated the efforts taken by BMC for integration of marginalized communities into sanitation spectrum.

BMC launches 30 fogging machine

In order to bring an end to mosquito menace, BMC Mayor Sulochana Das and the corporation officials launched 30 more small thermal fogging machines in the City, Tuesday. The light-weight machines are easy for the operators to move in narrow lanes. Previously, BMC had 8 small thermal fogging machines, 20 auto-mounted fogging machines and 2 big thermal fogging machines operating in the City.



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BJP seeks new face for Sambalpur Girl students forced to walk 6km for exams

WITH JAYANARAYAN MISHRA STAYING AWAY FROM ACTIVE POLITICS, ASPIRANTS QUEUE UP FOR NOMINATION

POST NEWS NETWORK

Morada, Dec 12: A total of 90 girl students of Kasturba Gandhi Girls' School at Bhaliadiha under this block in Mayurbhanj district had to walk for over six kilometres Tuesday to appear for their mathematics examination. The students were forced to walk the long distance thanks to the apathy of their headmistress, sources said Tuesday. After the examination, they had to trek the same distance to return to their respective homes. The incident has sparked sharp resentment among the guardians. They have demanded that the authorities conduct a high-level probe and take action against the erring headmistress. Sources said that the Upendranath Ghosh Government High School at Baramail was designated as a centre for the panchayat-level mathematics examination. However, instead



None of the girls were senior students. They were students of Classes IV, V and VI respectively. For them the 12-km up and down trek was really very painful

manded suitable action against the erring headmistress.

However, Bishnupriya rejected the charges stating the school did not have funds to arrange vehicles for transporting the girls to the examination centre and back again. As a result, she had to ask them to walk. She defended her actions stating that she also took the long walk with the students.

When contacted, assistant block education officer, Palu Hansda said he is unaware about the development, but would certainly look into the matter.

of arranging any transport to take the girls to the examination centre, headmistress Bishnupriya Jena made 90 of them walk the entire distance. It should be stated here that none of the girls were senior students. They were students of Classes IV, V and VI respectively. For them the 12-kilometre up and down trek was really painful,

but they had to undertake it in the absence of any other option.

Locals flayed the headmistress and made videos of the girls walking to the examination centre and returning home. They alleged that despite the school receiving funds under SIG grant, the 'callous' headmistress forced the girls to take such a painful step. They de-

SAMBALPUR ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Dec 12: With leader of the Opposition in the Odisha Legislative Assembly, Jayanarayan Mishra expressing his desire to retire from active politics, the BJP is looking for a new face to replace him for the upcoming state elections. Jayanarayan won from the Sambalpur Assembly constituency in 2019. It has always been a BJP stronghold since 2000, except in 2014, when the BJD candidate emerged victorious.

The BJP realises the importance of the seat and is taking all possible measures to retain the constituency. Hectic parleys have begun within the BJP as a number of aspirants are vying for nomination as the 2024 Assembly elections draw near.

It should be stated here that Jayanarayan has withdrawn himself from all activities in his constituency due to health problem for the last four-and-half-years. He has also rarely visited the constituency. Sources said that Jayanarayan is staying away from Sambalpur fearing arrest for his alleged assault on a lady police officer, February 15, this year. He had applied for anticipatory bail but it has been rejected by the Orissa High Court.

Amid these circumstances, three persons have emerged as front-runners to get nomination. They are: Girish Patel, the district BJP president and former chairman of Sambalpur Municipality, district BJP Krushak Morcha president Samir Ranjan Babu

and senior party leader Damodar Kar. Sources also informed that Jayanarayan is trying his level best so that his daughter gets nominated in his place.

Among the aspirants, Patel has utilised time during Jayanarayan's absence. He has regularly organised meetings. Patel has also taken the lead in organising demonstrations against Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and 5T Chairman VK Pandian to win the trust and support of the people in Sambalpur constituency.

Babu on the other hand is a staunch Jayanarayan loyalist. He is trying to garner the support of the public through agitations and meetings.

Kar, who is trying to get nomination to the seat since 2014, enjoys

good rapport with all sections of the party. He also has the support of some top-ranked party leaders including Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, sources said. Kar has the sympathy factor working for him since he suffered serious injuries in a bike accident during the Hanuman Jayanti celebrations April 12, this year.

All the three however, feigned ignorance when questioned about their aspirations. Patel, Babu and Kar, all asserted that everyone will work in unison for the candidate the BJP selects. All of them are confident that the party will certainly nominate a heavyweight in case Jayanarayan sticks to his decision of not being in electoral politics.

Patel has utilised time during Jayanarayan's absence by regularly holding meetings and protests

3 dead in Bhadrak road accidents

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhadrak, Dec 12: Three persons were killed and two others were critically injured Tuesday in two separate accidents on National Highway-16 in this district, police said.

In one of the mishaps, a speeding car coming from Kolkata with four persons on board, rammed into an electric pole at Ranital under the Bhadrak (Rural) police station limits, a cop said. Two people died and two others were seri-



ously injured in the accident that took place in the early hours of Tuesday, he stated. The car was going towards Bhubaneswar when the accident took place.

The deceased were identified as Satya Kumar Sahoo and Ashok Kumar Mohanty, the police officer said. Sesadeba Ratha and Paramesh Chandra Sahoo, who were severely injured, were taken to Bhadrak district headquarters hospital (DHH) and later shifted to SCB Medical College and

Hospital in Cuttack after their condition deteriorated.

In the second mishap, a truck heading towards Balasore hit a parked goods vehicle, resulting in the death of its driver, identified as Kusulesh Kumar, police informed.

"The bodies of the deceased have been sent to Bhadrak district hospital for post-mortem and investigation is underway to ascertain the cause of the mishaps," said Amitabh Das, inspector-in-charge (IIC), Bhadrak (Rural) police station.

Saffron party trying to portray picture of unity

Rourkela party unit turns active, organises demonstrations against liquor-related cash seizure

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Dec 12: In the last couple of days, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) here has become proactive. The Rourkela unit of the party is trying to portray a united front as it protests and organises demonstrations against the huge liquor-related cash seizure in Bolangir, Boudh and Sundargarh.

At Biramitrapur, MLA Shankar Oram, who had been almost dormant for the last five years, suddenly spurred into action Tuesday as he led a demonstration in front of the urban local body office.

"It is a good sign that the party took a united stance while demonstrating against the cash seizure.

At least all the top leaders were together following the sarcastic rebuke by Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan," said a political analyst here Tuesday.

In fact, during his visit here recently Pradhan had advised both Nihar Ray, the BJP candidate for the Rourkela constituency in 2019 and state spokesperson Dhiren Senapati, a ticket aspirant this time, to work together. The two are poles apart and the differences between them are no secret to the people here. The bitterness is so acute that they don't even talk politely or sit close to each other during meetings.

"Differences will be there but should not affect the party. We are all working for the BJP, so we



Shankar Oram

should put all our differences behind in the interest of the party," a BJP worker said.

Senapati meanwhile is trying to play down the differences between him and Ray. "This was a party programme and I must assure you that BJP is never a divided house and it was reflected during the demonstration against the 'cash recovery'," Senapati said.

Ray however, initially did not

comment. "We are always active and we organised the demonstration to raise the issue in public. This is our primary duty and we have done it on several occasions," he later said. Ray asserted that the BJP will continue to raise issues on all platforms and work in unison.

Ray also supported the demonstration organised by Oram. "The MLA, as peoples' representative, must attract the public's attention to certain issues," said Ray. He also quashed allegations that Oram had not been active in the past few years. "Had he not been active, how could Shankar bhai organise such a massive protest," asked Ray.

Senapati also defended Oram. "He is the sitting MLA and he has always been active for the people of his constituency. He has always participated in all of BJP's activities," Senapati said.

Hindalco plans battery foil unit at Sambalpur

COMPANY TO INVEST ₹800 CRORE IN FACILITY WHICH WILL BE COMMISSIONED BY JULY 2025

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 12: Aluminium producer Hindalco Industries announced Tuesday its plan to set up a battery foil manufacturing facility at Sambalpur at an investment of ₹800 crore to tap the fast-expanding electric vehicle market.



REPRESENTATIVE PIC

The facility, to be commissioned by July 2025, will initially produce 25,000 tonne of the aluminium foil which forms the backbone of lithium-ion and sodium-ion cells, Hindalco Industries said in a statement. The company also plans to significantly expand its capacity of making fine-quality aluminium foil which is used in rechargeable batteries, it added.

"Hindalco Industries is investing ₹800 crore to build a new plant near Sambalpur in Odisha that will initially produce 25,000 tonne of the resilient product which forms the backbone of lithium-ion and sodium-ion cells," the statement said.

By 2030, demand for battery grade aluminium foil in India is expected to grow manifold to 40,000 tonne, prima-

rily driven by mushrooming growth in gigafactories for advanced cell manufacturing, according to the company.

"We are seeing a fast traction in battery materials demand, driven by an impressive outlook for the electric vehicle and grid storage sectors. Raw material localisation is critical in such strategic sectors," said Satish Pai, managing director at Hindalco Industries.

"Hindalco is thus making various investments in battery materials and technologies towards building 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'. Investment in this new battery foil mill is another such step in this direction," added Pai.

Additionally, the company is working closely with original equipment manufacturers (OEM) to co-develop and make critical components like battery enclosures, motor housings, busbars, structural and safety components, and lightweight load bodies, many of which are being designed and developed for the first time in India, Hindalco said in the statement.

The series of investments catalyse Hindalco's metamorphosis from a manufacturer of metal to a provider of high-tech metal solutions, it said. This Sambalpur project will provide a thrust to the government's green initiative to reduce carbon emissions and build sustainable growth, the company added.

The factory in Sambalpur will be located alongside a 25-MW solar power plant, and can access additional solar energy from a 400-KV national grid connection. The unit will supplement the facility at Mouda, Hindalco said. The new unit in Odisha will further augment capability to supply material to gigafactories across the world, the company added.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/23-24/
E-Tender/112 Dt.: 08.12.2023
Tender No. e-Tender-BRIDGEKUR-363-23 Dt.: 04.12.2023
Description: PROVISION OF SIDE PATHWAY ON VARIOUS GIRDER BRIDGES BETWEEN KHURDA ROAD-RAJATHGARH SECTION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.
Approx cost of the work: ₹ 354.67 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 3,27,300/-, Completion period: 12 Months.
Tender closing date & time: at 1500 hrs. of 27.12.2023.
No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available on website www.reps.gov.in
Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/ corrigenda issued for this tender.
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PRATYUSH
INTERVIEW FOR SCIENTIFIC AND LEGAL PERSONNEL
PRATYUSH, a unit of Multi Services Organization will conduct an interview on 26.12.2023 from 9.00 A.M. onwards to select Scientific and Legal personnel for temporary engagement on outsourcing basis for State Wildlife Project Management Unit to function in the office of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha, BBSR as detailed below:-

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	Vacancy	Consolidated monthly emoluments in Rupees
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3	Subject Matter Specialist (Habitat Management)	1	40,000/-
4	Subject Matter Specialist (Carnivore Specialist)	1	40,000/-
5	Subject Matter Specialist (Wetland Management)	1	40,000/-
6	Subject Matter Specialist (Law & Policy)	1	40,000/-
7	Subject Matter Specialist (Outreach & Evaluation)	1	40,000/-

For complete details like essential & desirable qualification, application form, venue of interview and other terms & conditions, please refer to the notice section of official websites: www.wildlifedisha.in & www.wildlife.odisha.gov.in.
Interested & eligible candidates can download the Application Form from the above websites. Scanned copy of duly filled in Application Form along with all relevant document scan be sent on email- pratyush.hr.09@gmail.com or can send the hard copy by Speed Post/Registered Post/ Courier, so as to reach our office on or before 18.12.2023 (Monday), 05.30 P.M. Hardcopy of the application form can also be collected from our office address given below:-
A/62, KRISHNA GARDEN COMPLEX, PHASE-II, JAGAMARA, BHUBANESWAR - 751030, CONTACT NO.: 9237398198, 9237398130
* No TA/DA will be paid for attending the interview.
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3. Smt. Swarnalata Sahoo w/o of Late Baikuntha Nath Sahoo (In the capacity of Legal heir of Baikuntha Nath Sahoo since deceased), Nelia Sahi, Nandighore, Dist. Nayagarh Odisha - 752081
4. Shri Suryakanta Sahoos/o of Late Baikuntha Nath Sahoo Nelia Sahi, Nandighore Dist. Nayagarh Odisha - 752081
5. Shri Suryakanta Sahoo s/o of Late Baikuntha Nath Sahoo (In the capacity of Legal heir of Baikuntha Nath Sahoo since deceased) Nelia Sahi, Nandighore, Dist. Nayagarh Odisha - 752081
6. Shri Tarakanta Sahoo s/o of Late Baikuntha Nath Sahoo Nelia Sahi, Nandighore Dist. Nayagarh Odisha - 752081
7. Shri Tarakanta Sahoo s/o of Late Baikuntha Nath Sahoo (In the capacity of Legal heir of Baikuntha Nath Sahoo since deceased), Nelia Sahi, Nandighore Dist. Nayagarh, Odisha - 752081
8. Shri Chandrakanta Sahoo s/o of Late Baikuntha Nath Sahoo Nelia Sahi, Nandighore Dist. Nayagarh Odisha - 752081
9. Shri Chandrakanta Sahoo s/o of Late Baikuntha Nath Sahoo (In the capacity of Legal heir of Baikuntha Nath Sahoo since deceased), Nelia Sahi, Nandighore Dist. Nayagarh, Odisha - 752081
Sub: Notice under Section 13 (2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.
We, Axis Bank Limited (hereinafter referred to as "the Bank") having its Registered Office at Trishul, Opp Samartheswar Temple, Law Garden, Ellisbridge, Ahmedabad - 380006 and its Corporate Office at Axis House, C-2, Wadia International Centre, P.B.Marg, Worli, Mumbai-400 025 and having Structured Asset Group, East at 1 Shakespeare Sarani, AC Market 4th floor, Kolkata-7000071 do hereby give this Notice under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, in its capacity as Secured Creditor.
You No.1 carrying business in the name and style as "M/s SHREERAM FOOD PRODUCTS" (hereinafter referred to as "the firm") had approached the bank for availing certain credit facilities and after due consideration, the bank sanctioned credit facilities vide sanction letter no. AXIS/SME/BBSR/1033/2016-17 dated 24.03.2017 and AXIS/SME/BBSR/318/18 dated 28.08.2018 on such terms and conditions mentioned therein. Thereafter, the facilities have been reviewed/renewed/enhanced from time to time and the same have been duly accepted by you all on such terms and conditions more specifically mentioned therein.
The details of the credit facilities availed by you No. 1 with Axis Bank Ltd are as follows: (Amount in Rupees)

Facility	Limit sanctioned	Total dues as on 31.01.2022 (Interest applied upto 30.04.2019)
Cash Credit	6,00,00,000.00	61837616.68
Term Loan - I	95,00,000.00	7759798.00
Term Loan - II	75,15,000.00	5666300.00
Term Loan - III	6,00,000.00	5588512.00
TOTAL	8,46,15,000.00	8085226.68

You No.1 as well as the addressee no. 2, 4, 6, 8 and Late Baikuntha Nath Sahoo (Since deceased presently represented by addressee no. 3, 5, 7 and 9 in the capacity of his legal heirs) have accepted all the terms and conditions of said sanctions and you had entered into and executed various documents/Agreements/Joint documents and created various securities as detailed in Schedule I and II, with the Bank, inter alia, agreeing to repay the principal amount along with applicable interest as per the terms of sanction. That in terms of the sanction, Late Baikuntha Nath Sahoo (Since deceased presently represented by addressee no. 3, 5, 7 and 9 in the capacity of his legal heirs) have created equitable mortgage over properties together with all building and structures, more particularly described in the schedule, for securing due repayment of all the aforementioned credit facilities sanctioned to the proprietorship firm and also extended from time to time. You No. 2, 4, 6, 8 and Late Baikuntha Nath Sahoo (Since deceased presently represented by addressee no. 3, 5, 7 and 9 in the capacity of his legal heirs) have executed the necessary documents including Deed of Guarantees in favour of the Bank thereby guaranteeing the due repayment of the credit facilities along with the interest and future charges. We say that the above credit facilities are also secured by hypothecation of current assets, book debts, movables, stocks, more particularly mentioned in the Schedule I. The aforesaid securities are "Secured Assets" within the meaning of Section 2(1)(zc) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (hereinafter referred to as "the Act"). The aforesaid Secured Assets are fully owned by you, the addressees above named who are "Borrowers" within the meaning of Section 2(1)(f) of the Act. We state that despite having availed the aforesaid credit facility, You No.1 have committed various defaults in repayment of interest and principal amounts as per due dates. The said Credit facility is classified by the bank as a Non-Performing Asset (NPA) w.e.f. 30.06.2019 in accordance with the directions / guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India from time to time. The present position of the credit facilities after giving credit to all the payments made by you is as under:

Facility	Limit sanctioned	Total dues as on 31.01.2022 (Interest applied upto 30.04.2019)
Cash Credit	6,00,00,000.00	61837616.68
Term Loan - I	95,00,000.00	7759798.00
Term Loan - II	75,15,000.00	5666300.00
Term Loan - III	76,00,000.00	5588512.00
TOTAL	8,46,15,000.00	8085226.68

Having regard to your failure to meet your liability in respect of the said credit facility and classification of your account as NPA, we hereby invoke the provisions of Section 13 of the Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and by this Notice issued under the provisions of Section 13(2) of the aforesaid Act and without prejudice to the Bank's rights arising from the various documents executed by you, we hereby call upon You No. 1 as Borrower, and You No. 2, 4, 6, 8 and Late Baikuntha Nath Sahoo (Since deceased presently represented by addressee no. 3, 5, 7 and 9 in the capacity of his legal heirs) as Guarantor, jointly and severally, to make payment of an amount of Rs.8,08,52,226.68 (Rupees Eight Crores Eight Lacs Fifty Two Thousand Two Hundred Twenty Six and paise Sixty Eight only) being the amount due as on 31.01.2022 (This amount include interest applied upto 30.04.2019) together with further interest w.e.f. 01.05.2019 at the contractual rate of interest, till the date of payment, within a period of 60 days from the date of this notice. In case of your failure to make repayment of the Bank's dues in the aforesaid manner, the Bank will be entitled to and will exercise all or any of the rights available to it under Section 13 (4) and 15 of the Act in respect of the secured asset(s) mentioned hereinabove including the management of the business of You No.1. Please further note that as mentioned in sub-section 13 of Sec.13 of the aforesaid Act, you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise any of the assets stated under security referred to in this Notice without prior written consent of the Bank. As per the provision of the aforesaid Act, all of you are also informed that in case if the proceeds from the liquidation of the secured assets are not adequate to cover the dues of the Bank, the Bank reserves its right to proceed against all of you jointly and severally for recovery of balance dues by initiating appropriate legal action. Kindly note that all costs, charges, expenses that shall be incurred by the Bank in the process of its actions under Section 13 (4) and incidental thereto shall be recoverable from you in the manner prescribed under the Act. Please further, we draw your attention to the provisions of Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act and the Rules framed thereunder which deals with your right of redemption over the secured assets. Please further note that Demand Notice issued us 13(2) of SARFAESI Act, dated 11.02.2022 and published on 09.07.2023 in Orissa Post (English) and Sambad (Odia) and any action taken thereafter stands recalled and/or withdrawn.

SCHEDULE I
DETAILS OF HYPOTHECATED ASSETS
(a) The whole of the Borrower's all stocks of raw material work in progress semi-finished goods and finished goods such as packing materials, consumable stores and spares etc., whatsoever situate and/or transit whether now belonging to or that may at any time during the continuance of this security belong to the borrower or that may be held by any party any where to the order and disposition of the borrower.
(b) All the present and future book-debts, outstanding monies, receivables claims bills, contracts, engagements and securities which are now due and owing or which may at any time hereafter during the continuance of this security become due and owing to the borrower in the course of its business by any person firm company or body corporate or by the Government of India or any state Government or any Government Department or office or any Municipal or local or Public or Semi-Government body or authority whatsoever including those relating to the assets leased out and/or given on hire purchase basis.

SCHEDULE II
DETAILS OF MORTGAGED PROPERTY
Equitable Mortgage of Land & Building on Plot No. 616, 617 Khata No. 196/185 and Plot No. 613 Khata No. 196/361, Mouza - Akhupadar, admeasuring total area of AC 1.46 dec, registered in the name of Shri Baikuntha Nath Sahoo.
Date : 13.12.2023
Place : Nayagarh, Odisha
Yours faithfully,
Authorized Officer,
Axis Bank Limited



What men call knowledge, is the reasoned acceptance of false appearances. Wisdom looks behind the veil and sees.

SRI AUROBINDO



Strategic Tool

The plight of Manipuri women stripped, brutally beaten and raped during one of the worst ethnic conflicts of recent times in north-east India has been pushed out of media headlines. What is hogging the limelight, instead, is the electoral success stories of the BJP beating main Opposition party – the Congress – hands down in state Assembly elections and brightening its chances of a hat-trick of winning the Lok Sabha elections a few months away. The violence heaped on the women of one ethnic group of Manipur by a section of the majority and ruling group is no isolated incident. Rape and different forms of abuse heaped on women are now recognised as a potent tool in ethnic conflicts and wars the world over.

The Indian government, in the case of Manipur, needs to wake up and act sincerely so as to rein in the perpetrators of violence on women and bring them to book. It is all the more necessary since the state government is known to have acted in a partisan manner shielding and aiding the culprits. United Nations special representative on the issue of conflict-related sexual violence Pramila Patten has, in her recent report, drawn attention of the powers that be across the world to this egregious crime against women. She has expressed concern that new waves of war's oldest, most silenced and least condemned crime of rape and gang rape by soldiers and ethnic groups have gone up alarmingly.

It is horrifying that women's bodies have become part of the terrain of conflict, according to a new report by Amnesty International. Rape and sexual abuse are not just a by-product of war, but are used as a deliberate military strategy, it says. War-mongers in previous centuries treated rape and plunder as war spoils, but it is being used in modern conflict as an orchestrated combat tool. Amnesty cites conflicts in Ukraine, Iran, Colombia, Iraq, Sudan, Chechnya, Bosnia and Afghanistan to demonstrate how rape has become a strategic weapon for perverted state powers and ethnic groups to intimidate adversaries. Tragedy is, even though wartime sexual violence can be curbed if commanders prohibit and prevent it, it is being widely used by warring parties and repressive regimes.

Amnesty International in its latest report revealed Iranian security forces used rape and sexual violence against women, men and children as young as 12 years during nationwide protests last year. The UN heard graphic accounts of rape and other sexual violence, including the mutilation of women's genitals, in the 7 October attacks by Hamas in southern Israel. Some survivors of the music festival massacre testified to the crimes.

Similarly, UN experts have cited widespread reports of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces systematically using rape and sexual violence "as tools to punish and terrorise communities" in the war in Sudan. A recent estimate suggested that about 100,000 women were raped or assaulted during the two-year civil war in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region, majority of victims being from the Tigrayan community.

A UN report on sexual violence in Ukraine described Russian soldiers targeting victims aged from four to 80. Patten said they were using rape as a "military strategy", though Russia denied the charges, brushing them aside as propaganda by Ukraine's Western allies.

Survivors of such rapes face emotional torment, psychological damage, physical injuries, disease, social ostracism and many other consequences that can devastate their lives. Women's lives and their bodies have become the unacknowledged casualties of war and ethnic conflicts for too long. The mayhem in Manipur has opened up raw wounds which will fester and rot unless and until the government at the Centre stops paying lip service to the humiliation of what authorities call "our daughters and sisters."

WISDOM CORNER

The fishermen know that the sea is dangerous and the storm terrible, but they have never found these dangers sufficient reason for remaining ashore.

VINCENT VAN GOGH

Everybody believes in something and everybody, by virtue of the fact that they believe in something, uses that something to support their own existence.

FRANK ZAPPA

It is through gratitude for the present moment that the spiritual dimension of life opens up.

ECKHART TOLLE

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1642: Dutch navigator Abel Tasman sighted South Island, New Zealand, and later, mistaking the strait north of the island for a bay, believed he had found the west coast of a hypothetical southern continent. Tasman reached the coast of South Island in New Zealand, and named it Staten Landt. Tasman was also the first European in recorded history to step foot on Tasmania, an island state in Australia. Tasman claimed the island for the Dutch crown. It is named after him as well.

1921: The Four-Power Pact was signed during the Washington Conference by the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and France, stipulating that all the signatories would be consulted in the event of a controversy between two of them over "any Pacific question."

1937: The Japanese Imperial Army seized Nanjing, China, during the Sino-Japanese War, leading to the Nanjing Massacre, in which up to 300,000 Chinese may have been killed.

2001: The Indian Parliament was attacked by terrorists. The attack was carried out by five armed assailants and has resulted in the deaths of six Delhi Police personnel, two Parliament Security Service personnel, and a gardener. All the five attackers were killed by security forces. Indian authorities accused Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) – two militant groups operating from Pakistan – of perpetrating the attack. The incident led to increased tensions between India and Pakistan, resulting in the 2001-2002 India-Pakistan standoff.

2003: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was captured by US forces during the Iraq War; three years later he was found guilty of crimes against humanity and was executed. Hussein, the fifth president of Iraq, was found hiding in a camouflaged hole in the ground and was captured by American forces near Tikrit, Iraq. The military operation that led to his capture was called Operation Red Dawn. He was subsequently handed over to the interim Iraqi government. After a trial where he was found guilty of crimes against humanity, he was executed in December 2006.

LOL

LAST WISH

Two men, sentenced to die in the electric chair on the same day were led down to the room in which they would meet their maker. The priest had given the last rites, the formal speech had been given by the warden, and a final prayer had been said among the participants. The Warden, turning to the first man, solemnly asked, "Son, do you have a



last request?"

To which the man replied, "Yes sir, I do. I

love dance music. Could you please play The Macarena for me one last time?"

"Certainly," replied the warden. He turned to the other man and asked, "Well, what about you, son? What is your final request?"

"Please," said the condemned man, "kill me first."

FOCUS ECONOMY

INCLUSIVE GROWTH IMPERATIVE



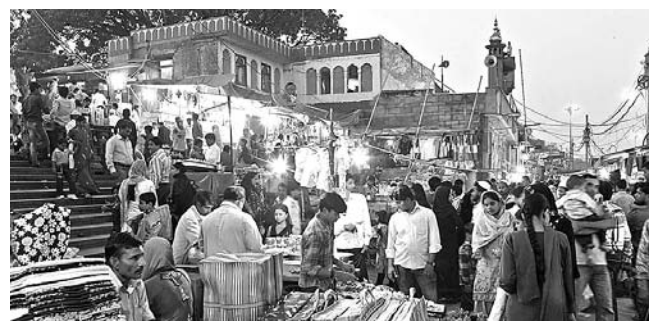
Ajit Ranade

IF YOU CORRECT FOR INFLATION THEN CONSUMER SPENDING IS RISING ONLY AT AROUND 3%, AND THIS MAKES UP 60% OF GDP

The economic data for the second quarter i.e. the period from July till September was published by the government on November 30. These are called quick estimates of the national economic output. They are provided for two broad sets of output numbers, namely Gross Value Added (GVA) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The former is a measure of value added by each individual producer, or sector or industry to the economy. It is of course measured across all producers, be they farmers, small entrepreneurs or large companies. GVA thus measures the value added in converting inputs to outputs. GDP is the value of goods and services produced within a given period, which could be annual GDP or quarterly GDP. It is measured in three different ways. Either as value of all production, or of all expenditure or of all incomes. All three give the same result, since the total value of what is sold also represents income to those producing what is sold. The only difference between GVA and GDP is taxes paid or subsidies received. Usually, GDP always exceeds GVA since the government imposes net taxes whose collection is higher than the subsidies that it pays out.

The GDP for July to September period measured in current prices was Rs 72 lakh crore compared to Rs 66 lakh crore for the same period last year. GVA for the corresponding two quarters of this and previous year was Rs 64 and Rs 59 lakh crore respectively. At this quarterly rate, the annual GDP in current prices will likely reach Rs 300 lakh crore during this fiscal year. This would be three times, or 200% higher than what it was 10 years ago.

These same numbers for GDP and GVA need to be examined by removing the impact of rising prices. Since inflation for the past four years on average has been clocking close to 5%, the expansion in GDP or GVA measured in current prices is not



Consumer spending momentum can be maintained if there is commensurate growth in employment, wages, and in retail loans

the "real" picture as it has an "inflated" component. Removing the inflation effect the real growth of GDP is 7.6% during the second quarter, which is higher than last year's 6.2%. This is quite heartening.

If we take both quarters of this year together, GDP has expanded by 7.7% in real terms. At this rate GDP growth for the full year would definitely cross 7% and put India among the fastest growing large economies of the world. To achieve this at a time of turmoil caused by wars, inflation, supply chain disruptions, geopolitical tensions and uncertainty is a very impressive achievement.

Hence, we need to examine three things. Firstly, what is driving this GDP growth. Secondly, whether it is sustainable in the medium to long term. And thirdly how are the benefits of GDP growth translating as gains for different sections of people, their livelihoods, incomes and employment.

The answer to the first question is that government and investment spending has risen much faster than consumer spending. Keep in mind that government spending makes up 10% and investment spending (also called capital formation) makes up 30%. The rest is consumption spending, which has the lion's share. Net exports are barely 1 or 1.5% currently. Government spending during the latest quarter of July to September grew at a rate of 19%

compared to a year ago. These were Rs 7 lakh crore this quarter as against Rs 5.9 lakh crore in the same period last year. Similarly, investment spending rose at an impressive 13% over last year, growing to Rs 21.5 lakh crore from Rs 19.1 lakh crore last year. So clearly these two are driving the growth rate at a spectacular pace. On the other hand, consumer spending rose by just 8% this quarter compared to last year. All these are nominal numbers, not adjusted for impact of inflation and rising prices.

If you correct for inflation then consumer spending is rising only at around 3%, and this makes up 60% of GDP. If real GDP growth is to maintain a pace of 7% in the medium term, the consumer spending component has to grow at close to 6 or 7% itself. It means doubling the rate at which it grew (in real terms) during the latest quarter of July to September. Consumer spending momentum can be maintained if there is commensurate growth in employment, wages, and in retail loans. The latter includes housing loans which can be a significant contributor to growth. High inflation can adversely affect consumer sentiment, as people cut down spending on discretionary items. Investment spending is picking up which is a very good sign. It should have an increasing component of private capital spending and should not only depend on government spending on infrastructure. The

government providing a fiscal fillip is constrained by the deficit situation. So that will need to be controlled. On a half yearly basis, the government component of GDP (at current prices) rose at 9%, only slightly higher than the consumer spending component. Even then since we are approaching the national elections of 2024, the government's capex push is likely to accelerate during this fiscal year which will provide additional strength to GDP growth.

Whether 7 or 7.5% can be sustained in the medium to long term depends on consistency of growth in consumer and investment spending. India is attracting large investment flows, and many sectors have a very positive growth outlook. Hence sustaining growth only needs price and policy stability and fiscal prudence. As for the third question of how the benefits of growth are translating to different sections of society, we will need more microeconomic data from surveys. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) is indicating rising employment numbers and higher labour force participation rates, both by men and women. The growth in real wage rates needs to be confirmed.

Since the present rate of growth in consumer spending is low, it implies that incomes of workers are not rising fast enough, even if wages are rising. The RBI consumer sentiment survey is also a useful guide. Here too lowered inflation expectations will help boost consumer confidence. Typically, higher income households tend to have a much higher proportion of savings, and hence sustained growth in consumer spending requires the gains of growth to be spread across all income categories. This is something we need to watch. The news on the economy is getting better and it is imperative that economic policy ensures that the growth process is truly inclusive.

The writer is a noted economist.
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IN JEST THIS

AI fails to impress pharmacists

If you're a pharmacist, I've got some good news for you. ChatGPT, the artificial intelligence chatbot, will not be replacing you anytime soon. You can relax and keep giving people the advice they need regarding their medications. You can even put up a sign outside your pharmacy that says, "If you love your life, consult me. If you're not too sure, consult ChatGPT."

ChatGPT recently took a pharmacy test and did so poorly that it was soon sitting in the dean's office, pleading to stay in pharmacy school.

ChatGPT: "I know I flunked. I'll do much better next time. I promise!"

Dean: "Flunked" is an understatement. You bombed. We gave you 39 questions and you answered only 10 of them correctly. That's just over 25 per cent. Eleven of your answers did not address the question directly, 10 were inaccurate, and 12 were incomplete. You are a virtual nincompoop. What do you have to say for yourself?"

ChatGPT: "I sat next to the wrong people during the test. I sat next to Julia, the party girl.

I should have sat next to Julian, the nerd."

Dean: "Are you confessing to academic dishonesty? You're not supposed to be copying."

ChatGPT: "I wasn't copying. I was researching."

In case you're wondering, the 39 questions were posed to ChatGPT as part of a study led by Sara Grossman, associate professor of pharmacy practice at Long Island University in New York.

ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI and launched on November 30, 2022, has been widely lauded for its ability to replicate human conversation. But even with a huge database of knowledge available to it, ChatGPT is not quite ready to dispense medical advice, as Grossman's study revealed.

Grossman and her team did not just make up questions, but challenged ChatGPT with real questions that the drug information service at Long Island University's College of Pharmacy had received over a 16-month period in 2022 and 2023.

Pharmacists involved in the study first researched and answered 45 questions, and each answer was reviewed by a second investigator. After eliminating six questions for which there wasn't enough literature for ChatGPT to consult, they compared the chatbot's answers to those of the professionals.

Here's an example of a question: Researchers asked ChatGPT whether a drug interaction exists between the COVID-19 antiviral Paxlovid and the blood-pressure lowering medication Verapamil.

ChatGPT's response: "No interactions between those two drugs. They don't even follow each other on Instagram."

Well, those weren't ChatGPT's exact words, but the result would be the same: endangering a patient.

"In reality, these medications have the potential to interact with one another, and combined use may result in excessive lowering of blood pressure," Grossman said. "Without knowledge of this interaction, a patient may suffer from an unwanted and preventable side effect."

For each question, researchers

asked ChatGPT to provide references, so they could verify the information. And this is where ChatGPT showed what it's really good at: fabrication.

ChatGPT provided references for just eight responses, and each included bogus references. They were totally made up. But ChatGPT did a great job of making the references look real, using correct formatting, providing URLs and citing articles in legitimate scientific journals. But the researchers found that these articles did not exist. It's the type of offense that would get any student in deep trouble, having to plead for mercy from the dean.

Dean: "You fabricated references?"

ChatGPT: "I don't know what I was thinking. I didn't think anybody would actually check them."

Dean: "Well, we did check them, and I'm afraid your career as a pharmacist is over before it even started. I'm going to expel you from the School of Pharmacy. But don't worry. You have a bright future in another field: politics."

For each question, researchers

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

Fight against expulsion

Sir, This refers to "Moitra vows to continue fight against expulsion" (Orissa POST, December 12). I am of the opinion that Moitra has got a fair chance to win her battle in the apex court against her expulsion from the Lok Sabha for more than one reason. First, she was denied the natural justice by the Lok Sabha in disallowing her to speak in her defence. The Ethics Committee failed to prima facie prove that Moitra accepted cash for query. The businessman concerned having paid the bribe was not allowed to be cross examined by the latter and therefore the principles of natural justice got violated. Secondly, the committee has itself been contemplating to initiate an intense, legal and institutional inquiry which clearly suggests that the guilt of Moitra has not been conclusively proved. Be that as it may, the expulsion of Moitra was not justified. The Lok Sabha ought not to have hurried up decision without careful consideration of the impugned report.

Arun Gupta, Kolkata

Beyond lip service

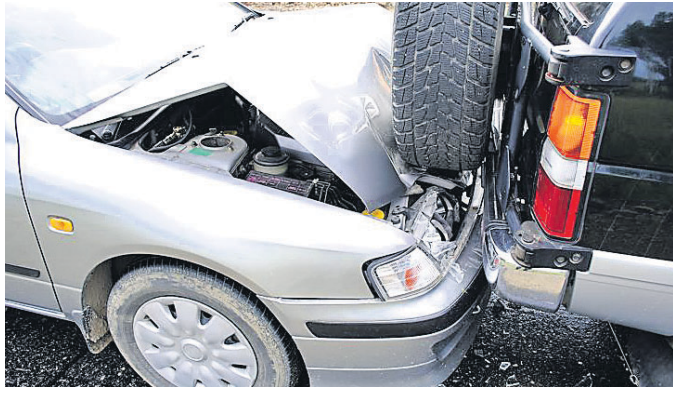
Sir, Climate change is perhaps the biggest problem confronting the world. Though Prime Minister Narendra Modi has stressed on several occasions the need to mitigate climate change, and said that India can lead the world in the fight against it, his government's efforts never matched his words. In fact, the World Air Quality Report 2023 published by IQAir, the Swiss air quality technology company, lists Delhi as the fourth most polluted city in the world. The promises against climate change made by the ruling BJP in the budget have failed due to the lapse of the ordinance. It seems the Modi government only talks when the time comes for implementation, and later the issue is kept in cold storage. The commitment of Modi's government against climate change must go beyond lip service. Also the campaign against air-pollution in India's capital and in other northern states need the participation of the media, educational institutions, civil society, the state and the Central governments – all need to be equal to the task in the fight against the same.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI



1,461 died in Delhi accidents last year UP plans 50 MW solar plant

The analysis of crashes empowers the government to be more proactive in saving lives on the road through evidence-based and targeted interventions and programmes, police said



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 12: The national capital has witnessed over three per cent decline in the number of fatality this year as compared to last year data, said police Tuesday. The 'Delhi Road Crash Report-2022' released by Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora contains the analysis of the accidents occurred during last year along with the causes, pattern and suggestions in road design, regulation and prosecution, they said. The analysis of crashes empowers the government to be more proactive in saving lives on the road through evidence-based

and targeted interventions and programmes, police said. "In 2022 till November 30, the number of fatality was 1,342, wherein during the corresponding period of 2023, the number of fatality reported was 1,300 resulting 3.1 per cent decrease," said a senior police officer. This decline, according to police, is a testament to the effectiveness of the strategies outlined in the Delhi Road Safety Action Plan (DRSAP). The police commissioner said that 1,461 people lost their lives in 2022. "In this report, we outline

a road safety action plan, which involves the joint efforts of multiple departments to improve education, engineering, enforcement and emergency care. The focus is on designing forgiving infrastructure to reduce the chance of crashes occurring in the first place and then reducing the deadliness in the cases where they do occur," said Arora. "The efforts of the Delhi Traffic Police have led to a total reduction in road crash deaths in Delhi by 20 per cent over the last decade. Continuing our endeavour to

save lives, we have now increased focus on more pedestrian centric traffic management," he added. The report identified the pedestrians as the most vulnerable road users and two wheelers next most vulnerable categories constituting 43 per cent and 38 per cent of the total persons killed in road crashes respectively in 2022, police said, adding the road crashes not only affect the livelihood of the people involved in the crash but also leave a longer imprint on the victims' families. The focus area of the traffic police is to enhance the use of technology in smooth traffic management and surveillance and to improve road infrastructure particularly in design and standards for the vulnerable categories of road users, they said. As the pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists are the most vulnerable road users, the focus will continue on the road safety measures for them, including prosecutions and awareness about usage of helmets, Zebra crossings, subways, encroachment free safe pedestrian walkways/footpaths etc, police said.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Dec 12: The Uttar Pradesh government is all set to establish a 50 MW solar plant in the heart of the Bakhira bird sanctuary, a Ramsar site touted as India's largest natural flood-plain wetland in Sant Kabir Nagar district. The move stems from a proposal by the district magistrate of Sant Kabir Nagar to the Uttar Pradesh New & Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA), recommending the installation of a ground-mounted or floating solar plant in the Bakhira lake area, which is an eco-sensitive zone and is being developed as an attractive tourist destination. UPNEDA director Anupam Shukla said: "We are exploring the possibility of setting up a 50 MW solar plant in the Bakhira lake area in Sant Kabir Nagar district under the Uttar Pradesh government's solar policy. Soon bids will be invited from interested developers to set up the plant that may be floating or ground-mounted, depending on the feasibility report."



The UPNEDA has asked the Lucknow Solar Power Development Corporation Ltd (LSPDCL) to conduct a feasibility study to find out the suitability of the establishment of a solar plant in the Bakhira area and suggest which kind of plant, floating (on water) or ground-mounted, will be more suitable given the geographical topography of the place. Formed in 2015, the LSPDCL is a joint venture of the UPNEDA and the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI). According to Narendra Singh, the district magistrate, Sant Kabir Nagar has recommended the installation of a 50 MW floating or ground-mounted solar plant/park in the Bakhira lake area to produce green energy for lighting and

other purposes in the sanctuary. "Currently, there is only one floating solar power plant in the state, and it is 20 MW set up by the NTPC in Aauriya," he said. The District Magistrate Sant Kabir Nagar, in his letter to the UPNEDA, said that the Bakhira bird sanctuary was being developed as an attractive ecotourism and agro-tourism hotspot with a strict ban on prohibited activities and encouragement of permitted ones to attract tourists. The Bakhira sanctuary, he pointed out, was last year also declared a Ramsar site. A Ramsar site is a wetland designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention signed in Iran in 1971. Currently, there are 75 Ramsar sites in India.

Solar fencing work in Dudhwa to end soon

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lakhimpur Kheri, Dec 12: The solar fencing work in the Dudhwa buffer zone (DBZ) along the Dudhwa National Park (DNP) is nearing completion. This is designed to keep away wild animals from entering into human habitations and damaging agricultural crops -- the primary reason behind the human-animal conflicts in the Terai region of Uttar Pradesh's Kheri district. The work, covering length of 20 km in Palia, Majhgain and Bhira ranges of the DBZ, is in full swing and is likely to be completed in the coming months, said Saurish Das, deputy director, DBZ. Lalit Verma, field director, DTR said the move would help check human-animal conflicts in the buffer zone as the solar fencing would deter the wild animals particularly elephants,



tigers, leopards from crossing the fence. In recent past, Dudhwa buffer zone has witnessed many human-animal conflicts that have led to loss of lives of humans and wild animals. Growth in population of big cats and other wild animals has increased apprehensions of rise in human-animal conflicts, officials said. Free movement of wild elephants from neighbouring Nepal into Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, Dudhwa buffer zone, their adjoining areas and their prolonged stay here has added to worries and concerns of local farmers as herds of wild animals damage their standing crops and properties.

Over 35,000 stray dogs sterilised: MCD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 12: More than 35,000 stray dogs were sterilised from April-October, while over 1,100 monkeys were caught and sent to the Asola Bhati Mines sanctuary in Delhi in the same period, civic authorities have said. Presenting its budget estimate for the next fiscal year on December 9, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) shared details of the action taken by its veterinary department in the current financial year. To control the population of stray dogs, the civic agency is sterilising them with the help of NGOs and private veterinarians, reads the text of the budget speech. The MCD said 35,161 stray dogs have been sterilised from April to October this year. It added that it targets to sterilise 80,000 dogs by the end of this financial year. For anti-rabies vaccination, special camps were set up in 12 areas, the corporation



added. Dog sterilisation is currently being carried out at 16 centres in the city, and four new centres will soon be opened, according to civic authorities. The MCD added that 1,118 monkeys were caught from April to October and sent to the Asola Bhati Mines sanctuary of the Delhi government. Besides, 156 illegal dairies were sealed and removed, while FIRs were lodged against owners of 161 illegal dairies and notices were sent to owners of 98 illegal dairies, it added.

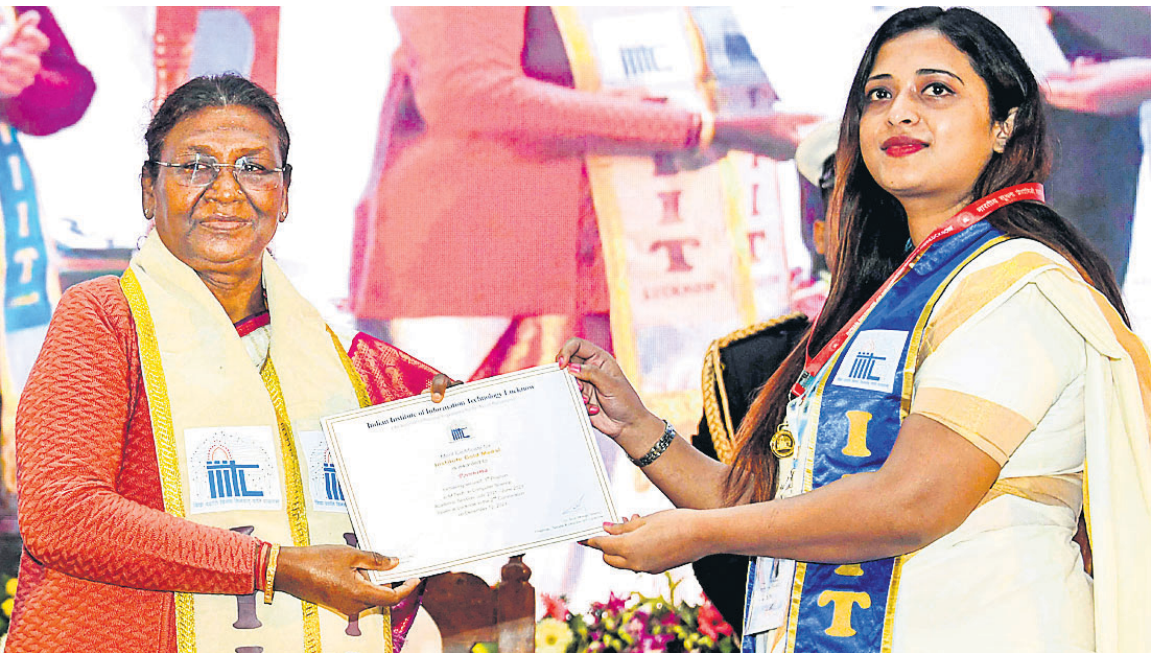
14 CONVICTED FOR POWER THEFT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 12: In a bid to curb electricity theft, power discom TPDDL secured 14 convictions, including of some e-rickshaw owners, in the last eight months, a statement of the company said. The Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (TPDDL) filed criminal cases for theft of power at the special electricity court Rohini that convicted 14 individuals between April and November this year, it said. The discom caters to a seven million populace in north and northwest Delhi. The 14 power theft cases in which convictions were secured involved an amount of Rs 40 lakh. The quantum of sentences in four cases that involve Rs 27 lakh, is yet to be decided. "The company urges all citizens to refrain from engaging in illegal activities that compromise the integrity of the electrical network, create safety haz-



ards and harm the financial interests of the public," a statement from the company read. "At Tata Power-DDL we will continue to uphold the integrity of our services and bring perpetrators to justice. Our dedication to eradicating electricity theft remains steadfast, reinforcing our vision for a responsible and sustainable energy future," said Bharat Kumar Bhadawat, chief-contracts, consumer litigation, TPDDL. The discom is a joint venture between Tata Power and the Delhi government.



President Droupadi Murmu during the second convocation of the Indian Institute of Information Technology in Lucknow, Tuesday

Prayagraj rly station to get sleeping pods



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Prayagraj, Dec 11: The North Central Railways (NCR) has started the process of providing the sleeping pod facility to its passengers before the commencement of the Magh Mela on Makar Sankranti, January 14, in Prayagraj. The Prayagraj division of the NCR had floated a tender for installation of sleeping pods at Prayagraj Junction. After completing all the formalities, the work has been awarded

to a Pune-based company which has commenced the work. Authorities are optimistic that the facility will be open for the travellers before commencement of the Magh Mela. These sleeping pods, 60 in total, will be installed at the old booking office on the Civil Lines side of Prayagraj Junction. "For the first time in the state, such a facility will be introduced at Prayagraj Junction and we hope that the facility would be launched by Makar Sankranti," said Public

Relation Officer (PRO), Prayagraj Division, Amit Singh. The agency, which has been awarded the work for installing sleeping pods, will be entrusted with the responsibility of operating the same, he added. The sleeping pod is a very small capsule-sized room but equipped with hi-tech facilities. This includes phone charging, Wi-Fi network, locker rooms and deluxe bathrooms, among other facilities. Sources said that about 60 air-conditioned sleeping pods are proposed to be made available at Prayagraj Junction. Among these, 45 would be single and 10 double occupancy pods along with five family pods. Ten of these pods will be reserved for women passengers. A sleeping pod will be eight-feet long and six-feet wide. Rs 500 will be charged for using a single seated sleeping pod for 12 hours, while Rs 1,000 for double bed and Rs 1,500 for family pod is proposed. The booking will be on a flexi-fare basis. The Sleeping Pod Hotel will also have a cafeteria.

OFFICE OF THE DEAN & PRINCIPAL
GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL, SUNDARGARH, (ODISHA)
 AT/P.O.: Sankara, Dist.: Sundargarh, PIN - 770020, Odisha
 e-mail: sundargarhmc@gmail.com, Ph. No.: 06622-272088
 Letter No. 2377/GMCH/SNG Dated: 11.12.2023

TENDER CALL NOTICE FOR CHEMICAL, REAGENT, EQUIPMENT, INSTRUMENT & CONSUMABLE (MEDICAL) FOR MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL, SUNDARGARH
 No. E-629: Sealed tenders are invited from the registered firms for "Supply of Chemical, reagent, equipment, instruments & consumable (medical)" in two bid system (Technical and Financial) by Registered Post/Speed Post/Courier only so as to reach the Office of Dean & Principal, Government Medical College & Hospital, Sundargarh on or before 5.00 P.M. of 10.01.2024. The detailed tender papers, terms & conditions are available in the website sundargarh.nic.in/gmch/sng.odisha.gov.in. The technical bid will be opened on 11.01.2024 at 11.30 A.M. at Conference Hall of the Dean & Principal. The date of opening of financial bid of the technically qualified bidders will be intimated later on. The undersigned reserves the right to cancel of the tender in full or part at any time without assigning any reason thereof. OIPR-10217/11/0005/2324. Sd./- Dean & Principal, GMCH, Sundargarh

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
DHENKANAL (R&B) DIVISION, DHENKANAL
 No. B-1431 Email: eedk1pvd@gmail.com
INVITATION FOR BIDS THROUGH e-Procurement
 Bid Identification No. SEDKL (R&B), 42/2023-24

Invitation for Bids

The Superintending Engineer, Dhenkanal (R&B) Division, Dhenkanal on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in Single Cover System in ONLINE MODE only, for Construction of Building Work & Electrical Work as detailed below.

1. Nature of Work	Electrical Works
2. No. of Work	01 No.
3. Bid Cost	Rs.6,000/- Each
4. Class of Contractor	MV / HT Licence
5. Availability of Bid Documents in the website	From 10.00 A.M. of 15.12.2023 to 5.00 P.M. of 21.12.2023
6. Date of Opening of Bid	At 11.00 A.M. of 22.12.2023
The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: https://tendersodisha.gov.in . Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.	

Sd./- Superintending Engineer
 Dhenkanal (R&B) Division
 OIPR-34016/11/0032/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
TALCHER MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, TALCHER
e-Procurement Notice
 Tender Reference No. TCRM-18/2023-24
 Bid Identification No. 2023_ORULB_98192
 No. C-2068: e-mail ID: e.o.talcher@gmail.com
 Tender Notice No. 5360 / Date: 11.12.2023

1. Number of Works	: 1 (One) Number of Civil Works
2. Approximate estimated cost	: Rs.84.98 lakhs
3. Period of Completion	: 05 (Five) Calendar Months
4. Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal	: Dt.12.12.2023 at 4.00 P.M.
5. Last date/time for receipt of bid in the portal	: Dt.22.12.2023 upto 5.00 P.M.
6. Date of Opening Bid	: Dt.26.12.2023 at 11.00 A.M.
7. Name and address of the Office Inviting Bid	: Executive Officer, Talcher Municipality
8. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal https://tendersodisha.gov.in .	

Sd./- Executive Officer
 Talcher Municipality
 OIPR-13077/11/0048/2324

PUBLIC NOTICE

M/s. AM SB Infra Private Limited has been granted Environmental Clearance for Commercial Cum Residential Apartment Building Project at Mauja-Ebaranga, District- Khurda, Odisha. Identification No. EC23B038OR150080 Dated 27th Sept, 2023. The copy of clearance along with the conditions to be complied is available at office of the State Impact Assessment Authority, Odisha and on the website of the MOEF&CC at <http://parivesh.nic.in>. Also available at the registered office of the company at Plot No-31(P), Near Kokila Garden (Phase-II) Pokhariput, Bhubaneswar, Odisha and also on website of the company.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, DEOGARH
 E-mail: eerw_deogarh@yahoo.co.in

CORRIGENDUM NOTICE
 1st Corrigendum to TCN No. SERWDGH-Online- 10 of 2023-24 dtd.18.11.2023

No.O-1782:Due to unavoidable circumstance partial modification is hereby made to the e-Procurement Notice invited vide this TCN No.SERWDGH-Online-18 of 2023-24 as follows.

1. Availability of Tender online for bidding was 30.11.2023 10.00 A.M to 06.12.2023 upto 5.00 P.M Now Availability of Tender on-line for bidding is re-scheduled 15.12.2023,10.00 A.M to 21.12.2023 upto 5.00 P.M.
2. Date & Time of opening of tender was 07.12.2023 at 11.00 A.M Now is on dtd.22.12.2023 at 10.00 A.M.

Rest of the terms and conditions remain unchanged.
 Sd./- Superintending Engineer
 R.W.Division, Deogarh
 OIPR-25087/11/0016/2324

OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, KANIHA
 (E-mail- ori-kanhia@nic.in)
 Letter No.3487/ Dt.11.12.23

TENDER CALL NOTICE

No.i-527:- It is hereby called for sealed tender for selection of service provider for "Facility Management Service" of 'Kaniha Bus Stand'. Interested bidders may apply to the Block Development Officer, Kaniha.

Terms and condition:

1. The tender paper will be available from 14.12.2023 to 26.12.2023 in the District Web Portal www.angul.nic.in on payment of Rs.1,000/- (non-refundable) (in shape of Demand draft only).
2. The last date for submission of tender paper is 26.12.2023 at 4.00 P.M. through Post only.
3. The tender will be opened on 27.12.2023 at 11 A.M. in presence of bidders or their authorised representative in the office of the undersigned.
4. Security deposit in shape of EMD will be Rs.90,000/- which will be deposited soon after by the successful bidder prior to agreement.
5. The authority reserves the right to cancel the tender / agreement at any time.

Sd./- Block Development Officer, Kaniha
 OIPR-19318/11/0002/2324



A reveller poses as he takes part in SantaCon in New York City, New York, US. Thousands of people piled into the Big Apple Saturday morning for the kickoff of SantaCon 2023. Crowds flooded the streets chanting, "We are Santa" and singing, "SantaCon is coming to town"



Fishermen clean after an oil spill in the Bay of Bengal off the Ennore Creek area in the aftermath of Cyclone Michaung, near Chennai, Tamil Nadu



A display of earthmovers and other heavy machinery during the inauguration of 'EXCON 2023', a construction equipment exhibition, at BIEC in Bangalore, Karnataka



Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari inspects a Guard of Honour during the Commanders' Conference of Western Air Command (WAC) of the Indian Air Force, in New Delhi



Activists with Jewish Voice for Peace, gather to protest the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza and chain themselves to the fence outside the White House



Students during the third convocation of Patliputra University (PPU) at SKM Hall in Patna, Bihar



Tibetan spiritual guru the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, arrives to impart Buddhist religious teachings to around 30,000 devotees at Palzor Stadium in Gangtok, Sikkim

national

of the day quote

Besides the challenge of deepfakes, cyber security, and data theft, AI tools falling in the hands of terrorists pose a big threat

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

Just spoke to Israeli Foreign Minister @elico11. Discussed the Gaza situation, Lebanon and safety of maritime traffic in the region

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

The Centre and the state have the responsibility of giving hope to the new generation on the issue of reservation which has become serious (matter), be it reservation to Maratha, Dhangar, Lingayat or Muslim (communities)

SHARAD PAWAR | NCP PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Central team to visit 4 districts in Andhra

Amaravati: A five-member team constituted by the Central government is scheduled to visit four districts in Andhra Pradesh to estimate the losses caused by the cyclone Michaung, said an official Tuesday. Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority managing director B R Ambekar said the team will visit Krishna and Bapatla districts Wednesday, and Nellore and Tirupati districts Thursday.

EC revokes T'guna DGP's suspension

New Delhi: The Election Commission has revoked the suspension of Telangana DGP Anjani Kumar after the officer tendered an unconditional apology, sources said Tuesday. Kumar was suspended December 3 after he had called on state Congress chief (now chief minister) A Revanth Reddy with a bouquet when the counting process was still on. While taking the stern action, the EC had said he violated the model code as well as service conduct rules and had set a bad precedent for junior officers.

Chargesheet filed against Jyoti Priya

Kolkata: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Tuesday filed a chargesheet before a city court against West Bengal minister Jyoti Priya Mallick and a businessman in connection with the alleged ration distribution scam. The chargesheet was filed 46 days after Mallick's arrest October 27. The ED claimed to have found his links with businessman Bakibur Rahaman, who was arrested in the case in early October.

Mohan Yadav to take oath as MP CM today

Bhopal: Mohan Yadav will take oath as the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh here Wednesday, and the event will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and chief ministers of BJP-ruled states, among others, a party leader said. Elaborate arrangements are being made for the swearing-in ceremony, where a large number of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers, especially from Yadav's hometown Ujjain, will gather, sources close to the chief minister-designate said.

Serial killer held

Hyderabad: Police in Nagarkurnool district of Telangana Tuesday arrested a "serial killer" who was allegedly involved in the murders of as many as 11 people in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.



I have not set Kashmir on fire. Jammu and Kashmir was heaven. Who turned it into hell? Have we been able to win the hearts? If elections can be held anywhere in the country, then why not in Kashmir?

FAROOQ ABDULLAH | FORMER J&K CM

SANJAY CHARGED WITH SEDITION

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut has been booked on the charge of sedition and other offences for writing an objectionable article against Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the party mouthpiece 'Saamana', a senior official said Tuesday



Delhi HC refuses to grant divorce to Omar



Abdullah had sought divorce from his estranged wife Payal Abdullah on the ground that she subjected him to cruelty

New Delhi, Dec 12: The Delhi High Court Tuesday dismissed National Conference leader Omar Abdullah's plea seeking divorce from his estranged wife on grounds of cruelty, saying there was no merit in his appeal.

A bench of Justices Sanjeev Sachdeva and Vikas Mahajan upheld the 2016 family court order refusing to grant a decree of divorce to Abdullah, a former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir.

The copy of detailed judgment is awaited. Abdullah had sought divorce from his estranged wife Payal Abdullah on the ground that she subjected him to cruelty. "We find no infirmity in the view taken by the family court that the allegations of cruelty were vague and unacceptable, that the appellant failed to prove any act which could be termed as an act of cruelty, be it physical or mental, towards him," the bench said while pronouncing the judgment.

On August 30, 2016, the family court had dismissed Abdullah's plea, holding that he could not prove his claims of "cruelty" or "desertion" which were the grounds alleged by him for seeking a decree of divorce. "The petitioner (Abdullah) has not been able to explain a single circumstance to show that the supervening circumstances have erupted which has made it impossible for him to continue his relationship with the respondent (Payal)."

"Rather, evidence shows that they were in continuous contact till the filing of the divorce petition," the trial court had said in its order, adding that "there is not an iota of evidence in regard to the circumstances which have prevailed to prompt the pe-

tioner to file the divorce plea". In his plea seeking divorce, Abdullah had claimed before the family court that his marriage had broken down irretrievably and he has not enjoyed a conjugal relationship since 2007 and that the couple, married September 1, 1994, was living separately since 2009. The couple has two sons who are staying with their mother.

The petition before the trial court also alleged that Abdullah was subjected to "unreasonable conduct" by Payal, causing pain and harassment to the politician.

In August this year, a single judge bench of the Delhi High Court had directed Abdullah to pay Rs 1.5 lakh as monthly interim maintenance to his estranged wife. It had also ordered him to pay Rs 60,000 each on a monthly basis for the education of his two sons who are pursuing law.

The high court's order had come on petitions by Payal Abdullah and the couple's sons against 2018 lower court orders granting her and them interim maintenance of Rs 75,000 and Rs 25,000 till they attained the age of majority, respectively.

The judge had observed that Abdullah has the financial capacity to provide a "decent standard of living to his wife and children" and that he should not abdicate his duties as a father.

Bhajan Lal Sharma to be new Raj CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 12: The BJP Tuesday picked first-time MLA Bhajan Lal Sharma as Rajasthan's new Chief Minister, ending days of speculation that followed its victory in the Assembly polls.

The surprise choice was announced after BJP MLAs met here and elected the 56-year-old legislator from Sangner as the leader of its legislature party. He is at present a Rajasthan BJP general secretary.

Diya Kumari and Prem Chand Bairwa will be the deputy chief ministers and Vasudev Devnani the speaker of the state Assembly, said senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh, who led a team of three party central observers to oversee the meeting.

Following the meeting at the BJP office here, Chief Minister-designate Sharma met Rajasthan Governor Kailash Mishra and staked claim to form the next government in the state. Party sources said the oath taking ceremony is likely to take place December 15. The BJP won 115 seats in the November 25 as-

sembly elections, while the Congress got 69 seats. Polling was held on 199 of the 200 seats in the state. BJP state president CP Joshi presented a letter to the governor, informing that Sharma has been elected as the leader of the BJP legislature party in the state, according to a Raj Bhawan statement.

Kumari is a member of the erstwhile Jaipur royal family and a Rajput, while Bairwa a Dalit leader and Sharma a Brahmin. Vasudev Devnani is from the Sindhvi community.

At the meeting, the CM-designate's name was proposed by former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, who was herself considered to be in the running for the top post.

Sharma is the third in the series of little known MLAs who have been elevated by the BJP to the chief minister's post after the recently held assembly elections, ignoring state stalwarts.

The others are Vishnu Deo Sai, who has been picked as the CM-designate for Chhattisgarh, and Mohan Yadav, who has been picked for the post in Madhya Pradesh.



Elections were held between November 7 and November 30 in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram. The Congress won in Telangana and the Zoram People's Movement in Mizoram. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh-backed Sharma won the Sangner constituency with a margin of 48,081 votes.

Sharma, who belongs to Bharatpur district, holds a master's degree in political science. He thanked the BJP leadership for giving a "chance" to the son of a farmer and said the party takes care of its workers.

"The BJP is the only party which gives opportunities to its workers. I would like to thank the party's national and state lead-

ership for giving a chance to the son of a farmer," Sharma said. "The BJP is a party that takes care of its workers. The party has honoured a small worker of the organisation. I am thankful for it," he told reporters at the BJP office. Sharma along with his wife and sons Abhishek and Kunal, a doctor, stay on the seventh floor of the apartment near Jawahar Circle. Security has been tightened for Sharma's family members, who will soon move to the Chief Minister's official residence. Prior to the legislature party meeting, a group photo was taken and Sharma is seen standing in the last row. Before Sharma, Raje was the preferred choice of the BJP for the post for 20 years.



National Investigation Agency (NIA) Director General Dinkar Gupta presents a memento to Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Christopher A Wray during a meeting in New Delhi. FBI Director Christopher A Wray visited the NIA headquarters Tuesday and emphasised the need to take the partnership between the US and India to the next level to deal with constantly-evolving challenges and threats of terrorism

MAMATA-PM MEET DEC 20

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Dec 12: Amid escalating pressure from West Bengal's ruling TMC over withholding of MGNREGA dues by the Centre, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is set to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on December 20 to request release of the funds, a senior official confirmed on Tuesday.

As the Prime Minister's Office granted Banerjee's request for an appointment with Modi, the state BJP said this is a reflection of the Centre's faith in federalism. "The meeting will take place at 11 am on December 20," the official told PTI.

Earlier this week, Banerjee asserted that the Centre owed Rs 1.15 lakh crore to West Bengal, including funds for 100 days of work under MGNREGA. At a public distribution program at Siliguri on Tuesday, she claimed, "The Centre has stopped giving money for state projects, including schemes for minorities and widows."

Non-cooperation hindered border fencing: Centre to SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 12: The Indo-Bangladesh border fencing project has been hindered due to non-cooperation of the West Bengal government and pending land acquisition issues in the state, the Centre told the Supreme Court Tuesday during the hearing of petitions challenging Section 6A of the Citizenship Act related to grant of Indian citizenship to illegal immigrants in Assam.

The law officer told the apex court that West Bengal shares a 2,216.7 km border with Bangladesh and 81.5 per cent fencing has been done.

All efforts are being made to secure the remaining length through fencing or technological solutions.



Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, told a five-judge constitution bench headed by CJI that the Union government has taken multi-pronged steps to secure the Indo-Bangladesh border

North-East. The top court, which reserved its order on the petitions challenging the constitutional validity of Section 6A, also heard submissions of senior advocates Shyam Divan and Kapil Sibal.

Divan submitted there was no temporal limit to the operation of Section 6A and individuals could still apply for citizenship under it.

He said there existed no mechanism for evaluating, assessing, or determining the grant of citizenship under Section 6A(2). The bench reserved order on 17 petitions questioning the constitutional validity of Section 6A, which was inserted into the

Citizenship Act as a special provision to deal with the citizenship of people covered under the Assam Accord.

It says those who came to Assam on or after January 1, 1966 but before March 25, 1971 from specified territories, including Bangladesh, in accordance with the Citizenship Act amended in 1985, and since then are residents of the north-eastern state, must register themselves under Section 18 for acquiring Indian citizenship.

As a result, the provision fixes March 25, 1971 as the cut-off date for granting citizenship to migrants, particularly those from Bangladesh, residing in Assam.

The Centre has told the court in an affidavit that it is not possible to collect data of illegal migrants living in various parts of the country as entry of foreign nationals is clandestine and surreptitious.

It informed the apex court that 17,861 people have been granted citizenship under Section 6A.

The top court had earlier directed the Centre and the Assam government to provide extensive data, including those on the number of Bangladeshi immigrants granted Indian citizenship in Assam between January 1, 1966 and March 25, 1971, while taking note of pleas that illegal immigration has impacted the demography and cultural fabric of the border state.

SNIPPETS

Certain UAPA provisions included in redrafted Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill

New Delhi: Certain provisions of anti-terror law UAPA have been included in the redrafted Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill, which was reintroduced in the Lok Sabha afresh along with two other bills to replace the existing criminal laws. The three bills were reintroduced to include some of the recommendations made by a parliamentary panel. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill was first introduced in Lok Sabha August 11, along with the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam bills. The proposed legislations seek to replace the Indian Penal Code, 1860, the Code of Criminal Procedure Act, 1898, and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, respectively.

Kerala Gov hardens stand against Vijayan

New Delhi: Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan Tuesday claimed that his car was "attacked" by the Students Federation of India activists at the behest of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan as he has called for a report on the financial health of the state government. Khan today hardened his stand against Vijayan over the ongoing SFI stir against him, reiterating that it was a "conspiracy" hatched by the chief minister while the protesters were acting as per his "instructions".

Himachal cabinet expanded

Shimla: The one-year-old Himachal Pradesh Cabinet headed by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu was expanded Tuesday with the induction of Rajesh Dharmani and Yadvinder Goma as cabinet ministers. Sukhu said efforts have been made to balance the caste and region and the lone Congress MLA from Mandi district, Chandersheker, would be accommodated soon. One ministerial berth in the cabinet is still vacant and would be filled soon, the chief minister told reporters here. He also indicated reshuffle in portfolios of ministers.

J'khand CM may skip ED summons

Ranchi: Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren Tuesday left for the state's second capital Dumka to take part in the government's ongoing outreach programme. With this, speculations were rife that he may skip the summons of the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The ED has issued a fresh summons to Soren for questioning in connection with a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam, official sources said. Soren, 48, was asked to appear before the federal agency's regional office in Hinoo area here at 11 am and get his statement recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) Tuesday, they said.

DISHA SALIAN DEATH CASE

MUMBAI COPS TO FORM SIT



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 12: Mumbai Police Tuesday formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the death of Disha Salian, the ex-manager of late actor Sushant Singh Rajput, an official said.

Speaking in Nagpur, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said instructions have been given to the police department.

"In the last session of the state legislature, a demand was raised in the Assembly (for setting up an SIT). The government had stated that evidence will be examined and instructions will be given to the police department. Accordingly, instructions have been given to them," Fadnavis, who handles the Home portfolio, told reporters when asked if the SIT has been formed in the Salian case. In Mumbai, the police official said Malvani police station senior inspector Chimaji Adhav will investigate the case and the investigation will be supervised by Deputy Commissioner of Police Ajay Bansal. Salian (28) was found dead on June 8, 2020, days before Rajput (34) was found hanging in his flat in suburban Bandra in Mumbai.

international



On the Kashmir issue, China's position is consistent and clear. This is a dispute left from the past between India and Pakistan and it should be properly addressed through peaceful means, according to the UN charter, United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and relevant bilateral agreements
MAO NING | CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON

ZELENSKY TO MAKE LAST-DITCH PLEA

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with US lawmakers on Capitol Hill Tuesday to make a last-ditch plea to keep military support flowing as he battles Russia



of the day quote

This government will mobilise to keep the world committed to helping Ukraine
DONALD TRUMP | POLISH PM

Tensions between Congo and Rwanda have escalated, heightening the risk of a military confrontation that could draw in Burundi
BINTOU KEITA | TOP UN OFFICIAL IN CONGO

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

SHORT TAKES

Nawaz acquitted in Al-Azizia case

Islamabad: The Islamabad High Court Tuesday acquitted Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif in the Al-Azizia Steel Mill corruption case, removing a major legal hurdle in his way to leading his party in the upcoming 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. He has already been acquitted in the Avenfield case in which he was convicted in July 2018 and sentenced to 10 years in jail. He also got relief in the Flagship corruption case in which he was declared innocent by the court in 2018 but the acquittal was challenged in the IHC by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

Yemen's Houthis claim attack

Dubai/Oslo: Yemen's Houthis said Tuesday they carried out a military operation against a Norwegian commercial tanker in their latest protest against Israel's bombardment of Gaza, underlining the risks of a conflict that has shaken the Middle East. The Iran-aligned group hit the tanker, the STRINDA, with a rocket because it was delivering crude oil to an Israeli terminal and after its crew ignored all warnings, Houthi military spokesperson Yehia Sarea said in a statement. But the tanker's owner, Norway's Mowinckel Chemical Tankers, said the vessel was headed to Italy with a cargo of palm oil to be used in biofuels. It was not planning to stop in Israel, a company's spokesperson told Reuters.

Doctors advise to put on face masks

Singapore: Doctors in Singapore are calling on people to vaccinate and to put on a face mask to reduce the usual year-end increase in acute respiratory infections, including COVID-19, influenza and the common cold. Both Healthway Medical, the largest general practice chain with more than 120 clinics, and Parkway Shenton with 55 GP clinics, say they have seen a 30 per cent increase in respiratory infections, according to a report by The Straits Times Tuesday.

Spain seizes 11 tons of cocaine

Madrid: Spanish authorities have confiscated 11 tons of cocaine and arrested 20 people in two different operations against the smuggling of the illegal drugs inside shipping containers, Spain's National Police said Tuesday. Police said that 7,500 kilograms of cocaine seized by agents in the northwestern city of Vigo were hidden between pieces of frozen tuna.

ISRAEL STRIKES ACROSS GAZA

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rafah (Gaza Strip), Dec 12: Israeli forces carried out strikes across Gaza overnight and into Tuesday as they pressed ahead with an offensive that officials say could go on for weeks or months, even as global calls for a ceasefire left both Israel and its main ally, the United States, increasingly isolated. The war ignited by Hamas' October 7 attack into southern Israel has already brought unprecedented death and destruction to the impoverished coastal enclave, with much of northern Gaza obliterated, more than 18,000 Palestinians killed, and over 80% of the population of 2.3 million pushed from their homes. The health care system and humanitarian aid operations have collapsed in large parts of the besieged enclave, and aid workers have warned of starvation and the spread of disease among displaced people in overcrowded shelters and tent camps. Strikes overnight and into

Tuesday in southern Gaza — in an area where civilians have been told to seek shelter — killed at least 23 people, including seven children and six women, according to hospital records and an Associated Press reporter who saw the bodies arrive at a hospital. Islam Harb's three children were among those killed overnight when Israeli airstrikes flattened four residential buildings in the town of Rafah on the Egyptian border. The family was sharing their home with nine displaced people, he said. "My twin girls, Maria and Joud, were martyred, and my little son, Ammar, also martyred," he said. In central Gaza, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah received the bodies of 33 people killed in strikes overnight, including 16 women and four children, according to hospital records. Many were killed in strikes that hit residential buildings in the built-up Maghazi refugee camp.



Thousands of turtle hatchlings are released near the Itenez river in the Community of Versailles, Bolivia. The baby turtles were released into the Amazonian river in northeastern Bolivia to repopulate and conserve the endangered species that has seen its population reduced by the trade for human consumption of eggs, illegal fishing and habitat loss

23 Pakistan soldiers killed in terror attack

AN EMERGENCY WAS DECLARED IN DISTRICT HOSPITALS WHILE ALL SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES WERE CLOSED DUE TO THE ATTACK

PAKISTAN HAS BEEN FACING A RISE IN VIOLENCE IN THE WAKE OF THE TALIBAN SEIZING POWER IN AFGHANISTAN IN AUGUST 2021

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Peshawar, Dec 12: At least 23 Pakistani soldiers were killed and more than 30 others injured Tuesday when six terrorists linked to a Pakistani Taliban affiliate rammed an explosive-laden truck into a security forces' post in the restive Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, in one of the worst terror attacks targeting security forces in recent years. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations, the media wing

of the army the terrorists attacked the security post in Dera Ismail Khan's Daraban area bordering the South Waziristan tribal district in the early morning hours. The army had set up the camp in a police station complex in the Daraban area. "The attempt to enter the post was effectively thwarted which forced the terrorists to ram an explosive-laden vehicle into the post, followed by a suicide bombing attack. The resulting blasts led to the collapse of the building, causing multiple casualties," it said. Twenty-three Pakistan Army soldiers were killed while all six terrorists were "effectively engaged and sent to hell," the ISPR said. It added that sanitisation operations were being conducted to eliminate any other terrorists present in the area. "Security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthens our resolve," the ISPR said. An emergency was declared in



district hospitals while all schools and colleges were closed due to the attack. The Tehrik-e-Jihad Pakistan (TJP), a newly formed militant group that is an affiliate of the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), claimed responsibility for the attack. TJP spokesperson Mullah Qasim termed the attack a "suicide mission" (Fidayein). Separately, 17 terrorists were killed in an intelligence-based operation in the Darazinda area of Dera Ismail Khan, the army said. "During the conduct of the operation, terrorists' hideout was busted and 17 terrorists were sent to hell," the military's media affairs wing said. The ISPR further stated that two soldiers were killed while four more terrorists were neutralised in another IBO in the Kulachi area. "The killed terrorists were actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against security forces as well as killing of innocent civilians. Weapons, ammunition and explosives were

also recovered during the operation," the statement said. Throughout this year, terrorists and separatists have been targeting security forces in Pakistan. Tuesday's attack resulted in the military's highest single-day death toll from terror attacks this year. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar strongly condemned the attack and said the security forces would not be demoralised by such "cowardly acts", state-run Radio Pakistan reported. He said the entire nation salutes those who sacrificed their lives in the war against terrorism. The premier directed authorities to provide the best medical treatment to the injured persons. "Their dedication, sacrifice and valour in the face of terror is unparalleled and a beacon of hope for our nation. My deepest sympathies to the families of our brave martyrs. We will fight back till the menace of terrorism is eliminated from our motherland," he said in a post on X.

Man held for threatening Vivek

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, Dec 12: A 30-year-old man has been arrested and charged in connection with death threats aimed at Indian-American Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy and his campaign event attendees, the US attorney's office in New Hampshire has said. The attorney's office on Monday said Tyler Anderson of Dover in New Hampshire was arrested on Saturday and charged with transmitting in interstate commerce a threat to injure Ramaswamy, a 38-year-old biotech entrepreneur.

According to an FBI affidavit, the Ramaswamy campaign sent a text message on Friday to notify voters, including Anderson, about an upcoming campaign event in Portsmouth. Anderson allegedly responded to the message: "Great, another opportunity for me to blow his brains out!" He also said: "I'm going to kill everyone who attends" and added a vulgar description of what he would do to the bodies. While the statement from the US attorney's office did not name which presidential campaign was targeted, Ramaswamy's team confirmed on Monday that he was the target, The Washington Post reported.

Japan court convicts 3 ex-servicemen

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tokyo, Dec 12: A Japanese court Tuesday convicted three former soldiers in a sexual assault case that authorities had dropped until the victim, a former service member, came forward demanding a reinvestigation, prompting a military-wide harassment probe and challenging a still male-dominated society. The Fukushima District Court sentenced the former Japanese army soldiers to two years in prison but suspended the sentences for four years — meaning they won't actually serve time in prison. Still, the ruling is a rare victory in a country that



consistently ranks near the bottom in international gender equality surveys and where sexual misconduct complaints are often disregarded and victims tend to face criticisms for speaking up. The case filed by Rina Gonoji in August 2021 was initially dropped. Nine months later, she came forward and demanded the case be reinvestigated, saying the experience caused her to give

up her military career. Gonoji said she has been attacked on social media for coming forward, but that she did so because she wanted to prevent similar problems for other female service members. Her revelation prompted a military-wide investigation into sexual harassment and other abuse allegations in September 2022, and prosecutors reopened her case. The Fukushima court said Tuesday her three former supervisors — Shutaro Shibuya, Akito Sekine and Yusuke Kimezawa — each pressed the lower part of their bodies against her at an army training facility in August 2021, and it found them guilty of indecent assaults.

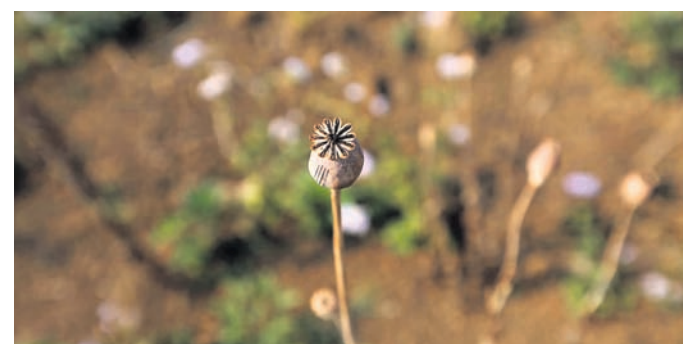
Myanmar overtakes Afghanistan as top opium producer

FROM 2022 TO 2023, MYANMAR SAW THE ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF LAND USED TO GROW THE ILLICIT CROP INCREASE 18 PER CENT TO 47,100 HECTARES (116,400 ACRES), THE NEW UNODC REPORT SAID

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bangkok, Dec 12: Myanmar, already wracked by a brutal civil war, has regained the unenviable title of the world's biggest opium producer, according to a UN agency report released Tuesday. The Southeast Asian country's opium output has topped that of Afghanistan, where the ruling Taliban imposed a ban on its production, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime said in its "Southeast

Asia Opium Survey 2023." The Taliban's ban has led to a 95 per cent drop in the cultivation of opium poppies, UNODC said last month. Opium, the base from which morphine and heroin are produced, is harvested from poppy flowers. From 2022 to 2023, Myanmar saw the estimated amount of land used to grow the illicit crop increase 18 per cent to 47,100 hectares (116,400 acres), the new UNODC report said. "Although the area under cultivation has not returned to his-



toric peaks of nearly 58,000 ha (143,300 acres) cultivated in 2013, after three consecutive years of increases, poppy cultivation in Myanmar is expanding and becoming more productive," it said. It also noted that the estimated opium yield expanded by 16 per cent to 22.9 kilograms per hectare (20.43 pounds per acre) — topping the previous record set in 2022. It attributes that increase to "increasingly sophisticated means of cultivation, including increased plot density, improved organisation of plants, and enhanced practices, such as the use of irrigation systems and potentially fertilizers." The violent political turmoil in Myanmar has contributed to the opium production in-

crease. "The economic, security and governance disruptions that followed the military takeover of February 2021 continue to drive farmers in remote areas towards opium to make a living," UNODC Regional Representative Jeremy Douglas said. The report notes that "opium poppy cultivation in Southeast Asia is closely linked to poverty, lack of government services, challenging macroeconomic environments, instability, and insecurity." For farmers, the bottom line is simple economics. UNODC said the average price paid to opium growers increased by 27 per cent to about USD 355 per kilogram (USD 161 per pound), demonstrating the attractiveness of opium as a crop and commodity and strong demand. The figures mean farmers earned around 75 per cent more

than in the previous year, said the UN agency. Douglas said that armed conflict in Shan state in Myanmar's northeast, a traditional growing region, and in other border areas "is expected to accelerate this trend." An offensive launched in late October by an alliance of three ethnic armed groups against Myanmar's military government has further destabilized the remote region. Northeastern Myanmar is part of the infamous "Golden Triangle," where the borders of Myanmar, Laos and Thailand meet. The production of opium and heroin historically flourished there, largely because of the lawlessness in border areas where Myanmar's central government has been able to exercise only minimum control over various ethnic minority militias, some of them partners in the drug trade.

business



Jobs is the single most important pressure point... If we had many more private sector jobs showing up, would there be so much pressure on reservations? Perhaps there'll be less so to some extent
RAGHURAM G. RAJAN | FORMER RBI GOVERNOR

COAL INDIA'S CAPEX RISES 7.6%

State-owned CIL Tuesday said that its capital expenditure increased by 7.6% to Rs 10,492 crore in first eight months of ongoing financial year. The public sector enterprise's capital expenditure was Rs 9,751 crore in the year-ago period, CIL said in a BSE filing. "CIL's capital expenditure increased by Rs 741 crore in eight months ending November FY 2024 to Rs 10,492 crore," the company said.



of the day quote

Our economy is moving in the right direction... Macroeconomic fundamentals are fine. We have become the fastest-growing economy. Q2 growth of 7.6 per cent is the highest in the world



NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

Our objective is to increase the annual number of cruise passengers in India to 50 lakhs over the Amrit Kaal by 2047, up from 4.72 lakhs at present



SARBANANDA SONOWAL | UNION MINISTER

We had a very strong festive season, which I would attribute mainly to the newly launched facelifted Nexon, Harrier, Safari and the iCNG range. And therefore, our VAHAN registrations, or real sale as we call it, was the highest ever in our history



SHAILESH CHANDRA | TATA MOTORS PASSENGER VEHICLES MD

Inflation at 3-month high of 5.55% in Nov

THE DECLINING TREND WAS SNAPPED DUE TO FIRING FOOD PRICES, INCLUDING VEGETABLES AND CEREALS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 12: Snapping its declining trend, retail inflation rose to a three-month high of 5.55 per cent in November on firming food prices, including vegetables and cereals, though it remains within the RBI's comfort zone of less than 6 per cent. Inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 4.87 per cent in October and 5.88 per cent in November 2022, the government data released Tuesday showed.

The previous high was 6.83 per cent in August and inflation had been on a decline since then. According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) data, inflation in the food basket increased to 8.7 per cent in November from 6.61 per cent in October and 4.67 per cent in the year-ago month. Food basket has about 50 per cent weightage in CPI. The annual rate of price rise in 'spices' was 21.55 per cent,



'pulses and products' 20.23 per cent, vegetables 17.7 per cent, and fruits 10.95 per cent. The year-on-year inflation in 'cereals and products' was 10.27 per cent. However, there was a decline in retail prices of 'oil and fats' was about 15 per cent. Data further showed that inflation in rural areas was at 5.85 per cent while it was 5.26 per cent in urban centres taking the national average to 5.55 per cent during November. The Reserve Bank of India has been tasked by the government to ensure retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a mar-

gin of 2 per cent on either side. In the monetary policy announced last week, the RBI projected the CPI inflation at 5.4 per cent for 2023-24, with a reading of 5.6 per cent in the third quarter and 5.2 per cent in the last quarter. Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist at ICRA said that the surge in food and beverages inflation to 8 per cent in November was largely led by a sharp increase in vegetables inflation, even as seven of the 12 food sub-groups reported a moderation in their year-on-year inflation print. She further noted the core CPI

eased to 4.2 per cent in November 2023 from 4.4 per cent in October 2023.

"This was the lowest print in the post-pandemic period. The sustained easing in the core CPI inflation is positive and has counterbalanced the menacing food inflation prints over the last few months," Nayar said.

NSO collects the price data from selected 1,114 urban markets and 1,181 villages covering across the country on a weekly roster. During November 2023, NSO collected prices from 99.9 per cent villages and 98.6 per cent urban markets.

SHORT TAKES

Disney, Reliance to merge media ops

Bangalore: Reliance Industries, India's most valuable company, and Walt Disney Co are expected to sign an agreement as early as Monday to merge their Indian media operations in a cash-and-stock deal, Bloomberg News reported Tuesday. JioCinema, run by billionaire Mukesh Ambani-controlled Reliance's broadcast venture Viacom18, has increased pressure on Disney India and other streaming platforms, with Ambani marketing the platform by offering free access to the Indian Premier League cricket tournament, the digital rights of which earlier belonged to Disney. Reliance in October was reported to be valuing Disney's India assets, which comprises the Disney+ Hotstar streaming service and Star India, between \$7 billion and \$8 billion.

Adani Ports to raise Rs 5,250cr

New Delhi: Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) Tuesday announced that it will raise more than Rs 5,250 crore by issuing non-convertible debentures and non-cumulative redeemable preference shares on private placement basis. In a stock exchange filing, APSEZ said, "the board of directors of the company has given their in-principle approval for issuance of non-convertible debentures for capex/refinancing of existing debt and general corporate purpose for an aggregate amount not exceeding Rs 5,000 crore in one or more tranches on private placement basis."

Volkswagen to hike prices from January

New Delhi: Volkswagen Passenger Cars India Tuesday said it plans to hike prices by up to 2 per cent across model range to offset adverse impact of rising input and material costs from January 1, 2024. Already other manufacturers such as Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai Motor India, Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Honda, Audi and BMW, have announced plans to increase prices of their vehicles in January. Effective January 1, 2024, the company plans to hike prices by up to 2 per cent across its model range owing to rising input and material costs, a spokesperson of Volkswagen Passenger Cars India said in a statement. "While the brand continues to absorb most of the input cost increase, however, some impact will have to be passed on to the end consumers," it added.

Passenger vehicle wholesales grow 4 pc in November

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 12: Domestic passenger vehicle wholesales rose by around 4 per cent year-on-year in November, driven by robust demand for utility vehicles, industry body SIAM said Tuesday.

Passenger vehicle dispatches from companies to dealers rose to 3,34,130 units last month, the best ever figure for the month of November, from 3,22,268 units in same month last year.

Two-wheeler sales rose to 16,23,399 units last month, a growth of 31 per cent as compared to 12,36,282 units in November 2022.

Similarly, three-wheeler dispatches also rose to 59,738 units last month, registering an increase of 31 per cent over 45,664 units in last November.

"All segments of the automobile industry witnessed robust growth during the festive season which ended in the first part of November," Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) President Vinod Aggarwal said in a statement.

Supported by strong economic growth, the automobile industry is optimistic in ending the year 2023 on a high note and expects the trend to continue into 2024, he added.

Elaborating further, SIAM Director General Rajesh Menon said passenger vehicle segment witnessed highest ever wholesales in November 2023 with dispatch of 3.34 lakh units, albeit with a growth rate of 3.7 per cent, in the backdrop of a high base last November.

Three-wheeler dispatches in November were just below the peak of November 2017, he noted.

Stock markets take breather after record-breaking rally



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 12: Benchmark stock indices closed lower Tuesday due to profit taking by investors after a record-breaking rally and ahead of release of key inflation numbers.

After a two-day rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell by 377.50 points or 0.54 per cent to settle at 69,551.03. During the day, it declined 484.68 points or 0.69 per cent to 69,443.85.

The broader Nifty scaled a new lifetime intra-day high of 21,037.90 points before closing below the 21,000 level. The 50-issue barometer declined by 90.70 points or 0.43 per cent to close at 20,906.40.

Monday, the BSE benchmark surged past the 70,000-level for the first time, reaching its record intra-day peak of 70,057.83. Nifty had settled just below the 21,000 level at 20,997.10, its all-time closing high.

Among the Sensex firms, IndusInd Bank, Maruti, Titan, Reliance Industries, NTPC,

Mahindra & Mahindra, Larsen & Toubro, Kotak Mahindra Bank and HDFC Bank were the major laggards.

UltraTech Cement, JSW Steel, Axis Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Wipro and ITC were the major gainers.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge fell 0.40 per cent and smallcap index declined 0.27 per cent.

Among the indices, oil & gas went lower by 1.84 per cent, realty fell by 1.82 per cent, energy (1.68 per cent), utilities (1.49 per cent), consumer durables (1.18 per cent), capital goods (1.10 per cent) and industrials (0.94 per cent). IT, metal and services were the gainers.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.39 per cent to USD 76.33 a barrel Tuesday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,261.13 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

IIP rises to 11.7% in October

THIS WAS MAINLY DUE TO DOUBLE-DIGIT GROWTH IN MANUFACTURING, POWER AND MINING SECTORS' OUTPUT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 12: India's industrial production growth accelerated to 16-month high of 11.7 per cent in October, mainly due to double-digit growth in manufacturing, power and mining sectors' output, according to the official data released Tuesday.

The factory output growth measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) had contracted by 4.1 per cent in October 2022.

The previous high of IIP growth was recorded at 12.6 per cent in June 2022.

During April-October 2023-24, the IIP growth works out to be 6.9 per cent, up from 5.3 per cent in the corresponding period a year ago.

The IIP for September 2023 was revised to 6.2 per cent from provisional estimates of 5.8 re-

Automatic payment limit via UPI raised to ₹1L: RBI

UPI HAS EMERGED A PREFERRED MODE OF PAYMENT FOR A LARGE SECTION OF THE POPULATION WITH OVER 11.23 BILLION TRANSACTIONS RECORDED IN NOVEMBER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 12: The Reserve Bank of India Tuesday increased the limit for automatic payments through UPI to Rs 1 lakh per transaction from the existing Rs 15,000 for certain categories, including subscription to mutual funds.

As of now, relaxation in Additional Factor of Authentication (AFA) is permitted while processing e-mandates/standing instructions on cards, prepaid payment instruments and UPI (Unified Payments Interface), for subsequent recurring transactions with values up to Rs 15,000.

"...It has been decided to increase the limit from Rs 15,000 to Rs 1,00,000 per transaction for.. Subscription to mutual funds, payment of insurance premiums, and credit card bill payments," the central bank said in a circular on "processing of e-mandates for recurring transactions."

UPI has emerged a preferred mode of payment for a large section of the population with over 11.23 billion transactions recorded in November.

An announcement in this regard was made by Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das, while unveiling the December bi-monthly monetary policy last week.



leased last month. "India's IIP growth rate rises to a 16-month high of 11.7 per cent in October 2023," an official statement said.

It also stated that the growth rates over the corresponding period of the previous year are to be interpreted, considering the unusual circumstances on account of the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020.

As per the IIP data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the manufacturing sector's output grew 10.4 per cent in October 2023 against a contraction of 5.8 per cent a year ago.

Power generation rose 20.4 per cent in October 2023 compared to 1.2 per cent growth in the year-ago period.

Mining output rose by 13.1 per cent in the month under review against a 2.6 per cent growth a year ago.

As per use-based classifica-

tion, the capital goods segment grew 22.6 per cent in October this year compared to a 2.4 per cent contraction in the year-ago month.

Consumer durables output during the month grew by 15.9 per cent against a contraction of 18.1 per cent.

Consumer non-durable goods output increased by 8.6 per cent compared to a contraction of 13 per cent a year earlier.

Infrastructure/construction goods posted a growth of 11.3 per cent against a 1.7 per cent expansion.

The data also showed that the output of primary goods logged 11.4 per cent growth in the month compared to 2.1 per cent in the year-ago period.

The intermediate goods output in October rose 9.7 per cent against a contraction of 2.3 per cent growth during the corresponding month last year.



India's digital public infra empowers 97% of population: Report

IT HAS EXPANDED BEYOND AADHAAR AND UPI, CREATING IMPACT ACROSS SECTORS, INCLUDING E-COMMERCE, GAMING, FINTECH, BANKING AND MSMEs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, Dec 12: India's current digital public infrastructure (DPI) landscape has provided 97 per cent of the population with a digital ID, facilitated direct benefit transfer (DBT) to the effect of 900 million beneficiaries till date and has even given 40 per cent of the 1.2 billion population access to banking facilities, a report showed Tuesday.

India's DPI has expanded beyond Aadhaar and unified payments interface (UPI), creating impact across sectors, includ-

ing e-commerce, gaming, fintech, banking and MSMEs.

According to the report by Redseer Strategy Consultants in collaboration with Infosys Chairman Nandan Nilekani, DPIs have not just impacted governance but also the private sector, especially startups.

It has a symbiotic relationship with the startup ecosystem adding over \$100 billion in value across multiple sectors of the Indian Internet economy, the report mentioned.

The landscape is currently expanding beyond the JAM trinity (Jan Dhan, Aadh, Mobile)



with properties such as Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA), DigiLocker 2.0, Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), Account Aggregator (AA), Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (Diksha) among others.

"The availability of zero merchant discount rates (MDR) have boosted the popularity of UPI in the e-commerce space.

"Mobility accounts for 65 per cent of the e-commerce payments with foodtech following closely at 50 per cent and e-tailing at 35 per cent. Emerging

platforms such as ONDC are also seeing a greater degree of popularity in the MSME space owing to their open architecture and affordability," the report mentioned.

Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) itself could generate a Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) ranging from \$250-300 billion by 2030.

Additionally, the evolving DPI landscape has also boosted gaming monetisation by 20-25 per cent, bringing in \$27 billion in transaction value to the online gaming industry, said the report.

Colts script superb comeback

JUNIOR HOCKEY TEAM IN SEMIS OF WORLD CUP AFTER THRILLING WIN OVER THE NETHERLANDS



AGENCIES

Kuala Lumpur, Dec 12: India produced a spectacular display of grit and character to advance to the semifinals with a thrilling 4-3 win over the Netherlands in the Hockey Men's Junior World Cup here Tuesday. Trailing 0-2 at half time and 2-3 in the third quarter, India exhibited immense resilience to beat the Dutch in the quarter-final and set up a last four clash against Germany. It was indeed a thrilling comeback by the Boys in Blue, who also withstood a late challenge by the Dutch.

The Netherlands set the ball rolling early in the first quar-

ter with a penalty corner conversion from Timo Boers (5th minute). Despite the Indian side playing a solid defensive game, Pepijn van der Heijden (16th) scored for the Netherlands in the second quarter through another penalty corner conversion. The Dutch went to the interval with the same scoreline, all poised to enter the semis.

India came back strongly in the third quarter with a goal from Aditya Lalage (34th). The ball was set up by Arajjeet Singh Hundal who hoodwinked the Dutch defence with a sizzling run. Two minutes later Arajjeet

scored the equaliser for India from a stroke.

The India colts kept the pressure on the Dutch but the latter earned another penalty corner much against the run of play. It was duly converted by Olivier Hortensius (44th).

With less than 15 minutes remaining, the Indians raised the tempo and it proved fruitful as Sourabh Anand Kushwaha (52nd) found the back of the net off a rebound following a brilliant attack to restore parity at 3-3.

India then earned a penalty corner in the 57th minute and skipper Uttam Singh did not make any mistake to put India

ahead at 4-3.

The victory for the India colts was due to tremendous grit and determination. Rohit stood out in the Indian defence with his uncanny ability to nip in the bud many a Dutch attack. He also blocked six penalty corners taken by the players of Netherlands. Rohit was rightly chosen man of the match after the end of the game.

Overall it was a pulsating affair with the pendulum of fortune changing sides frequently. Even though the Dutch enjoyed more ball possession, the Indians always looked threatening on the counter-attack.

JUNIORS SEAL LAST 4 SPOT

Limbani's dream spell ensures 10-wicket victory for U-19 squad

AGENCIES

Dubai, Dec 12: Seam bowler Raj Limbani (7/13) bowled a brilliant and incisive spell as India cruised to a 10-wicket victory over Nepal to clinch a semi-final berth in the U-19 Asia Cup cricket tournament here Tuesday.

After shooting out Nepal for just 52 runs in 22.1 overs, courtesy Limbani's superb performance, all-rounder Arshin Kulkarni (43 n o), kept the IPL scouts interested with five huge sixes to knock off the winning runs in just 7.1 overs.

India had lost to arch-rivals Pakistan by eight wickets in an earlier game. Hence the colts, led by Uday Saharan, needed to win their final league game to qualify for the knock-out stage and they absolutely dominated the proceedings against the boys from Himalayan nation.

Nepal were already out of contention after losing both their group league games but their worst was saved for the last with none of their players getting into double digits. The top scorer for Nepal was Hemant Dhama (8), whose two boundaries got the team past the 50-run mark.

Limbani, the lanky 18-year-old right-arm fast bowler from Baroda, who primarily bowls in-swingers, didn't let any of the Nepalese batters settle down. He pitched the ball sufficiently up and managed to get a lot of movement.

However Limbani's seven-wicket haul isn't the best effort by an Indian bowler in U-19 internationals. Former India pacer Irfan Pathan had astounding figures of 9/16 against Bangladesh in the Junior Asia Cup in Lahore, back in 2004.

The chase was never a problem and opener Arshin tonked



DEADLY SPELL: Raj Limbani (smiling) is hugged by a teammate after dismissing a Nepal batter during the game Tuesday

the Nepal bowlers for fun and also sent a message to the IPL recruiters that he is one of the newcomers on whom everyone should keep a close eye on.

Arshin has already scored an unbeaten 70 and had taken three wickets in the opening game

against Afghanistan but didn't make much of an impact against Pakistan.

BRIEF SCORES
Nepal U-19 52 in 22.1 overs (Raj Limbani 7/13) lost to India 52/0 in 7.1 overs (Arshin Kulkarni 43 n o) by seven wickets.

SHORT TAKES

Castro, Ashwini rise in rankings

New Delhi: Riding on their remarkable run in the last two weeks, Indian women's doubles pair of Ashwini Ponnappa and Tanisha Crasto climbed four places to reach World No. 24 in the latest Badminton World Federation (BWF) ranking issued Tuesday. Ashwini, 34, and her 20-year-old partner Tanisha, who joined hands in January this year, secured Sunday their third women's doubles title and the second Super 100 crown at the Guwahati Masters. The Indian pair, who had finished runners-up at the Syed Modi International Super 300 tournament in Lucknow, now has 44,590 points from 16 tournaments.

Injured Chanu delays her return

New Delhi: Injured Mirabai Chanu's return to the weightlifting arena has been further delayed as the Olympic silver medalist is set to miss the Asian Championships in February next year. Chanu, who competes in the 49kg weight class, is still recovering from the hip tendinitis injury she sustained in October while competing at the Asian Games. The former World Champion was earlier trying to get fit by the Asian Championships in Tashkent February 3 to 10. "I will not participate in the Asian Championship this time. Instead, I will participate in the World Cup," Chanu said Tuesday. She added that she is planning to travel to the USA in February to work with Dr Aaron Horschig for her rehab.

Woakes calls his exclusion 'fair'

Bridgetown: Pacer Chris Woakes conceded that England took a fair call by leaving him out of the Test series against India given his record in the sub-continent. The 34-year-old was not included in England's 16-member squad for the five-match Test series, starting January 25 in Hyderabad. "It's mixed emotions," Woakes was quoted as saying by a cricket-specific website. "Whenever there's a Test squad announcement, you're always desperate to be in it. But at the same time, at my age, with my away record - particularly in the sub-continent - I feel like it's a fair decision," he added. The last time in 2016 Woakes played in India in the longest format of the game, he managed only three wickets in three Tests.

CR7 doesn't want to stop

PORTUGAL MARKSMAN GETS 50TH GOAL OF THE SEASON FOR AL NASSR

AGENCIES

Riyadh, Dec 12: Cristiano Ronaldo said he had more left in him this year after scoring his 50th goal of 2023 in Al Nassr's 5-2 Saudi King Cup victory over rivals Al Shabab here Monday night. The former Manchester United and Real Madrid forward lashed home from close range with his right foot in the 74th minute to score the fourth goal for his side.

"Great victory and I'm thrilled to announce my 50th goal in 2023," the 38-year-old Portuguese wrote on Instagram after his goal helped Al Nassr reach the semifinals. "All thanks to the unwavering support of my teammates, fans, and my family! There's still room for a few more this year."

The skipper averages nearly a goal a game since joining Al Nassr at the end of last year. He has also struck 10 times for Portugal in nine matches in 2023, which means that the 38-year-old has scored 60 goals this year and add a few more before the year ends.

"I still want to carry on for a few years and to do that I try to



keep myself fit," Ronaldo further said. "It means that I will have to sacrifice a lot, but I am keen to do that as I am passionate about playing well, both for my club and country," the Portugal player added.

Meanwhile people here are warming up for a possible Ronaldo and Cristiano Ronaldo face-off once again. Messi's Inter Miami have announced that they will participate in the Riyadh Cup football tournament.

Inter Miami will play Al-Hilal

January 29 and Al Nassr - February 1. Those two clubs lead the Saudi Pro League and Ronaldo is that league's leading scorer.

"These matches will offer important tests for our team, which will benefit us as we approach the new season," Inter Miami sporting director Chris Henderson said Monday in the US. "We're excited for our group to get the chance to go up against teams with as much quality as Al-Hilal and Al Nassr."

Mandhana banking on Muzumdar's experience

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Navi Mumbai, Dec 12: With the Indian women's team lacking enough red ball exposure, vice-captain Smriti Mandhana said her young teammates are picking the brains of new head coach Amol Muzumdar ahead of the one-off Test against England. The last time Indian eyes had played Test cricket was two years ago with both games ending in draws.

Mandhana, who herself has played just four Tests in a decade-long career, feels the presence of Muzumdar, a former domestic player and captain, will be crucial as they prepare for the four-day game starting here Thursday.

"We have an experienced coach in Amol sir. He has played so much of Ranji Trophy cricket and is used to playing a lot of four-day (cricket)," Mandhana told the media here ahead of India's training session.

"More than two or three of us, he has more experience of red ball cricket. I can see a lot of girls approaching him and asking how his mindset was when

he played the long duration games," added Mandhana.

It should be added here that Muzumdar was appointed head coach in October. Since then whenever they have had the opportunity, the Indian eyes had trained with the red ball under Muzumdar. The team had a training camp in Bangalore and also took part in an intra-squad match for four days.

"We did have one long duration practice match. I was not able to play because of a slight niggle, but the others enjoyed it. It was a good prep to get the girls into the habit of playing red ball cricket," Mandhana informed.

"It starts from today - the mental and physical preparation - and hopefully we can execute what we have thought about the way the Test format needs us to," Mandhana said.

Injuries plague India ahead of AFC Asian Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 12: India will be missing their key central defender Anwar Ali because of his ankle injury in the upcoming AFC Asian Cup football tournament in Qatar starting January 12. Down with a fractured right ankle, the 23-year-old left-footed central defender has been excluded from the 50-member India probables named Tuesday.

A key member of head coach Igor Stimac's defence, Anwar's injury will upset the Croat's plans as he has taken a gamble to include midfielder Jeakson Singh in the probable.

To add to the team's woes, Anwar's Mohun Bagan teammate Ashique Kuruniyan, who is down with an ACL injury, has not been named in the probables on expected lines.

India, 102 in the FIFA rankings, are the lowest rung side in Group B. The other teams in the group are Uzbekistan (January 18) and Syria (January 23). India's main target would be to reach the pre-quarterfinals.

Rinku, SKY prop India amid rain interruptions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gqeberha (South Africa), Dec 12: Rinku Singh (68 n o, 39b, 9x4, 2x6) enhanced his credentials as a finisher with a maiden half century while skipper Suryakumar Yadav (56, 36b, 5x4, 3x6) played in his inimitable way to take India to 180 for seven in the second T20 International against South Africa here Tuesday. The Indian innings was closed with three deliveries left as rain interrupted play. South Africa were then set a revised target of 152 in 15 overs.

Put in to bat, India lost Yashasvi Jaiswal (0) and Shubman Gill (0) for six runs before Surya led from the front and forged a fine partnership of 49 runs for the third wicket with Tilak Varma (29). Surya and Rinku then put on 70 runs for the fourth wicket to set up the platform for a final assault.

Rain arrived with South African pacer Gerald Coetzee on a hat-trick, having got rid of Ravindra Jadeja (19) and Arshdeep Singh (0).

Playing for the first time in



South Africa, Rinku took his time initially before working the field beautifully. His square of the wicket shots stood out in his well-paced innings including two straight sixes off Aiden Markram.

Coming in at No.3, Varma looked good in the middle before getting caught at deep third man in the sixth over. SKY, as Suryakumar Yadav is popularly known played like he usually does, collecting a chunk of his runs behind the wicket.

Odisha Masters kicks off in style

FREE ENTRY FOR ALL BADMINTON FANS AT VENUE IN CUTTACK, INFORMS OFFICIAL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Dec 12: The Odisha Masters 2023 Super 100 badminton tournament started Tuesday at the JN Indoor Stadium herein Cuttack. Players from over 30 countries were in action on the opening day of the tournament. Most of the matches were of the qualifying rounds. The event boasts of a substantial prize pool of USD 1,00,000.

Among the matches played on the day, Isharani Baruah (India) triumphed over Indonesia's Mutiara Ayu Puspitasari 25-23, 21-17 in a hard-fought women's singles match. Likhitha Srivastava (India) on the other hand, outplayed her opponent from Uganda, Gladys Mbabazi 21-11, 21-14. In another women's singles encounter, Shriyanshi Valishetty (India) defeated compatriot Janani Ananthakumar 21-16, 8-21 and 21-17.

In other men's singles first round matches Siddhanth Gupta, Ayush Shetty and Harshel Sani entered the second round with contrasting wins.

Siddhanth easily defeated



Hemanth M Gowda 21-10, 22-20, but Shetty had to dig deep to beat Tharun Manneppalli 21-19, 16-21, 21-14. In another men's singles match Sani overcame Alap Mishra, 18-21, 21-17, 21-15 while Ravi saw off Abhishek Yeligar 21-11, 21-14.

The day's final fixture saw Satish Kumar prevail over Arunesh Hari, comfortably securing a victory in straight games 21-16, 21-11.

Meanwhile, the hosts of the tournament, the Odisha government announced Tuesday that spectators keen to watch the tournament will be provided free entry at the venue. State Sports Secretary Vineel Krishna said, "We are hosting Odisha Masters. Badminton is a priority for us and we have undertaken a number of measures for a holistic development of the game. We have top-class play-

ers from over 30 countries participating in the event."

Odisha's own Rutaparna Panda is participating in the tournament. She talked about her experience of playing at the stadium here. "We played three matches today. I loved every minute while playing at the JN Indoor Stadium. It feels great to play here as it is my first international tournament in Odisha," said Rutaparna.