

Yami at top
Yami Gautam's *Chor Nikal Ke Bhaaga* has been adjudged the most popular Indian film of 2023 on Netflix

LEISURE | P2



Hostages killed
Israel Defense Forces (IDF) say they 'accidentally killed three Israeli hostages' during fighting in Gaza

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Adani buys stake in IANS
Billionaire Gautam Adani's group acquires a majority stake in news agency IANS India Pvt Ltd as the group expands presence in the media space

BUSINESS | P11



Stunning Sheetal
Armless archer Sheetal Devi continued her extraordinary form as she won a gold medal at the inaugural Khelo India Para Games

SPORTS | P12

LI projects worth ₹2,500cr launched

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday inaugurated 59 lift irrigation (LI) projects that have been developed at a cost of ₹2,500 crore.

Developed under the Parvati Giri Mega Lift Irrigation project, the 59 utilities will help irrigate about 80,000 hectare of land in 13 districts of the state, officials said.

He also laid the foundation stone for 33 other such projects, which will irrigate about 50,000 hectare of land in nine districts after completion, they said.

Patnaik said he was happy that the farmers of the state were getting benefits of the project.



He said the state's agriculture budget has tripled in five years and reached ₹25,000 crore.

The chief minister noted that 20 in-stream storage structure projects are being implemented for utilising the river water for agriculture purpose and charging groundwater.

Under the Parvati Giri Mega Lift Irrigation Project, 208 utilities have been completed so far for irrigating 2,64,330 hectare of agricultural land. In the second phase, 170 irrigation projects are being developed.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



...and the award goes to the man who snatched the smoke cracker while reporting from the parliament..

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	27.2°C	26.4°C
Min Temp	13.2°C	13.5°C
Humidity	61%	68%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

FORECAST
CLEAR SKY MAINLY

LANCET STUDY: PROGRESS IN ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE STAGNATING IN INDIA

1 in 5 girls marrying below legal age

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 16: One in five girls and about one in six boys in India are married, with the progress made towards eliminating the practice of child marriage entirely stagnating in recent years, according to a study published in 'The Lancet Global Health' journal.

Between 2016 and 2021, the practice of child marriage also became more common in some states and Union territories, researchers said in their study.

Girl child marriages increased in six states, including Manipur, Punjab, Tripura, and West Bengal, while eight states, including Chhattisgarh, Goa, Manipur, and Punjab, witnessed a



rise in boy child marriages, the researchers found after analysing data from all five waves of India's National Family Health Survey from 1993 to 2021.

The research team, comprising researchers from Harvard University and those affiliated with the Indian gov-

ernment, however, said that child marriage had declined nationally. Prevalence of girl child marriage decreased from 49 per cent in 1993 to 22 per cent in 2021, while that of boy child marriage came down from 7 per cent in 2006 to 2 per cent in 2021, they found.

Nevertheless, progress towards stopping the practice of child marriage altogether has stalled in recent years between 2016 and 2021, the researchers said. Child marriage numbers reduced the most between 2006 and 2016.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) sees child marriage as a 'violation of human rights', as it 'compromises the development of girls and boys'.

India eves script history, rout Eng in Test

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Navi Mumbai, Dec 16: Deepthi Sharma played the enforcer's role to perfection for the second time in as many days as the dominant India Women scripted a historic 347-run victory over England on the third day of the one-off Test here, Saturday.

India set in motion the hunt for triumph while declaring their second innings closed at the overnight score of 186 for 6, leaving England to climb a huge mountain of 479 runs in their second innings.

The Indian bowlers led by off-spinner Deepthi (4/32) and pacer Pooja Vastrakar (3/23) then bundled out England for 131 to celebrate a victory which now stands as the biggest in terms of runs in the history of women's Test cricket, bettering Sri Lanka's 309-run victory over Pakistan in April 1998.

It was also India's first win over England at home in 15 Tests, having beaten them in away games twice in 2014, giving them a big boost ahead of the one-off Test against Australia starting here next week.

Over the course of the last three days, the Indians did not show any rust of not having played Test cricket in two years, and a first at home after nine years, while being at their ruthless best.

But for all that slew of records, the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side should thank Deepthi (8-2-32-4) who was in her elements after that sensational 5 for seven in the first innings, as England lacked gumption to fight even on a pitch that appeared to be far more gentle.

MORE P12

NEW YEAR RUSH

Ensure smooth movement of devotees in Puri: Pandian

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's close aide and 5T (transformational initiative) and Nabin Odisha scheme chairman V K Pandian Saturday reviewed the crowd management system of the Shree Jagannath Temple here in view of the New Year rush. He issued directions to officials for hassle-free movement of devotees at the 12th-century shrine.

The Puri district administration is expecting a congregation of around 5 lakh devotees in the holy seaside town on the occasion of the New Year. Puri town usually witnesses a huge rush of tourists and devotees from December 20 till January 15 every year, an official said.

Pandian, who visited Puri early in the

morning, also reviewed the ongoing Heritage Corridor (Parikrama) project between 5 am to 7 am, an official release issued by the CMO said.

"He took stock of facilities being created for a comfortable visit of pilgrims during the New Year rush," an official said, adding that Pandian also directed to augment the place with appropriate holding space for pilgrims and disciplined queue management. He inspected all elements of 'Parikrama' including progress on landscaping works, 'Matha' (monastery) restoration, queue management system, and two two-wheeler parking areas. He also took a detailed review of all challenges in the conference hall of the Srimandir Temple Administration office and instructed officials to complete all the works as per pre-decided time.

SHORT TAKES

6th arrest in Parl breach



New Delhi: A sixth arrest has been made in the Parliament security breach case - Mahesh Kumawat, 32, from Rajasthan's Nagaur

who was allegedly in contact with the other accused for the last two years for hatching the conspiracy and had destroyed their mobile phones to get rid of the evidence, police said, Saturday. MORE P9

Diarrhoea claims 4 lives

Rourkela: The 'Smart City' tag of Rourkela received a big blow with an outbreak of diarrhoea claiming four lives within 24 hours. Diarrhoea is rampant in Rourkela and adjoining areas as over 25 to 30 patients are arriving at Rourkela Government Hospital every day, informed Sudharani Pradhan, director in-charge of the medical facility. "At present, we have 102 indoor patients receiving treatment for the disease, and all except two are stable," she said.

37-YR-OLD SAYED ISHAAN BUKHARI FROM J&K'S KUPWARA DIST HELD BY CRIME BRANCH FOR IMPERSONATING PMO OFFICIAL, ARMY DOCTOR

Kashmiri imposter in Odisha STF net

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: The Special Task Force (STF) of Odisha Police's Crime Branch arrested a Kashmiri man on the charge of cheating people by impersonating a PMO official and an Army doctor.

The 37-year-old man who allegedly has links with several people in Pakistan and suspicious elements in Kerala also married a number of women in several states, STF IG JN Pankaj said here.

Following a tip-off, the STF arrested the accused identified as Sayed Ishaan Bukhari alias Ishaan Bukhari alias Dr Ishaan Bukhari in Neulpur village in Jajpur district, Friday.

"The accused was found to be impersonating a Neuro Specialist, an Army Doctor, an officer in PMO, a close associate of high-ranking NIA officials and others. Numerous forged documents like medical degree certificates issued by Cornell University of USA, Canadian Health Services Institute,



- Bukhari has married at least 6-7 women from various parts of India including Kashmir, UP, Maharashtra and Odisha
- A non-bailable warrant is pending against him in Kashmir in a cheating and forgery case
- He was in touch with several Pakistani nationals and some suspicious persons in Kerala

and others were also seized," Pankaj told reporters. This apart, several affidavits, bonds, ATM cards, blank cheques, Aadhaar cards and visiting cards were also seized from the man who hailed from Kupwara district of Jammu & Kashmir.

"It was also found that the accused has married at least 6-7 women from various parts of

India including Kashmir, UP, Maharashtra and Odisha," Pankaj said.

He was also active on various websites/ applications and was in romantic relationships with many girls impersonating as a doctor with international degrees, said Pankaj.

Sources claimed he was arrested by Kashmir police for duping a person by identifying himself as an Army doctor working in Odisha. He used to marry women and later dump them after extorting money from them. He was also reportedly arrested by Maharashtra police in 2017.

Pankaj said that it seems that the accused is also wanted by Kashmir Police in connection with a case of cheating and forgery and one non-bailable warrant is pending against him.

He was allegedly in touch with several Pakistani nationals and some suspicious persons in Kerala.

To a question, Panjkaj said that the STF did not find any link of his with ISI.

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TOMMY LEE SUED OVER ALLEGED SEXUAL ASSAULT

American musician Tommy Lee is being sued over an alleged encounter in February 2003, with an unnamed woman claiming he groped, kissed and penetrated her without her consent when they were onboard a chopper with another man.

HILARY DUFF TESTS +VE FOR COVID-19

American singer and actress Hilary Duff has revealed via social media that she and her husband, Matthew Koma, have both tested positive for the virus, days after Hilary announced her latest pregnancy.



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ARIES
Today finds you in a horrible dilemma - caught between you beloved and your boss. You can't bear to displease either one of them. However, Ganesh says sometimes you have to smilingly tackle such dilemmas. Take heart, life generally doesn't give you what you can't control.

TAURUS
Your closeness and intimacy with someone you already love is likely deeper and stronger. So says Ganesh. Time spent with your brothers, sisters, spouse and kids is sure to be pleasant, refreshing. The will be eager to please you, help you out. Later in the day you are likely to feel morose and dejected.

GEMINI
You will be worried on account of financial matters, or due to matters related to inheritances. You will become more possessive about material things today and will not be in the mood to share with others.

CANCER
You will give top priority to love today. Ganesh says that it is the best time to talk your mind to the beloved. Being happy with your colleagues, you will give them a treat in the evening. You will make everyone happy.

LEO
You will experience mixed feelings today. There are chances of conflicts with your spouse or life partner. Avoid ego clashes with your better half in the evening. You will have to discuss some matter very seriously. Do not take on important tasks as the time is not right, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Ganesh says you will raise the bar today. You will set higher goals for yourself, and will want to crack the existing barriers. You will be deeply concerned in the afternoon about your finances. Petty matters will lower your spirits. However, Ganesh advises you to climb the next rung in the ladder by spending the evening in spiritual pursuits.

LIBRA
Ganesh says work related to the government will prove beneficial to you today. Your relations with your siblings will improve. You may be able to spend a happy time with your close friends.

SCORPIO
Your day is equally divided between your near & dear ones and your responsibilities towards the elderly people. As you are sensitive, you may go out of your way to help them. For all those who are eagerly waiting to begin the new chapter in life, a marriage proposal is due during the evening time, foresees Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Family ties will be like slender chains for you, as they keep you occupied almost throughout the day. Kids to may become a reason to worry, practice caution in their matter. According to Ganesh, a day full of familial activities and responsibilities.

CAPRICORN
Love will be on your mind today. Going down the memory lane will make you cherish some golden moments spent with friends and family members. You will call up an old friend and share those memories. On the professional front, you will achieve major milestones, predicts Ganesh. All in all, it is a good day for you today.

AQUARIUS
If you are associated with law and legal matters, today is a favourable day for you. You will aim for the stars, because you know that even if you can't reach there, you will not end up being in the mud. Later on the day, you will receive some favourable news, feels Ganesh.

PISCES
Your health and mood will be good today as you will begin to reap the fruits the seeds sown in the past. You will experience happiness and satisfaction from business and returns during the evening. Make the most of the perfect alignment of planets is what is Ganesh's advice.

Aishwarya not living separately from Bachchans



Mumbai: Aishwarya Rai Bachchan has been hitting the headlines for quite some time now. Reports were rife that the actress has moved out of the Bachchan family home with her husband Abhishek Bachchan and daughter Aaradhya Bachchan.

However, contrary to reports, a source revealed that the Devdas actress still lives very much with the Bachchan family. She has been living in the adjacent bungalow to Amitabh Bachchan's Jalsa, which is internally connected to each other.

Not only this, Aishwarya, Abhishek, Big B, Agastya Nanda and Vrinda Rai were recently spotted and snapped together at Aaradhya Bachchan's school for a function. The source further said that although Aishwarya reached the school in a separate car, she waited till the entire family arrived at the venue. They were then seen heading inside together.

Aishwarya looked stunning in a black and golden traditional outfit, while Amitabh appeared dashing in a printed jacket and black pants. Abhishek and Agastya kept it cool in their casual attire.

Recently, after the Bachchan family joyfully assembled for a group photo at the premiere of Agastya Nanda's debut movie, *The Archies*, reports surfaced online about their social media activity. The family was photographed posing for cameras and passionately cheering on Agastya in the photos and videos from the premiere.

Biopics shouldn't be overhyped: R Balki

BHUBANESWAR: Filmmakers should avoid making sports biopics since they typically end up exaggerating the actual events and making them larger-than-life, according to Mumbai-based prominent director R Balki.



However, Balki admitted that his movie is loosely based on the life of a Hungarian shooter who battled every hurdle of life to participate in the Olympics despite losing an arm in an unfortunate accident.

The *Paa* director, whose previous release *Ghoomer* - starring Abhishek Bachchan and Saiyami Kher - has received positive reviews, made the remarks while addressing a sports literature festival held here, Saturday.

Ghoomer showcases a spirited tale of a woman cricketer who loses hopes of playing at international level after an unfortunate accident; however, a coach infuses new hope in her life. When asked why he directed

Ghoomer, a film on the life of a cricketer, despite his dislike for sports biopics, Balki clarified that his latest release is not a typical sports biopic film. It's a story about the resurgence of underdogs who had given up every hope and opportunity in their lives owing to misfortunes, he added.

Given the opportunity, whom would he like to show on-screen to the viewers? "Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi," pat came the reply.

"I would be extra careful in making the film, as the present generation is unaware of the cricket legend," added Balki.

The director signed off by saying he would like to work on any compelling ideas about a person, no matter his or her profession.

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Starkids shine at school function

AbRam strikes SRK's iconic pose while Aaradhya performs to perfect as an evil character in a dramatic look



Mumbai: The kids of top stars recently took part in their school's annual day celebrations. Many star kids performed at the function but the one who got the most applause were megastar Shah Rukh Khan's youngest son AbRam and Abhishek Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan's daughter Aaradhya.

In a video, which is currently doing the rounds on the Internet, it shows AbRam Khan arriving in a Medieval-inspired outfit on stage. He delivered the lines from the skit in English, and also offered hugs. In a segment, he told his fellow performers, "Give me a hug, I love hugs," and went on to strike the iconic pose of his father as the tune

of *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* played in the background. A proud SRK was seen applauding in the audience. In another video, Aaradhya dressed as an evil character in a dramatic look. She took to the stage and delivered her lines in English, and also shook a leg on a song during the performance. Taimur also sported

makeup for his performance. He was also seemingly joined by Karan Johar's son Yash Johar as he was papped in a similar outfit. Later, the stars also performed in the audience section at the annual day celebration at the Dhirubhai Ambani International School.

Yami's rare feat



Mumbai: Netflix just revealed its most accurate watching metrics. The most popular Indian film on the list is *Chor Nikal Ke Bhaaga*, starring Yami Gautam. Acknowledged for her broad range of performing roles, Yami has continuously dazzled audiences with her outstanding performances in theatre and on television. The actress never passes up a chance to amuse the crowd.

The actress took to her Instagram where she posted the poster from *Chor Nikal Ke Bhaaga*, the picture wrote: "*Chor Nikal Ke Bhaaga* becomes one of the only two Indian films titles in Top 500 in Netflix's comprehensive report on viewership data with over 40 million watch hours." She captioned this picture with, "Your love and support is my driving force!"

The success of *A Thursday* last year and now *Chor Nikal Ke Bhaaga* and *OMG 2* inspires me to fearlessly venture into new and exciting stories. Gratitude!"

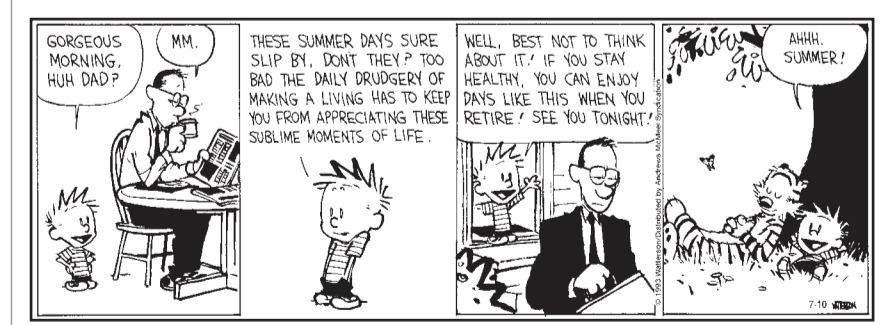
Yami's performance as a teacher in the suspense film *A Thursday* the previous year also made a significant impact on viewers and attracted a lot of attention. This demonstrates Yami's thoughtful choice of movies and screenplays, as she constantly puts her best into every project she undertakes. Her representation of characters in movies like *Dasvi*, *Bala*, and *Vicky Donor* has made her a well-known figure in the business and won her a lot of love and respect.

AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

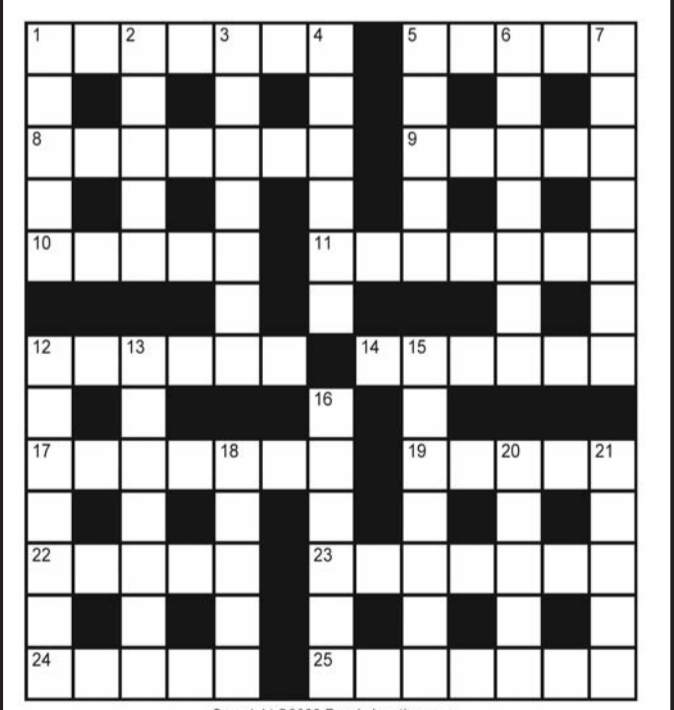


BREVITY



FUN post

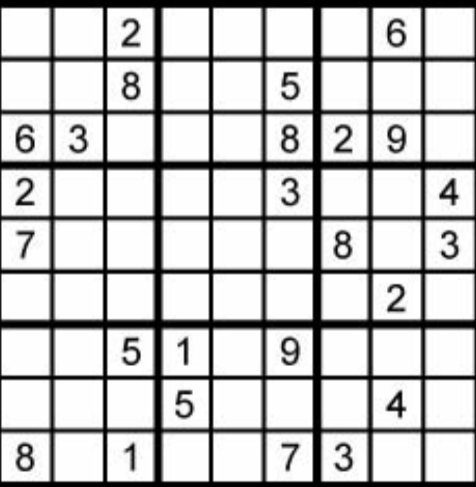
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Mournful
 - 5 Cowboy's rope
 - 8 Domain
 - 9 Grownup
 - 10 Move very slightly
 - 11 Zero
 - 12 Sufferer
 - 14 Load
 - 17 A brisk and lively tempo
 - 19 A silly and inept person
 - 22 Up to
 - 23 Spanish explorer
 - 24 Ceased
 - 25 Horse opera
 - Down**
 - 1 Nerd
 - 2 Shocking
 - 3 Antsy
 - 4 Bemoan
 - 5 To the lowest degree
 - 6 Analyzed
 - 7 Eight-sided
 - 12 Amount
 - 13 Associated
 - 15 Higher position
 - 16 Russian capital
 - 18 Frigid
 - 20 Slack
 - 21 Ache

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

MAKING A POINT

BJB college students holding placards with messages to create awareness on road safety in Bhubaneswar, Saturday





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7 multipurpose cyclone shelters in Puri on cards

The projects will come up at Chapamanika, Rebana-Nuagaon, Bada Diandi gram panchayats of Brahmagiri block, Nuapada and Badanala gram panchayats of Krushnaprasad block, Bijipur gram panchayat of Kanas block and Raigorada of Puri Sadar block



Pandian reviews Ganjam projects

BHUBANESWAR: 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman VK Pandian Saturday reviewed the progress of various developmental projects and interacted with students, farmers and Mission Shakti self-help groups (SHGs) in Ganjam.

Pandian reviewed the transformation work of Maa Budhi Thakurani temple in Berhampur which is being carried out at an expenditure of ₹18.91 crore.

The 5T Chairman took stock of the ongoing transformation work of Khambeya Dora Junior Science College at Pochilima in Hinjilicut block being carried out at an expenditure of ₹1.71 crore.

He visited the Rural Industrial Park of Sheragada and interacted with Mission Shakti SHG members there. The 5T Chairman emphasised on the major benefits being extended by the CM for women - ticket in

the newly-rolled LAccMI bus at just ₹5, meal in all Aahaar centres at ₹5 and interest-free loan up to ₹5 lakh for Mission Shakti SHGs.

Pandian later met farmers of Sheragada and Hinjilicut at Sheragada block office ground and discussed with them on the additional irrigation facilities that has been undertaken in both the blocks to augment the income of the farmers and prevent distress migration.

He informed the farmers that additional 12,000 acre of land will be irrigated at a cost of ₹186.5 crore for 65 projects covering 21 gram panchayats of Sheragada. It will benefit 10,000 farmers in Sheragada. Similarly, 1,535 acre of land will be further brought under irrigation at a cost of ₹20.45 crore for 37 projects covering 14 gram panchayats in Hinjilicut. These projects will benefit 2,000 farmers of Hinjilicut.

and Raigorada of Puri Sadar block.

The Rural Development department has been entrusted with the task of construction of the structures.

Puri district is cyclone-prone

region as it is situated on the coast of Bay of Bengal. The chief minister has directed the district administration to identify suitable places for the construction of shelters in other places of the district as well.

Work to build an inclusive Odisha: Secy to recruits

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) principal secretary G Mathi Vathanan Saturday urged the newly appointed project directors (PDs) of district urban development agencies (DUDAs) and executive officers (EOs) to work towards building an Odisha that is inclusive and empowered.

Vathanan was speaking on the first day of a 2-day orientation programme being organised for the new appointees here at the Odisha Urban Academy.

Welcoming the officers, the principal secretary said, "Each one of you is going to play a vital role in realising our collective dream of an inclusive and empowered Odisha. I expect nothing less than your absolute best."

Emphasising that people are at the centre of the democratic system, he advised the officers to direct their actions towards the betterment and welfare of the people of the state.

ECoR gets 2 nat'l awards



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: East Coast Railway (ECoR) has received two prestigious efficiency awards in the field of commercial and security segment, jointly with other zonal Railways in the 68th railway week central function at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, Friday.

ECoR General Manager Manoj Sharma along with Principal Chief Commercial Manager VR Lenin received Efficiency Shield for Commercial and Sharma along with Principal Chief Security Commissioner Alok Bohra received Efficiency Shield for Security from Railways, Communications, Electronics and Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.

In addition, Divisional Operations Manager of Khurda Road Railway Division Randhi Manoj Babu received "Ati Vishist Rail Seva Puraskar" from

Minister Vaishnaw for his dedication to the service in freight loading revenue generation and attracting new stake holders for transportation of new commodities. The Minister also conferred shields to best performing railway personnel and PSUs for promoting best practices among employees.

Altogether, 100 Railway employees from various Zonal Railways, production units and Railway PSUs all over the country were awarded for their outstanding services along with 21 Efficiency Shields.

The Minister of State for Railways, Coal & Mines, Raosaheb Patil Danve and Minister of State for Railways and Textile, Darshana Jardosh, chairman and CEO and members of Railway Board, General Managers of all zonal Railways and heads of production units of Railways and PSUs of Railways were present on this occasion.

Tribal crafts main draw at Toshali Mela

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: The 18th Toshali National Crafts Mela, was inaugurated by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik here, Friday evening.

Inaugurating the fair, Chief Minister, in his video message, wished the celebration of art and culture to continue to be a source of inspiration, creativity and economic empowerment for artisans.

This year the "Theme Pavilion" of the Mela showcases the "Tribal Crafts and Weaves of the State and GI Products" which was inaugurated by, Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts Minister Rita Sahu.

Addressing the inaugural event, Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts Principal Secretary Arabinda Kumar Padhee welcomed the weavers and artisans from across the country and the state.

Padhee urged the visitors to explore the stalls of Boyanika, Utkalika, Amlan and others where cruelty-free silk aka Karuna silk is being sold. He also requested the visitors to taste various delicacies especially the ones made from millet available in the food court.

Patha Utsav from Dec 24

Bhubaneswar: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Saturday decided to resume Patha Utsav (street festival) from December 24. The recreational event that sets stage for dance, music, art and other activities would be held from 6:30am to 9am. A preparatory meeting led by Mayor Sulochana Das and Vijay Amruta Kulange was held Saturday which revealed that cycling, ludo, quiz competition, rangoli competition, magic show and zumbo will take place in the streets of Bhubaneswar. While December 24 celebration will be held on the stretch from Master Canteen to Ram Mandir Square, the event will be held in north zone and south-east zone January 7 and January 11. The meeting stressed participation of people from every strata of society, including children, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and individuals from LGBTQIA community.

Two killed in road mishap

Sakhigopal: Two persons died as the motorcycle they were riding hit an electricity pole near Bhandaridanda under Satyabadi police limits of Puri district, Saturday. The deceased were identified as Aditya Padhee and Subharanjan Senapati. According to sources, the duo was returning home from Sakhigopal when the mishap occurred early in the morning. Locals spotted the lifeless bodies of Aditya and Subharanjan in a rivulet and informed the police, who reached the spot and seized the bodies. Satyabadi police station IIC Bijay Ketan Behera said an unnatural death case has been registered and the bodies have been sent for post-mortem. Investigation is in progress, he added. Notably, Aditya was working as a clerk at Odia University. A pall of gloom descended on the university precincts when the news of Aditya's death reached the campus.



MARKING 50 YEARS: Science and Technology, Public Enterprises and SSEPD Minister Ashok Chandra Panda and BMC Mayor Sulochana Das among guests attending the Golden Jubilee celebration of BJEM School in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

I-T RAID ON BDPL Dhiraj Sahu Gandhi family's ATM, says Dharmendra

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: Union Minister and senior BJP leader Dharmendra Pradhan Saturday alleged that Congress MP Dhiraj Sahu functioned as the 'ATM' of the Gandhi family.

Rejecting the allegation of the Union minister, the Odisha Congress said the I-T department is yet to name anyone in connection with the seizure.

Sahu Friday clarified that the seized cash has nothing to do with the Congress as is being claimed and all of it does not belong to him but to his family and partners in the liquor business.

The Union education minister said, "It is not Dhiraj Sahu ji's money; but Rahul, Priyanka

Gandhi brother-sister duo's money He functioned as the ATM of the Gandhi family. People are unable to digest his statement."

Pradhan also alleged that Sahu used to manipulate the excise policy of various states to suit his interest.

The BJP leader sought to know where the cash came from. Odisha Congress president Sarat Pattanayak described Pradhan's allegation as baseless.

"Let the Union minister

(Pradhan) wait till the completion of the investigation. Income Tax department is yet to name anyone in this connection," Pattanayak said.

The I-T department raids being carried out against the Odisha-based distillery firm owned by the family of Sahu, and some linked entities, ended early Friday, capping ten days of searches and recording the country's 'highest-ever' cash haul at ₹351 crore, official sources said in New Delhi.

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Har Pal Aapke Saath

Keonjhar dist turns into open-air elephant safari

Craze to watch the jumbos is such that people from urban areas often rush to villages after learning about the presence of herds



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Dec 16: Keonjhar district has turned into an undeclared open-air elephant safari as loss of natural habitat and shortage of food force elephants to stray into human habitats. Marauding elephant herds are wandering in the villages, crossing the roads at their will and destroying crops and properties giving people sleepless nights. They are becoming violent and killing people whenever a face-off occurs. All these have become a regular affair in Keonjhar district. People are gathering in hordes to drive away pachyderms and watch them crossing the roads. The scenes of elephant herds wandering in villages and crossing the highways have turned Keonjhar district into an open-air elephant safari. Sources said over 150 elephants divided in herds are roaming in various parts of the district after leaving their nat-

ural habitats in jungles. The villagers drive away the animals from one village to another or to a jungle to protect their crops and properties. The scene of elephants running from the villages while being driven away has turned into a spectacle for many. The craze to watch elephants is such that people in urban areas often rush to villages after learning about the presence of jumbo herds. Many also overlook the risks involved and do not hesitate to click photographs or shoot videos with the animals in order to post them on their social media handles to garner short-lived fame and appreciation. People also rush to see the elephants bathing in water bodies. The elephant calves in the herd have become the cynosures of all eyes. The scene of mother elephants walking with their calves with other herd members is another added attraction. The Forest department is

keeping track of the movement of the herds and trying alert the people where there are presence of elephants. The forest officials have urged commuters to allow safe passage to elephant herds when they notice them crossing the highway. They have also been warned not to go near the elephant and endanger their lives. Without heeding to the warnings, however, people often invite danger and end up losing life by venturing closer to the herd. On the other hand, farmers and people have alleged of inadequate compensation after suffering losses to their crops and properties. An affected farmer and sarpanch Bhagirathi Singh of Maidankel panchayat said crops in several acres of farmland have been destroyed due to elephant menace in Sadar block. The Forest department has been informed but they have failed to give adequate compensation due to improper assessment. ACF Ashok Das said people are being sensitised not to go near, tease or hurt the elephants. People are compensated after making assessment of their losses. The movement of elephants is regularly being tracked, he said. Durjyodhan Patra of Padmapur village said that earlier they had to visit Nandankanan to watch an elephant but now the giants can be seen on road and various parts of the district.



SCINTILLATING PERFORMANCE: Artistes of a dance troupe from Balimela performed Odissi dance on the second evening of 'Malyabanta Mahotsav' in Malkangiri, Saturday

2 killed in road mishap

Raigarh: A man and his father-in-law were killed as a motorcycle on which they were travelling was hit by a truck while they were overtaking it in front of a local post office at DNK Chowk under Raigarh block and this police limit in Nabarangpur district, Saturday. The deceased were identified as Laxman Jani, 30, a resident of Bhimatikira village Mundibeda panchayat, and his father-in-law as Bali Jani, 65, a resident of Marangali village of Ganjapara panchayat. Laxman along with Bali was going on the ill-fated motorcycle for some work. While they were overtaking a truck near DNK Chowk, they accidentally fell and came under the wheels of the truck. As a result the truck ran over Bali's head and Laxman's waist. While Bali died on the spot, Laxman died while undergoing treatment in a hospital.

Bid to shut down GEC Mineral Engg course draws flak



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Dec 16: A move to shut down the Mineral Engineering course at Government Engineering College in mineral-rich district of Keonjhar has drawn criticism from various quarters. In view of the interest of Keonjhar district's residents, the state government had launched the degree course in Mineral Engineering at the Government Engineering College in Keonjhar. However, the course is soon going to be discontinued due to incapability of the college authorities. The decision to drop the course has been taken by the board of governors in the college. This has sparked resentment and tension in the district. Mineral Engineering is a one-of-its-kind course with Keonjhar Government Engineering College being the lone institute in the entire country to provide the degree. No other engineering college in the country has facility for study

in this specialisation. Sources said that the board of governors in the college does not have any member from Keonjhar district. Taking advantage of the situation, the board has sent a letter to the state government urging to shut down the course. The Government Engineering College in Keonjhar has been declared as a centre of excellence. Many students after studying Mineral Engineering course from the college have got into many established companies in senior positions. Keonjhar, being a mineral-bearing district, must have facility for study in Mineral Engineering, Observers said. The college authorities have decided to shut down the course instead of attracting and encouraging students to enroll in the course. When contacted, Keonjhar Sadar MLA Mohan Majhi said he will complain against the college authorities before the state government.

Man facing trial for wife's murder found dead in jail

PNN & AGENCIES

Berhampur, Dec 16: An under-trial prisoner was found dead in a jail in Ganjam district Saturday, officials said. The body of Deepak Kumar Barik, 26, was found hanging from the shower pipe in the bathroom of the sub-jail at Bhanjanagar, they said. Barik, a resident of the Tarsingi area, was arrested last month for allegedly killing his wife, they added. He was in the jail since November 26, officials said. He went to the bathroom in the morning for a bath but did not come out for a long time. The guards got suspicious and knocked on the door. Since there was no response, they entered the bathroom and found him hanging by his towel from the shower, said Dandapani Patra, the superintendent of the sub-jail. He did not lock the door of the bathroom from inside, Patra said. Barik was immediately taken to the sub-divisional hospital where the doctors declared him dead, he said. The exact cause for the suicide is yet to be ascertained, he said. The body was handed over to his family after a post-mortem examination, he added. Police said a case of unnatural death was registered, and an investigation was underway.

AMA ODISHA, NABIN ODISHA

Funds sanctioned for merged school

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pottangi, Dec 16: Funds under the state government's 'Ama Odisha, Nabin Odisha' scheme have been sanctioned to a school which has been shut down after its merger with a nearby school under this block in Koraput district, a report said Saturday. The scheme aims at taking up measures to augment rural infrastructure for accelerated growth and transformation of villages. This has kicked up a row as ₹5 lakh was sanctioned under the programme to Sitampadu New Primary School at Sitampadu village under Ralegada panchayat of Pottangi block despite its closure after merger. The state government had decided to shut down the state-run schools having low enrolment and merge those with nearby schools. Accordingly, several

schools were shut down in the process and merged with other schools nearby. Accordingly, Sitampadu New Primary School also met with the same fate following its merger with nearby Tangini School. However, sanction of ₹5 lakh from the state government for the renovation of Sitampadu New Primary School under 'Ama Odisha, Nabin Odisha' scheme has started a row. After reports surfaced, block vice-chairperson Trinath Kata wondered whose interest is being safeguarded and alleged that government funds have been siphoned off in past -- not once but several times -- by announcing projects on the pretext of development by ignoring the local public representatives like sarpanches and samiti members. He demanded a high-level in-



quiry into the projects undertaken during the stint of former block development officer (BDO). ₹7 crore has been sanctioned to undertake developmental works in 14 panchayats under this block under the scheme, he said. However, he alleged that these funds are being misappropriated. Some influential politicians have managed

to sanction funds and are implementing the projects by themselves ignoring the elected sarpanches and samiti members, he alleged. In the panchayats where there are no ruling party representatives, the elected sarpanches and samiti members are being ignored and funds are being spent, locals alleged. Zilla Parishad member Tikai Gemel alleged that the state government is being defamed due to wrongdoings of some of their public representatives. When contacted, Assistant Engineer Biswanath Madali said the district Collector has stalled the implementation of the projects approved for the panchayats under 'Ama Odisha, Nabin Odisha' programme. Projects aimed at development of religious shrines are only being implemented, he added.



MATTER OF LIVELIHOOD: Two fishermen arrange their nets before leaving for fishing in Mahanadi in Sambalpur, Saturday

OP PHOTO

3 ex-employees convicted of bribery

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: Three former employees were convicted Saturday by Special Judge, Vigilance, Dhenkanal, for demanding and accepting a bribe from a contractor for the release of the final bill in connection with the execution of a cement concrete road. The three employees included former Junior Engineer (JE), Nilamani Nayak, who is currently working as Assistant Engineer (AE) in the office of the Executive Engineer, Quality Control Division, Rengali Right Canal Project, Mahisapat, Dhenkanal, Bharat Chandra Prusty, ex-head clerk (retired) and Banshidhar Pradhan, ex-cashier (retired) of Bhubaneswar. They were charged by Vigilance for demanding and accepting a bribe from a contractor for the release of the final bill in connection with the execution of a cement concrete road. Vigilance sources here said the court sentenced former JE



Nilamani Nayak, former head clerk (retired), and Bharat Chandra Prusty to undergo rigorous imprisonment (RI) for a period of two years and a fine of ₹20,000 each. The court ruled that in default of payment of the fine, they have to undergo further RI for a period of 6 months each for the offence U/s 7 PC Act, 1988. The court further sentenced them to undergo RI for a period of 2 years and a fine of ₹20,000 and in default of payment of fine, to undergo further RI for a period of 6 months more for the offence u/s 13(2) r/w 13(1)(d) of PC Act, 1988. They were further sentenced to undergo RI for a period of 6 months each for the offence u/s 120-B IPC. All the sentences are to run concurrently.

The court also convicted another accused, Banshidhar Pradhan, ex-cashier (retired) and sentenced him to undergo RI for a period of 1 year and a fine of ₹5,000. In default of payment of the fine, the convict would undergo further RI for a period of two months more for the offence u/s 7 PC Act, 1988. The court further sentenced him to undergo RI for a period of one year and fine of ₹5,000 and in default of payment of fine, to undergo further RI for a period of two months more for the offence u/s 13(2) r/w 13(1)(d) of PC Act, 1988. Both the sentences are to run concurrently. The Vigilance will now move the competent authority for the dismissal of Nilamani Nayak, who is currently working as an AE in the office of the Executive Engineer, Quality Control Division, Rengali Right Canal Project, Mahisapat, Dhenkanal, from service and the stoppage of the pension of Bharat Chandra Prusty, Banshidhar Pradhan, following their conviction.

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"Misfortunes one can endure – they come from outside, they are accidents. But to suffer for one's own faults – Ah! There is the sting of life." The adage found an expression in the devastating triple-train crash, involving Coromandel Express, Bangalore-Howrah Superfast Express and a goods train near Bahanaga Bazar station in Balasore district, June 2. The CBI which carried out an exhaustive probe attributed the tragedy to faulty signalling work, and lapses at multiple levels by Signalling and Telecom departments. The year will pass but the indelible trauma the families of the mishap victims suffered will certainly linger. As the year 2023 draws to an end, Orissa POST recapitulates the sequence of events leading to the devastating mishap that left 296 dead and over a thousand injured

296
DEAD

OVER 1,200
INJURED

THOUGH THERE WAS NO DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO CAUSE THE DISASTER, THERE ARE TELL-TALE SIGNS OF AN ATTEMPT TO HIDE THE INADEQUACIES AND DESTROY EVIDENCE AFTER THE TRAGEDY: CBI

TRAGEDY ON TRACKS

On the evening of June 2, 2023, the 12841 Coromandel Express was moving at 128 kmph, heading for the southern city of Chennai, when it approached Bahanaga Bazar station in Balasore district. What followed was India's deadliest train crash in more than two decades as the train careened into a stationary goods train resulting in a three-train collision and derailment killing at least 296 people and injuring more than 1,200.

THE CARNAGE

Shortly after sunset, at about 6:55 pm, the Coromandel Express was hurtling on the up main line at full throttle when it was wrongly directed by the interlocking system into a loop line, where a freight train loaded with iron ore was parked.

As the Coromandel Express rammed the goods train from the rear, its 21 coaches got derailed. Three of them toppled over to the down main line on which, in a horrific coincidence, the 12864 Bangalore-Howrah Superfast Express was passing exactly then. As an impact of the collision, two unreserved coaches and the brake van of the Howrah-bound superfast express train were derailed.

The accident, which happened about 200 km from state capital Bhubaneswar, led to chaotic scenes as 1,200 rescuers, aided by locals, climbed atop the wrecked trains to break open doors and windows using cutting torches to free survivors and pull out the dead. More than 24 hours after the crash, the mammoth search-and-rescue effort was declared over, but more than 1,000 personnel remained on the site to remove the mangled coaches and clear as well as restore the tracks so that rail operations could resume.

At least three NDRF and four ODRAF units be-



sides 15 fire rescue teams, 100 doctors, 200 police personnel and as many ambulances were mobilised for the rescue operations.

UNRESERVED COACHES WORST DAMAGED

Analysts say the carriages worst damaged were the non-air conditioned ones, some of which were unreserved coaches that are often the most crowded and that allow anyone with the cheapest category ticket to board without a specific seat reserved for them.

LOCALS' HEROIC ACT HAILED

People from nearby villagers were the first responders to the triple train tragedy. Using mobile flashlights and wits, they worked in the dark to hold the fort

until rescue teams arrived. Authorities from the nearby Balasore district headquarters arrived 30 minutes after the disaster, and then took time to set up the infrastructure for rescue. Villagers worked overnight and defied scorching heat the next day to help the rescue teams. Many were seen guiding relatives of the passengers to Bahanaga High School, where bodies were kept for identification. They were even seen comforting the relatives of the victims. Youths, in hundreds, queued up at local hospitals to donate blood for the injured. Their noble humanitarian act in the hour of crisis was praised by one and all.

100
DOCTORS

7
DISASTER RESPONSE UNITS

1,200
RESCUERS

200 **200**
AMBULANCES **POLICE PERSONNEL**

IDENTITY A HERCULEAN TASK

Bodies of the victims were initially kept at Bahanaga High School in Balasore, due to its close proximity to the crash site, and later shifted to AIIMS and Capital Hospital. Wailing relatives of the passengers from West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar and Tamil Nadu were seen doing the rounds of hospitals and morgues in Balasore, Cuttack and Bhubaneswar.

Apart from setting up helpdesks and issuing a dedicated helpline number, the Odisha government uploaded photographs of the dead on BMC

website and even published advertisements in newspapers for their identification. As a last resort for identification, DNA tests were done on many bodies that were beyond recognition owing to severe mutilation. As days went by and many bodies remained unidentified, special containers were brought from Paradip Port to preserve those for a long. After preserving those for over four months at AIIMS, the BMC cremated 28 bodies in October.

PARALLEL PROBE

Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw June 4 announced a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe along with a parallel inquiry by the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS). The CRS submitted its report June 30 blaming faulty signalling work, lapses at multiple levels in signalling and telecom department.



ARRESTED FOR LAPSES

Mohammad Amir Khan, Pappu Kumar and Arun Kumar Mohanta

WORST DISASTERS

With 64,000km of track, India's railway network is the fourth largest in the world – after the US, Russia and China – and carries about 13 million passengers on 14,000 passenger trains every day. It is also a lifeline for trade, with more than 1.5 billion tonne of freight being transported annually. Here's a look at some of the worst rail disasters in India.



- **2016 – Nov 20:** 146 people died when Indore-Patna Express train derailed in Uttar Pradesh
- **2010 – May 28:** 146 passengers were killed when a train derailed and crashed into a freight train in West Bengal
- **2002 – Sept 10:** 140 people died when Rajdhani Express, heading from Calcutta to New Delhi, veered off its tracks and plunged into the swollen Dhawe river in Gaya
- **1999 – Aug 2:** 285 people were killed in a collision between two trains in Gaisal in the eastern state of West Bengal
- **1998 – Nov 26:** 212 passengers lost their lives when the Sealdah Express – travelling in thick mist – slammed into a train that had derailed in the northern state of Punjab
- **1995 – Aug 20:** 300 people died in a collision between two trains at Ferozabad, near Agra
- **1981 – June 6:** 800 passengers killed when a train derailed while crossing a bridge in eastern Bihar and plunged into the river below



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan visited the spot June 3



On June 4, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced ₹5 lakh for the deceased kin and ₹1 lakh for the injured



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at the mishap site June 3

On June 2, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced ₹10 lakh ex-gratia for the deceased and ₹2 lakh for the injured. Vaishnaw informed the Rajya Sabha December 15, 2023 that a total of ₹51.37 crore has been disbursed to the families of the injured as well as the deceased.

SOLACE

FOCUS SOCIETY

JOBS MATTER



When decent, middle-class jobs disappear – owing to automation, trade, or austerity policies – there are not just direct economic effects, but also far-reaching social and political ones

Conventional economics has always had a blind spot when it comes to jobs. The problem goes back to Adam Smith, who placed consumers, rather than workers, on the throne of economic life. What matters for well-being, he argued, is not how or what we produce, but whether we can consume our preferred bundle of goods and services. Modern economics has since codified this approach by capturing individual well-being in the form of a preference function defined over our consumption bundle. We maximise “utility” by selecting the goods and services that offer us the most satisfaction. Though each consumer is also a worker of some kind, jobs enter the equation only implicitly through the income they provide, by determining how much money we have available to spend on consumption.



Dani Rodrik

THE TROUBLE NOW IS THAT MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES ARE NO LONGER THE LABOUR-ABSORBING SECTORS THEY ONCE WERE

Yet the nature of one’s job has implications far beyond one’s budget. Jobs are a source of personal dignity and social recognition. They help define who we are, how we contribute to society, and the esteem that society in turn bestows on us. We know that jobs matter because people who lose them tend to experience large and persistent reductions in life satisfaction. The monetary equivalent of such drops is typically a multiple of a person’s income, rendering compensation through government transfers (such as unemployment insurance) infeasible for all practical purposes.

More broadly, jobs are the cement of social life. When decent, middle-class jobs disappear – owing to automation, trade, or austerity policies – there are not just direct economic effects, but also far-reaching social and political ones. Crime rises, families break apart, addiction and suicide rates soar, and support for authoritarianism increases.

When economists and policymakers think of social justice, they typically focus on the “distributive” variety – who

gets what? But, as political philosopher Michael J. Sandel argues, perhaps a more important yardstick is “contributive justice,” which refers to the opportunities to win the social respect that comes with good jobs and “producing what others need and value.”

While these issues are typically considered in the context of advanced economies, they are equally important for developing countries. In a rich country, a good job might be defined as one that enables a path to middle-class living standards, and that upholds core labour rights such as safe working conditions, collective bargaining, and regulations against arbitrary dismissal. In a poor country, a good job is typically one that simply affords a higher living standard than unproductive, back-breaking subsistence agriculture or a precarious existence in the informal sector.

In fact, people moving from bad jobs to better jobs encapsulates the entire process of structural change that drives economic development. Unlocking this process in a rapid, sustainable manner is crucial, and industrialisation, historically, has been the main engine for doing so.

The trouble now is that man-

ufacturing industries are no longer the labour-absorbing sectors they once were. A combination of factors – particularly the increased skill- and capital-intensity of modern manufacturing methods and stiff international competition to join global value chains – has made it very difficult for developing economies to increase employment in formal manufacturing.

The inevitable consequence of these trends is that the bulk of the better jobs will have to be generated in services, both in developing and developed countries. But since most services in developing countries are highly unproductive and informal, this shift poses a major challenge. Making matters worse, most governments are unaccustomed to thinking of service sectors as growth engines. Growth policies – whether they relate to research and development, governance, regulation, or industrial policies – typically target large manufacturing firms that compete on world markets.

Difficult though it may be, governments must learn how to enhance productivity and employment simultaneously in labour-intensive service sectors. That means adopting measures with many of the same features of “modern industrial

policy,” whereby the state, in exchange for job creation, pursues close, iterative collaboration with firms to remove obstacles to their expansion.

There are already some examples of this model around the world. Consider the Indian state of Haryana’s partnership (begun in 2018) with the ride-hailing services Ola and Uber. Established with the goal of increasing employment for young people by making it easier for these firms to identify and hire drivers, this public-private partnership is based on a clear quid pro quo. Haryana has eased regulations that hampered the services’ growth, shared databases of unemployed youth, and held exclusive job fairs for the companies, which in turn have made (soft) commitments to employ a meaningful number of young people. The agreement is dynamic. Allowing for the terms to adapt to changing circumstances helps to build mutual trust without binding the firms to rigid conditionalities. In less than a year, the partnership has created more than 44,000 new jobs for Haryana’s youth.

Ultimately, economic growth and equity both require a jobs-centered approach to development. While economic growth is possible only if workers move toward better, more productive jobs, equity requires improvements in the employment prospects for workers at the bottom of the income distribution. A growing middle class will then, in turn, boost domestic demand and reinforce job creation in services.

A services-based model cannot generate the kind of growth miracles that export-oriented industrialisation produced in the past. But it can still lead to higher-quality growth, with much greater social inclusion and a broader middle class.

The writer is Professor of International Political Economy at Harvard Kennedy School.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM SPORTS

There’s nothing like Test cricket!

The popularity of the conventional form of cricket, ‘Test Matches’ may be on the wane, however, it is the only way one can measure the ability of a cricketer. The five days of play for men and four days for women truly bring to the fore some of the most important traits of the game that one misses in the shorter versions. It requires concentration, consistency, control, fitness, discipline, mental strength and good planning while batting as well as bowling.

Test cricket needed an infusion of change in the 70s as the sport was getting into a state of dullness and boredom. Cricketers, in order to be successful, then played cautiously and so it led to more matches being drawn rather than bearing a result. Kerry Packer brought into play a cricket circus that focused on entertainment and action. His colourful night cricket filled with legendary players from around the world captured the hearts of fans and followers. Limited overs came into play and colourful attire became the fashionable alternative. Cricket took a turn towards a fun-filled, fast-paced, extravagant and result-oriented sport. This was just the spark that was re-

quired to bring some spice into the slow-paced movements that cricket had fallen into.

The outcome of this transformation, however, was that some cricketers with average skills rose to prominence. Cricket needed action and what emerged next was the introduction of field and bowling restrictions with Power-plays. The boundaries were shortened to create more sixes and fours and the basics and skills that one required earlier to play the game were not so important to succeed. The limited-overs cricket that finally converged into the most popular version of T20 is a spectacle for spectators. However, one was pleased to learn how it is not as satisfying for a cricketer. Top women and men cricketers are emphasising their preference to play Test. This is music to a cricket connoisseur’s ears. The major issue that Test cricket faces against its limited-overs rivals is that of financial and commercial returns. Cricketers may feel that Test is the ultimate test of their abilities, however, the crowd and majority of followers think differently.

The ICC has realised the im-

portance of pushing forward the cause of Test through a World Test Cricket Championship. However, it needs a superlative effort from all cricket boards to create an atmosphere and interest to make it happen.

The Bangladesh versus New Zealand series was the start of an exciting new cycle of the Test Championship. Bangladesh at home brought about a historic win in the 1st Test match only to thereafter lose the next in a close encounter. Although the series was drawn, an extra match would have been just what the doctor ordered. That a 2-match series was what time permitted is precisely why Test cricket will be looked at as an inferior option.

India too in South Africa are playing just two Test matches, it truly diffuses the very essence of what Test cricket is all about. The tenacity and skills to sustain a full-fledged encounter needs over 4 or 5 matches. The batters and bowlers need to continuously innovate to deceive each other and that is what makes cricket an absorbing and interesting sport. Excessive exposure of limited-overs version has limited them in thinking and bowling as a Test cricketer. In failing

to keep a consistent line and length, bowling long spells took its toll on all bowlers.

It is wonderful to see that Test is gradually making its way into women’s cricket. The most redeeming factor is that women cricketers are pressing to play more Tests and this truly augments well for the sport. Watching Indian batters pile up a huge total of over 400 runs on 1st day of play against a strong English attack is a remarkable feat. These very batters in limited-overs game get lost between playing normal cricketing shots and end up playing ugly shots in trying to hit the ball out of the park. Indian women stole the show playing patiently and skillfully showcasing good technique and a solid defence.

Seeing women in whites was a pleasant sight and the way they played Test cricket was a true reflection as to why they want to play more of it. After all, watching a woman subtly place the ball between two fielders to the fence is far better than a woman’s swashbuckling hit or heave that one associates with chopping wood.

The writer is a former India cricketer.



Yajurvindra Singh

THE FIVE DAYS OF PLAY FOR MEN AND FOUR DAYS FOR WOMEN TRULY BRING TO THE FORE SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT TRAITS OF THE GAME

Evolution of consciousness is the central motive of terrestrial existence.

SRI AUROBINDO



Irrational Laws

A rational nation, a reasonable state, should be able to distinguish between a peaceful protest, however spirited, and an act of terrorism. That we no longer can is a reflection of two things. One is India’s laws which have always been bad but have become demented. The other is our inability to separate the state from the nation. Recent events, whose details we do not need to go into here, shine a light on both. We need to see how, and this is not limited to the events in our Parliament.

Cattle slaughter is an economic offence in India and not a religious crime. This is because the Constitution’s Directive Principle on this issue advises us that cattle are important for the economy. The Constituent Assembly debates are filled with earnest Congressmen telling the nation that one reason India was malnourished was because there was insufficient milk for our children. And to reverse this it was necessary that cow slaughter be banned. No evidence was given from elsewhere in the world because none existed. In its early manifestoes the Jana Sangh opposed the use of tractors because that would mean that bullocks would have no work.

All this has changed over the years of course. India is a milk surplus nation that exports its produce. And tractors have long eclipsed bullocks. But cattle slaughter laws not only remain but have been tightened. Gujarat’s punishment for cattle slaughter is now life imprisonment. No other economic crime attracts this but we have accepted that we are so full of passion in this that we cannot turn back from this path. The law comes with reversal of burden of proof. In 2019, a Gujarati Muslim was accused of slaughtering a cow to serve beef at his daughter’s wedding. The police told the court they could not prove that this had happened. The forensic sciences laboratory said the same thing. The judge sentenced the man to 10 years in jail nonetheless saying that it was for him to prove that he was innocent and not for the state to prove his guilt. Gujarat High Court suspended the sentence on the grounds of ‘judicial discretion.’ Perhaps the court was embarrassed that we have such laws on the book in this era. But the interesting thing is that you could rationally argue both sides. The higher court was right in overturning the sentence. But the sentence was the result of a law and the judge was not out of place in convicting the man.

Today saying something is a ‘security threat’ is sufficient to jail, possibly for years if the present is any indication, a group of youngsters making a point. Whose security? What threat? These are waters too deep for us to venture into because it requires adults to consider such things and we are not adults.

In 1919 Gandhi led an all-India strike against the Rowlatt Act. In support a crowd gathered in Amritsar to join the protest at Jallianwala Bagh. Punjab’s governor Sir Michael O’Dwyer claimed British rule was under threat and responded with violence, unleashing the Gurkha and Baloch Regiments on the civilians, killing over 300.

The British passed the Rowlatt Act in the face of opposition from all of the Indian members of the Imperial Legislative Council. The British claimed the law would affect very few Indians. However Gandhi called it an “affront to the nation.” So what was so offensive about the Rowlatt Act (more properly, the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, 1919)? Why were Indians so angered by it that they were holding public demonstrations and opposing it in the Council? The Act did away with fundamental principles of the rule of law. It could hold people without charge or trial and it did away with jury trials, in favour of in-camera trials by judges. This is called administrative detention, meaning the jailing of someone without a crime having been committed, merely on the suspicion that they will commit a crime in future. That anger which we had when it came to the British trampling over our rights appears to have vanished when it comes to oppression under government run by our own.

The UAPA, under which many Indians have been charged and are in jail, does not define ‘terrorist’ or ‘terrorism’. The law (readers would do well to read the latest version of it) is broad enough to name vast numbers of Indians as terrorists because it is so loosely framed. It has to be opposed, by all of us. At the age of 22, Bhagat Singh became a national celebrity in India. His act of rebellion, his desire to not cause harm to the enemy – the bombs were only whiz-bangs that produced smoke – and his ability to express himself clearly ensured that the media and the public were both riveted by him. What was the law that he was opposing? Bhagat Singh threw his smoke bombs to oppose the Public Safety Bill. It allowed the government to jail people without trial. Just like UAPA. Bhagat Singh was right to oppose it. He was right to oppose it in the manner he did. We call him a martyr because he was punished for doing what he did for the rest of us. We call the young people who did exactly the same thing and for the same reason terrorists.



Aakar Patel

The UAPA, under which many Indians have been charged and are in jail, does not define ‘terrorist’ or ‘terrorism’

WISDOM CORNER

Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful. ALBERT SCHWEITZER

Even a happy life cannot be without a measure of darkness, and the word happy would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness. It is far better to take things as they come along with patience and equanimity. CARL JUNG

People sacrifice the present for the future. But life is available only in the present. That is why we should walk in such a way that every step can bring us to the here and the now. THICH NHAT HANH

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1790: Discovery of the Aztec calendar stone. Also known as the Stone of the Five Eras, the sculpture was excavated in Mexico City.
- 1807: With Napoleon’s decree of Milan, all neutral countries and allies of France were forbidden to trade with Britain.
- 1892: The first issue of Vogue was published; initially a weekly high-society journal, it became a hugely influential American fashion and lifestyle magazine.
- 1903: First flight of the Wright Flyer. The powered aircraft was made by the Wright brothers and was the first such aircraft to take flight.
- 1989: After appearing as a cartoon short, the animated television series The Simpsons debuted as a Christmas special; it became a weekly series in 1990.
- 2010: Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire after being harassed by municipal officials, giving rise to Tunisia’s Jasmine Revolution and helping inspire the Arab Spring; he died from his injuries the following month.

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, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Enforce accountability

Sir, This refers to “Fresh IT searches at BDP,” Orissa POST, Dec 15. The eye-popping images of almirahs full cash in a distillery run by Jharkhand Congress MP Dheeraj Sahu in Odisha once again brought the obscenity of black money to the foreground. Their volume was so huge that half a dozen cash-counting machines of the Income Tax department broke down. The huge amount of Rs 300 crore is said to be the highest-ever haul in any I-T raid. Liquor business does generate lots of cash but keeping it off books and in such massive amounts is shocking. Were the currency notes just his stash or did they include the dirty money of others, only Sahu can tell. Politicians are known to park their kickbacks with industrialists to stay off tax radar. However, as the raids are coming ahead of the Parliament elections, the issue of corruption and purging of black money can turn out to be the poll plank. While the Congress is trying to insulate the party from Sahu and the huge sum of black money, BJP fiercely attacked Congress even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that all dirty money will be returned to people. He went on to include it in the list of ‘Modi’s guarantees’. The volume of currency pieces found in Sahu’s distillery was humongous perhaps because Rs 2,000 notes were sucked out in the last few months. But, Sahu had declared only a minuscule portion of the combined wealth of his family in his election affidavit. The Election Commission of India ought to go after him to enforce accountability if it really wants to clean up the system.

N Sathasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Man-elephant conflict

Sir, To address man-elephant conflict, the need of the hour is to create new forests or to resort to reforestation. Trees such as kumbi, salia, sedges, bamboos and palm should be planted and ponds need to be dug out, enabling food, water and shelter for elephants. Fast growing tree methods may be adopted to intensify the density of forests or create new forests in a short period of time. Further, solar fences should be built along forest borders and surveillance drones need to be utilised to safeguard forests.

Nabnii Panigrahi, RAYAGADA

'Can't set time frame for restoration of normalcy'

Efforts are on by the Central and state governments as well as the security forces to bring lasting peace through dialogue and other means, says Lt Gen RP Kalita

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Dec 16: General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Command of Indian Army Lt Gen RP Kalita Saturday said that peace is returning to the conflict-ridden Manipur but there cannot be set time frame for the restoration of normalcy in north-eastern state.

He said that efforts are on by the central and state governments as well as the security forces to bring a lasting peace through dialogue and other means.

"The Assam Rifles was called in after violence erupted in Manipur on May 3. We worked in a synergised



MANIPUR VIOLENCE

manner with state police and Central Armed Paramilitary Forces (CAPF) and succeeded in bringing about some semblance of normalcy in the next 7-10 days. The law-and-order situation was brought largely under control," the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Command said while addressing the media on the sidelines of a solemn wreath laying ceremony at Vijay Smarak in Fort William, Kolkata, to mark India's victory against Pakistan in the

1971 War that led to the liberation of Bangladesh.

He said that in Manipur there have been sporadic incidents of violence but the efforts are on through dialogue and a proactive role played by the forces to restore normalcy.

He said that, however, the large number of weapons in the hands of both communities and the instability in Myanmar, across the border, has had its impact.

"There are possibilities of sporadic incidents but all efforts are

to restore normalcy. While a reconciliation process is on from the governments' side, our objective is to bring down violence," Lt Gen Kalita said.

He said that the transportation of the mortal remains of victims of the violence took place on Friday and 19 bodies have already been cremated at Kangpokpi.

"The remaining will also be cremated in a couple of days. A burial ceremony will also take place at Churachandpur soon. I am positive that things will improve," he said. He said that, however, it is very difficult to put a time limit.

"There are a lot of historic issues and legacies involved between the two communities and such things take time," Lt Gen Kalita said.

He said that the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is under control.

Responding to a question on China's decision to rename the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) as Xizang, he said that India is clear about her territory and the area under occupation by China.

More SITs to probe violence in Manipur



The SITs comprising women officers would oversee the investigation of crimes involving sexual violence

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Imphal, Dec 16: Special Investigation Teams (SITs), constituted after SC order, to probe the incidents of violence, murder, rape and various other crimes during the ethnic violence in Manipur, started their inquiry and the remaining would soon start their tasks, officials said.

The officials of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and SITs are facing protests by the local organisations

and Tengenoual districts. These nine SITs would be supervised on a weekly basis by an officer of the rank of Deputy Inspector General of Police, Inspector General of Police or Additional Director General. Manipur Director General of Police Rajiv Singh would monitor the cases, being probed by the SITs, on a fortnightly basis.

The SITs comprising women officers would oversee the investigation of crimes involving sexual violence. Assam cadre IPS officer Anand Mishra has been deputed to the SIT, which is to investigate the cases of violence in Manipur while another officer of Assam Police Service Randip Kumar Barua has also been included into the SIT.

Assam's Commissioner Home and Political Department Deba Prasad Misra in an order earlier this week placed both Mishra and Barua at the disposal of the Manipur government to take charge of the SITs. Former Deputy National Security Adviser D.D. Padsalgikar has been appointed by the SC to monitor and supervise cases handed over to CBI and those of SITs.

Peace deal with pro-talks ULFA faction in last leg

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 16: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said that signing of a peace deal with the ULFA's pro-negotiations group, is in the final stage which is expected to be finalised this month or in January.

He also issued an invitation for talks to the banned outfit's hardline faction led by Paresh Baruah. Sarma held meetings in the national capital with Directors of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), Tapan Deka, and National Investigation Agency, (NIA) Dinkar Gupta about issues pertaining to security.

The Chief Minister held discussions with Gupta on Rohingya infiltration, regarding which Assam has filed a case and the agency had conducted searches in as many as 44 locations throughout the Northeast.

He told reporters later that final touches are being given to the peace agreement with the pro-talks ULFA faction led by Aranbinda Rajkhowa, which is expected to be signed this month or in January. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister reached

MANIPUR VIOLENCE

out to the Baruah-led side, offering an olive branch, saying that ULFA-I should reach a permanent peaceful settlement in the larger interest of the state and its citizens, as violence will inhibit growth and development in Assam.

"Violence is pointless and will slow down the pace of progress. At a time when Assam is experiencing growth and investments are flooding the region, it will poison the atmosphere," Sarma said.

Recruitment Notice 04/2023 National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation, Sehore. Includes details on posts, age limits, and application procedures.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, SAMBALPUR. Includes details on e-procurement for construction work.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA SAMBALPUR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, SAMBALPUR. Includes details on national competitive bidding for road construction.

EAST COAST RAILWAY Tender Notice No. 43-SBP-TRD-OT-2023-24 Dt. 11.12.2023. Includes details on work for rebuilding of 05 nos. bridges.

Bank of India POSSESSION NOTICE. Includes details on the secured assets of a borrower and the enforcement of security interest.

Assam to bring bill to ban polygamy in Feb

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 16: At the upcoming session of the Assam Assembly in February 2024, a bill to outlaw polygamy will be introduced, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced.

According to him, after months of consultation with several people and organisations, the bill has been developed. "The bill to ban polygamy will be placed on the Assam assembly floor, which will commence from February 4," Sarma told reporters in the

national capital Friday.

The Chief Minister had previously declared that the measure would include certain provisions aimed at putting an end to 'love jihad' within the state. Officials reported that in response to a public notice seeking comments on the proposed law prohibiting the practice of multiple marriages, the state administration had received as many as 149 recommendations.

They added that 146 of these recommendations supported the measure, demon-

strating the broad support of the public. Three organisations have stated that they are against the bill.

August 21, the state administration published a notice asking for public input about the prohibition of polygamy. The notification asked people of Assam to send in their opinions via mail or email by August 30.

In addition, the state government established an expert group to investigate the legislative authority of the Assam state legislature to pass such a law.

THE KARUR VYSYA BANK LTD., Asset Recovery Branch (ARB)-Kolkata. Includes details on e-auction sale of immovable assets and various notices.



Folk dancers perform 'Chhau dance' during 'Lok Mahotsav', festival of folk and tribal arts of Eastern India, in Birbhum, West Bengal



Georgians with EU and national flags gather to celebrate Georgia's EU candidacy at the Rustaveli street in Tbilisi, Georgia



Major General Gaurav Gautam, GOC, 26 Infantry Division pays homage at Balidan Stambh on the occasion of Vijay Diwas in Jammu



A surfer dives off his board while surfing at sunset in Encinitas, California, US



A boy flies a kite in a mustard field during a foggy winter morning in Nadia, West Bengal



A woman walks past a car covered with snow after heavy snowfall in Moscow, Russia



A local resident inspects the roof of a house damaged by recent shelling in the course of Russia-Ukraine conflict in the town of Yasnyuvata in Donetsk



A farmer collects water calltrop nuts on the outskirts of Jabalpur

national

of the day quote

Poor security arrangements in the Prime Minister's dream project is a matter of shame. The government is trying to scare people in the name of security

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

Doctors should work in the spirit of "Nation first", taking inspiration from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of making India a developed nation by 2047

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | UNION HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE MINISTER

Times have changed and the report card speaks. Lies do not get votes but work does

JP NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Jitu Patwari new MP Cong chief

New Delhi: The Congress replaced Kamal Nath as the party's Madhya Pradesh unit chief Saturday and appointed Jitu Patwari in his place. The development comes days after the party's humiliating defeat in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly polls, where the Congress, led by Nath, failed to replace the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government. Sources said Nath was asked to tender his resignation soon after the poll results were out. Nath met party chief Mallikarjun Kharge and tendered his resignation thereafter.

Another arrest in drug haul case

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Saturday said a key accused wanted in connection with the recovery of 102 kg heroin at the Attari border in April 2022 has been arrested. Amrpal Singh, a resident of Tarn Taran district in Punjab, was taken into custody by the NIA on Friday, an agency spokesperson said in a statement. He is the third person to be arrested in the case. The probe so far indicated that Singh was the handler of cash and laundered drug proceeds through banking and hawala channels.

Two lakh lives, infra threatened due to GLOFs in Third Pole: Study



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 16: Roughly two lakh lives are endangered by potential glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) in the Third Pole, spanning the Tibetan Plateau, the surrounding Himalayas, Hindu Kush, and Tianshan Mountain ranges, a new research has found.

Triggered by climate change, these potential GLOFs also threaten the infrastructure in the region, including buildings, hydropower projects, roads and bridges, researchers at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, China, said in their study.

Of the 5,535 glacial lakes in the region, they have identified almost 1,500 that have a "high potential" for outburst floods. After analysing data since 1900, they also found that yearly GLOF occurrences heightened in fre-

quency, from an average of 1.5 events during 1981-1990 to 2.7 during 2011-2020.

Overall, these findings are concerning for countries like India, China, Kazakhstan, Nepal, and Pakistan which are exposed to GLOFs in the Third Pole, the researchers said in their study published in the journal Nature Communications.

"Approximately 55,808 buildings, 105 existing or planned hydropower projects, 194 (square kilometres) of farmland, 5,005 kilometres of roads, and 4,038 bridges are threatened by the potential GLOFs," said the study's corresponding author Weicai Wang, associate professor, Chinese Academy of Sciences.

"Our findings underscore the significant challenges posed by the substantial potential disaster volumes in these economically disadvantaged and highly vulnerable



We cannot go ahead in the country without someone telling all concerned that we must respect the doctrine of separation of powers

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

Cops make sixth arrest in Parl security breach case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 16: A sixth arrest has been made in the Parliament security breach case - Mahesh Kumawat from Rajasthan's Nagaur who was allegedly in contact with the other accused for the last two years for hatching the conspiracy and had destroyed their mobile phones to get rid of the evidence, police said Saturday.

All the accused, who have been remanded in police custody for a week, are from different states - Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. As the probe widened, police teams have left for their respective states for further investigation into the December 13 incident, sources said. Special Judge Hardeep Kaur remanded Kumawat, 32, in Delhi police's custody after the public prosecutor told the court that the accused "wanted to create anarchy in the country so that he can compel the government to meet their unjust and illegal demands".

Sources said Kumawat will be confronted with the other accused during his questioning. On Saturday, a team of the Delhi Police's Special Cell collected CCTV footage from inside and outside Parliament.

The Special Cell, which is investigating the case, also plans to record the statement of BJP MP Pratap Simha, who had authorised the visitor passes for the two men who breached security to enter the House, sources said.

Meanwhile, Lok Speaker Om Birla wrote a letter to all MPs, informing them that he had constituted a "High Powered Committee" that would review all aspects of security in the Parliament complex and formulate a concrete action plan to ensure

that such incidents do not recur. This committee is in addition to a probe panel headed by the CRPF director general which is investigating the incident. After Kumawat was arrested following his questioning and produced in court on Saturday, sources alleged that he was part of a parliament security breach plan where he had to stand on another gate with canisters but he could not come on December 13, the day of the incident.

"He (Kumawat) was in contact with other accused persons in hatching the conspiracy for the last two years. He helped the mastermind accused, Lalit Jha, in the destruction of mobile phone to destroy evidence and to hide the larger conspiracy," the prosecutor told the court, adding he was required to be questioned to unearth the entire conspiracy. The police sought his custody for 15 days. The defence counsel opposed the police application, claiming that the Kumawat was arrested without any reason in a violation of his fundamental rights.

During the arguments, the prosecutor told the court that the custody of the accused was required "to find the actual motive behind the attack and his association with enemy country

and terrorist organisations". According to Delhi police, Kumawat has been arrested on charges of destruction of evidence and criminal conspiracy. He was also a member of the now-deleted Bhagat Singh Fan Club page created by the accused, they said.

It is suspected that Kumawat, a resident of Kuchaman city, helped Jha stay in Nagaur where he fled after the Wednesday incident. Kumawat had come on his own to a police station along with Lalit Jha on Thursday night and both were handed over to the Special Cell. He was being questioned since then, the police said.

The police will soon take Jha to Nagaur. He will be taken to the place where he claimed to have destroyed his and others' mobile phones, another official said. "Like the other accused, Kumawat talked about revolutionary ideas," another official said adding he used to motivate other youths to join their group.

Meanwhile, police officials said the five accused arrested earlier have revealed that they explored self-immolation and distribution of pamphlets before settling on the plan to jump into the Lok Sabha chamber with smoke canisters.



There has definitely been a security lapse, but the reason behind it is the country's biggest issue - unemployment

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

RAGHAV APPOINTED AAP LEADER IN RS

The Aam Aadmi Party has appointed its MP Raghav Chadha as the leader of the party in Rajya Sabha in place of Sanjay Singh, sources said



COVID sub-strain JN.1 detected in Kerala

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 16: A case of COVID-19 sub-variant JN.1 was detected in Kerala December 8, official sources said Saturday.

The sample from a 79-year-old woman had returned a positive result in an RT-PCR test on November 18, they said, adding that she had mild symptoms of influenza-like illnesses (ILI) and had recovered from COVID-19.

More than 90 per cent of the COVID-19 cases in India at present are mild and they are in home isolation, the sources said. Earlier, an Indian traveller was also detected with JN.1 sub-variant in Singapore. The person was a native of Tamil Nadu's Tiruchirappalli district and had travelled to Singapore October 25.

No increase in cases was observed in Tiruchirappalli district or other places in Tamil Nadu following the strain being detected in them. "No other case of JN.1 variant has been detected in India," the source said.

The JN.1 sub-variant - first identified in Luxembourg and since spreading to several coun-



tries -- is a descendant of the Pirola variant (BA.2.86). It contains a significant number of unique mutations, particularly in the spike protein, that may contribute to increased infectivity and immune evasion, a source explained.

Navy responds to hijacking incident



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 16: The Indian Navy has swiftly responded to a call for help following a hijacking incident involving a Malta-flagged cargo vessel with 18 crew on board in the Arabian Sea, officials said Saturday.

The Indian Navy swung into action after receiving a Mayday message (distress call) on the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operation (UKMTO) portal on December 14. The vessel MV Ruen indicated that six 'pirates' persons had illegally boarded it, the officials said.

The Navy's maritime patrol aircraft undertook surveillance missions in the area and its warship on anti-piracy patrol in the Gulf Aden were deployed to locate and assist MV Ruen. The Navy said its aircraft flew over the hi-

jackied vessel and movement of the vessel is being monitored. It said the vessel is now heading towards the coast of Somalia.

"Responding swiftly to the developing situation, the Indian Navy diverted its naval maritime patrol aircraft undertaking surveillance in the area and its warship on anti-piracy patrol in the Gulf Aden to locate and assist MV Ruen," an Indian Navy spokesperson said.

"The aircraft overflew the hijacked vessel on early morning of December 15 and the aircraft has been continuously monitoring movement of the vessel, which is now heading towards the coast of Somalia," he said. The official said the Indian Navy's warship deployed in the Gulf of Aden for anti-piracy patrol has also intercepted MV Ruen on Saturday morning.

21 IEDs RECOVERED

Bijapur: Security forces Saturday recovered 21 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) planted by Naxalites along an under-construction road in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, police said. The IEDs with pressure mechanisms were planted between Palnar and Saavnar villages where road construction is underway, a police official said. A joint team of District Reserve Guard, Bastar Fighters, which are units of the state police, the Central Reserve Police Force's 85th battalion and 22nd battalion, which included bomb disposal squads, the elite CoBRA's 202nd battalion and district police had launched an operation from their newly-set up Palnar camp to trace landmines, he said.

India, Oman to expand ties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 16: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Saturday adopted a vision document to shore up bilateral cooperation in around 10 key areas and pushed for concluding a comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA) as early as possible during their "productive" talks to inject new momentum in India-Oman strategic ties.

PM Modi and the Omani ruler also discussed the situation arising out of the Hamas-Israel conflict, the challenge of terrorism as well as the larger need to try and achieve a two-state solution to the Palestine issue as a way forward, according to Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra.

The two sides also announced the third tranche of Oman-India joint investment fund worth USD 300 million (around Rs 2,500 crore) that would be used for channelising investment into the fastest growing sectors of the Indian economy.

The investment fund was started as a 50:50 joint venture between the SBI and Oman investment authority with the first tranche of USD 100 million and the second one of USD 200 million.

At a media briefing, the foreign secretary said India and Oman also signed agreements providing for cooperation in the field of information technology, combating financial crimes, culture and one for the establishment of a Hindi chair of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations in Oman.

regions," said Wang.

Warming temperatures and altered rainfall patterns stemming from climate change are considered to have caused over 10,000 Third Pole glaciers to retreat over the past three decades, facilitating the formation of thousands of glacial lakes.

When triggered by events like glacier collapse, snow avalanches, landslides, or the collapse of natural dams, glacial lakes can release vast volumes of water swiftly, leading to destructive outbursts, or GLOFs.

Given the enormous threat these GLOFs pose to the exposed communities and industries, previous research have made efforts to understand their triggers and assess their risks to enable preventive decision-making.

However, the researchers said, these studies contain several inconsistencies, such as the number of glacial lakes reported, arising out of the differences in the inquiry methods employed. They said that depending on the definition used, the number varied from 10,000 to 30,000 in the 2015-2020 period.

In this study, the researchers identified and classified all glacial lakes in the Third Pole region based on their position and characteristics in relation to their source glacier, using satellite images taken between 2018 and 2022.

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER
WATCO DIVISION, CUTTACK
Telephone/e-mail/FAX: 0671-2547115/gmwatcocct@gmail.com
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
Bid Identification No. **GMWATCO (W)-06/2023-24 Dtd.15.12.2023**
Name of the work: Provision of 2.00 Lakh ltr. capacity RCC UGR, laying of loading and distribution pipe line with valve arrangement, construction of pump house and site development, provision of roof top PVC tanks and dismantling of old pump house and storage tank at City Medical, Cuttack in connection with the work "Construction of 100 bedded MCH complex (G+6) at City Hospital, Cuttack".

1. Estimated cost	: Rs. 37.87 Lakhs (Approx.)
2. Period of completion	: 6 (Six) months.
3. Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal	: From 11A.M of dt.20.12.2023 to 5.00 P.M. of dt.29.12.2023.
4. Last date/time of receipt of bids in the portal	: 29.12.2023 up to 05.00 P.M.
5. Date & time of opening of bids	: 30.12.2023 at 12.30 P.M.
6. Name and address of the officer Inviting Bid	: The General Manager, WATCO Division, Cuttack- 753003, Odisha Ph.(0671)2547115, email : gmwatcocct@gmail.com
7. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only.	

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
Sd./- General Manager, WATCO Division, Cuttack
OIPR-13170/11/0007/2324

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL
PURUSHOTTAMPUR (GANJAM), Pin-761018
Email ID: eo-nacpurushottampur@gov.in / purushottampurnac@gmail.com
Ph.No. 06811-295222

Letter No: **10034/NAC** Dated: **16.12.2023**

QUOTATION CALL NOTICE

No. C-2149:- Sealed Quotations are invited in prescribed proforma from intending authorized firms/companies/manufacturers/ suppliers/ agencies/ authorized dealers having up-to-date dealership/ GST Regd. Certificate, PAN card etc. for **supplying, fitting and fixing of Cast Iron Lamp Post with electrification at Economic Corridor (design provided by ULB).** The quotationer shall have to quote the price of the item and unit-wise of their respective company. The rate quoted documents should be submitted to the undersigned on or before **27.12.2023** during office hours through Regd. Post/ Speed Post or in person and the same will be opened on **28.12.2023 at 11.00 AM** in the presence of quotationer or their authorized representatives. Beyond the date, no quotation shall be entertained. The quotation paper along with terms and conditions is available in the ULB website of Purushottampur NAC i.e. www.nacpurushottampur.in with effect from **18.12.2023 to 27.12.2023 up to 04.00 PM** on submission of non-refundable cost of quotation paper i.e. Rs. 6,000/- (Rupees Six Thousand) only in shape of Demand Draft in favour of Executive Officer, Purushottampur NAC payable at Purushottampur nationalized banks. Postal delay shall not be taken into consideration. The undersigned reserves the right to reject whole or part of the quotation without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./- Executive Officer
NAC, Purushottampur
OIPR-13187/11/0027/2324

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, BANPUR
E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
Bid Reference No. **E.O.-N.A.C.-BNR-06/2023-24**
Tender Call Notice No. **2686 / Dt.15.12.2023**
No. C-2144: The Executive Officer on behalf of Banpur NAC invites percentage Bid through e-procurement in Double Cover System according to norm of e-procurement.

1. Type of Works	: Civil Construction Works as in the D.T.C.N.
2. Total No. of Works	: 3 Nos.
3. Tender Amount Cost	: Rs.7280899.00 to Rs.12396427.00
4. Period of Completion	: 180 days
5. Date and time of availability of Bid documents in the portal	: From 10.00 A.M. of Dt.18.12.2023 to 5.00 P.M. of Dt.02.01.2024
6. Date & Time of Opening of Tender	: Dt.03.01.2024 at 11.00 A.M.

Further amendments, corrigendum or other communication regarding this letter will be available only on <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in> and will not be published in print media.
OIPR-13177/11/0018/2324 Sd./- Executive Officer, Banpur NAC

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. O-1823
"e" Procurement Notice
e-mail ID: rw_sambalpur@yahoo.co.in, Phone No.: 0663-2401850
No. 6228 Dated: 14.12.2023
Bid Identification No. **TENDER ONLINE SBPR - 13 of 2023-24.**

1. Name of the Work	: Road & Building Works as per DTCN available in the website: www.tendersodisha.gov.in
2. Total No. of Work	: 13 (Thirteen) Nos.
3. Estimated Cost	: Varies from Rs.0.84 lakhs to Rs.16.80 lakhs
4. Period of Completion	: 01 (One) Calendar Month
5. Period and time of availability of bid document in the portal for bidding	: 19.12.2023 at 11.00 A.M. to 28.12.2023 upto 5.00 P.M.
6. Date and time of opening of Tender	: 29.12.2023 at 11.00 A.M.
7. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: S.E.R.W. Divn., Sambalpur

(1) Other details can be seen from detailed notice inviting tenders, available in website: www.tendersodishagov.in.
(2) Corrigendum if any shall only be published in the website: www.tenderodisha.gov.in.
Sd./- Superintending Engineer Rural Works Division, Sambalpur
OIPR-25076/11/0020/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
ROURKELA IRRIGATION DIVISION, ROURKELA
email id: seridkl@gmail.com

e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
BID IDENTIFICATION NO. **SERID-RKL-12/2023-24 DT.15.12.2023**
No. A-1026: The Superintending Engineer, Rourkela Irrigation Division, Rourkela on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage Rate Bid in Single Cover System to be received in online mode from the eligible contractors registered with the State Government, contractors of equivalent Grade/Class Registered with Central Government/MES/Railways/CPWD work as detailed below:

1. Nature of Work	: Canal Works, Road Works, Flood Work
2. Total Number of Works	: 07 (Seven) Nos.
3. Bid Identification No.	: SERID-RKL-12/2023-24 (Online)
4. Estimated Cost	: Rs. 5.70 lakhs to 30.44 lakhs
5. Class of Contractor	: Referred to DTCN
6. Cost of Tender Paper	: Referred to DTCN (Non Refundable)
7. Earnest Money Deposit	: Referred to DTCN (Refundable)
8. Period of Completion	: Referred to DTCN
9. Date & time of Availability of Bid documents in the portal	: From Dt.19.12.2023 at 10.00 A.M. to Dt.28.12.2023 upto 05.00 P.M.
10. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal	: Dt.28.12.2023 at 05.00 P.M.
11. Date and time of Opening of Bids	: Dt.29.12.2023 at 11.30 hours
12. Last Date and time of seeking of clarification	: Dt.27.12.2023 at 5.00 P.M.
13. Place of Opening	: Office of the Superintending Engineer, Rourkela Irrigation Division, Rourkela
14. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Superintending Engineer, Rourkela Irrigation Division, Rourkela

The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only As Goods & Service Tax (GST) has come into force with effect from 01.07.2017.
Further details can be seen from the Govt. website: www.tendersodisha.gov.in
Sd./- Superintending Engineer Rourkela Irrigation Division, Rourkela
OIPR-32018/11/0013/2324

international

of the day quote

Kirby said that Sullivan also discussed Israel's efforts now undertaking to be more surgical and precise in their targeting and efforts that they are taking to help increase the flow of aid

We strongly oppose and deplore the individual countries slandering Hong Kong's national security law and interfering in the judicial system

We will do our best to get the International Criminal Court to punish [Israel] for this genocide

SHORT TAKES

Positive growth in SL's economy
Colombo: Sri Lanka's bankrupt economy has recorded a positive growth for the first time since the economic crisis hit the island nation, according to official data. Sri Lanka had recorded a minus 8 per cent growth when it declared bankruptcy in April 2022. The country's economy continued to be in the negative for the fourth quarter of 2021.

'Militia enthusiast' gets 4 yrs in prison
Washington: A Michigan man described by prosecutors as a self-professed militia leader was sentenced Friday to more than four years in prison for attacking law enforcement officers with a stolen police baton during the Jan 6, 2021, riot at the US Capitol. Matthew Thomas Krol, 65, of Linden, Michigan, assaulted at least three officers, injuring one of them, with the baton that he took from police. A prosecutor said Krol was one of the worst instigators of violence that ultimately forced officers to retreat from the mob of rioters who stormed the Capitol's West Plaza.

Over 40 held in police operation
Rome: Forty-one people have been arrested in Italy in a nationwide police operation targeting juvenile criminal gangs, local authorities said. A further 74 people were reported to the police investigators Friday. Four of those held and 24 of those reported were minors, Xinhua news agency reported, citing the Interior Ministry.

Pak poll body issues election schedule
Islamabad: The schedule for Pakistan's general elections February 8 has been issued, hours after the Supreme Court quashed a lower court's decision which could have delayed the much-awaited polls. The election schedule was issued on Friday night by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), within hours after the Supreme Court quashed a decision by the Lahore High Court (LHC) to suspend the appointment of officials from the bureaucracy to oversee the elections in defiance of the apex court's orders.

26 injured in grenade blast
Kiev: At least 26 people were injured when a local deputy detonated several grenades in a village council building in Ukraine's western Zakarpattia region, the National Police said. The incident occurred at about 11:37 a.m. local time Friday in the village of Keretsky during the council meeting, Xinhua news agency reported.



I think President Trump was the right President at the right time. I agree with a lot of his policies, but chaos follows him. Rightly or wrongly, chaos follows him. We can't afford four more years of chaos and survive it

NIKKI HALEY | FORMER GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA

DENMARK RAISES BIRD FLU RISK LEVEL TO HIGH

The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA) announced a significant escalation in the threat level for avian influenza, commonly known as bird flu, moving from medium to high alert



ISRAEL-GAZA WAR

3 hostages mistakenly killed

Anger over the mistaken killings is likely to increase pressure on the Israeli government to renew Qatar-mediated negotiations with Hamas over swapping more captives for Palestinians imprisoned in Israel



- The three, all young men in their 20s, were killed Friday in the Gaza City area of Shijaiyah, where troops have engaged in fierce fighting with Hamas militants in recent days
- They had been among more than 240 people taken hostage during the unprecedented raid by Hamas into Israel

they posed no threat. Two were killed immediately, and the third ran back into the building screaming for help in Hebrew. The commander issued an order to cease fire, but another burst of gunfire killed the third man, the official said.

Jerusalem, Dec 16: Three Israeli hostages who were mistakenly shot by Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip had been waving a white flag and were shirtless when they were killed, an Israeli military official said Saturday. Hamas has conditioned further releases on Israel halting its punishing air and ground campaign in Gaza, now in its 11th week. The account of how the hostages died also raised questions about the conduct of Israeli ground troops. Palestinians on several occasions reported that Israeli soldiers opened fire as civilians tried to flee to safety. The military official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to brief reporters in line with military regulations, said it was likely that the hostages had been abandoned by their militant captors or had escaped. The soldiers' behaviour was "against our rules of engagement," the official said, and was being investigated at the highest level. Hundreds of protesters

blocked Tel Aviv's main highway late Friday in a spontaneous demonstration calling for the hostages' return. The hostages' plight has dominated public discourse in Israel since the October 7 attack. Their families have led a powerful public campaign calling on the government to do more to bring them home. Hadas Kalderon, whose former partner is still held hostage after their two teenage children were released in November, said the Israeli government must pay any price to free all hostages. "To make a deal, now, that's what I'm saying. Yesterday, not now," said the military official said the three hostages had emerged from a building close to Israeli soldiers' positions. They were waving a white flag and were shirtless, possibly in an effort to signal

IRAN EXECUTES MOSSAD SPY

REUTERS

Tel Aviv, Dec 16: An agent of Israel's Mossad intelligence service was executed Saturday in Iran's southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province, the official IRNA news agency reported. "This person communicated with foreign services, specifically Mossad, collecting classified information, and with participation with associates, provided documents to foreign services, including the Mossad," it said.

It did not name the person. It said the accused had handed classified information to a "Mossad officer" with the aim of "propaganda for groups and organisations opposed to the Islamic Republic". It did not say where the alleged handover had taken place.



It was not clear when the person was arrested, but IRNA said an appeal had been rejected. The execution, which took place in a Zahedan jail in Sistan-Baluchestan, came a day after Baluch militants attacked a police station in the province, killing 11 security personnel and wounding several others. A state funeral was held on Saturday for the men in the town of Rask where the attack took place, according to state television.

Kuwait's ruling emir Sheikh Nawaf dies

REUTERS

Kuwait, Dec 16: Kuwait's emir Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah died Saturday, aged 86, according to the royal court, just over three years after assuming power in the US-allied Gulf oil producer.

The cause of his death was not immediately disclosed. The emir was admitted to hospital late last month due to what the state news agency described at the time as an emergency health problem but said that he was in a stable condition. Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Sabah, 83, who has been Kuwait's de facto ruler since 2021, when the frail emir handed over most his duties, was named as Sheikh Nawaf's successor.

Kuwait announced 40 days of mourning and a three day closure of official departments. World leaders paid tribute to Sheikh Nawaf and offered their condolences to his successor, Sheikh Meshal, the Al Sabah family and the people of Kuwait. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said in a statement on social media platform X that he was saddened to hear of the passing of Sheikh Nawaf, who he described as a great friend of the United Kingdom that would be remembered fondly. Emirati President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed wrote on X that Sheikh Nawaf had been a wise leader who played a major role in strengthening Kuwait-UAE relations. Sheikh Nawaf became emir in September 2020 following



- In late November, Sheikh Nawaf was rushed to a hospital for an unspecified illness
- In the time since, Kuwait had been waiting for news about his health
- State-run news previously reported that he travelled to the United States for unspecified medical checks in March 2021
- The health of Kuwait's leaders remains a sensitive matter in the Middle Eastern nation also bordering Iraq and Saudi Arabia, which has seen internal power struggles behind palace doors

the death of his brother, Sheikh Sabah, who had ruled for more than a decade and shaped the state's foreign policy for over 50 years. Sheikh Nawaf was seen by diplomats as a consensus builder even though his reign was marked by an intense standoff between the government and elected parliament, which had hindered key structural reforms in the oil rich Gulf state. In recent months, consensus returned between the government and the parliament.

SNIPPETS

US, UK navies shoot down 15 attack drones

London: A US warship shoot down 14 suspected attack drones over the Red Sea Saturday, and a Royal Navy destroyer downed another drone that was targeting commercial ships, the British and American militaries said. Houthi rebels in Yemen have launched a series of attacks on vessels in the Red Sea, one of the world's busiest shipping routes, and have launched drones and missiles targeting Israel, as the Israel-Hamas war threatens to spread. US Central Command said that the destroyer USS Carney "successfully engaged 14 unmanned aerial systems" launched from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen. The drones "were shot down with no damage to ships in the area or reported injuries," Central Command tweeted. UK Defense Secretary Grant Shapps said that HMS Diamond fired a Sea Viper missile and destroyed a drone that was "targeting merchant shipping." The overnight action is the first time the Royal Navy has shot down an aerial target in anger since the 1991 Gulf War. Shapps said attacks on commercial ships in the global trade artery by Yemen's Houthi rebels "represent a direct threat to international commerce and maritime security."

Russia, Ukraine exchange drone attacks

Kyiv (Ukraine): Russia and Ukraine each reported dozens of attempted drone attacks in the past day, just hours after Hungary vetoed 50 billion Euros (USD 54.5 billion) of European Union funding to Ukraine. Ukraine's air force said Saturday that Ukrainian air defense had shot down 30 out of 31 drones launched overnight against 11 regions of the country. Russia also said Friday evening that it had thwarted a series of Ukrainian drone attacks. Russian anti-aircraft units destroyed 32 Ukrainian drones over the Crimean Peninsula, the Russian Defense Ministry said on Telegram. Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, a move that most of the world considered illegal, and has used it as a staging and supply point during the war. Earlier, Russia's Defense Ministry said that six drones had been shot down in the Kursk region, which borders Ukraine. In Ukraine's partially occupied southern Kherson region, the Russia-installed governor, Vladimir Saldo, reported on Telegram that Russian anti-aircraft units had downed at least 15 aerial targets near the town of Henichesk.



Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, centre, welcomes Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, left and Albania's Prime Minister Edy Rama, at Chigi Palace, in Rome AP/PTI PHOTO

DEMOGRAPHIC CRISIS

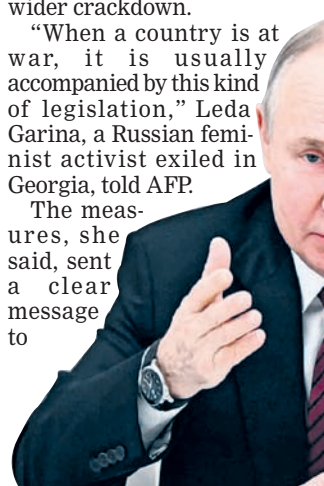
Sit at home, give birth to more soldiers: Russia

Russian President Vladimir Putin said this week that he was against banning abortion, but that terminations were against state interests

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Moscow, Dec 16: Russia's radical conservative turn since it invaded Ukraine is changing life inside the country, with even the long-held right for women to have abortions being questioned. Russia has a decades-old tradition of legal abortions, with the issue less divisive as in many more religious Western countries. But over the last few months, a flurry of regions have rushed to restrict abortions in private clinics, yielding to demands from the Russian Orthodox church. And health officials have dou-

bled down on policies at state clinics to try to discourage women from terminating. Authorities say they aim to improve Russia's dire demographics, despite evidence that restricting abortion does not increase birth rates and puts women at risk. Activists see it as part of a wider crackdown. "When a country is at war, it is usually accompanied by this kind of legislation," Leda Garina, a Russian feminist activist exiled in Georgia, told AFP. The measures, she said, sent a clear message to



Russian women: "Sit at home and give birth to more soldiers." The timing has raised eye-

Russia's abortion debate comes as Putin seeks re-election in March and as he projects an ever more conservative vision of what a Russian family should look like

For years the President has offered financial incentives for Russians to have more children, with the population shrinking fast since the 1990s. But since the Ukraine war, this has acquired new meaning

brots - Russia's abortion rate has already fallen "almost tenfold" since the 1990s, according to Russian demographer Viktoria Sakevich. 'National survival' Last month, Orthodox church leader Patriarch Kirill urged authorities to curb abortions, claiming the population could be increased with "the wave of a magic wand". Since then more than a dozen regions moved to stop or limit abortions in private clinics. Non-state clinics perform mostly pill-based procedures and ask fewer question, according to Sakevich, making them popular for urban women. Government clinics for years have held "consultations" seeking to dissuade women from the procedure. But new health ministry recommendations for doctors encourage a more heavy-handed strategy. If private clinics were banned from performing abortions,

Sakevich predicted there could be a "grey zone" of clinics taking on paid abortions, hitting poor women the hardest. Sakevich feared it could lead to a black market of abortion pills and even backstreet abortions. 'Expect more bans' Russia's pro-life movement was once marginal but the war has created a "political environment" to press more radical initiatives, Stanovaya said. It has also divided the Putin camp. Some male politicians rushed to back restrictions, while Valentina Matvienko - Russia's highest-ranking woman politician - warned a ban could have "tragic consequences". Political analyst Ekaterina Schulmann said the debate is intended to give Russians something to talk about in a pre-election period where "you can't talk about the war or the state of the economy"

Senior cardinal convicted of embezzlement

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vatican City, Dec 16: A Vatican tribunal Saturday convicted a cardinal of embezzlement and sentenced him to 5 1/2 years in prison in one of several verdicts handed down in a complicated financial trial that aired the city state's dirty laundry and tested its justice system.

VATICAN CORRUPTION TRIAL

Cardinal Angelo Becciu, the first cardinal ever prosecuted by the Vatican criminal court, was absolved of several other charges and nine other defendants received a combination of guilty verdicts and acquittals among the nearly 50 charges brought against them during a 2 1/2 year trial. Becciu's lawyer, Fabio Viglione, said he respected the sentence but would appeal. Prosecutor Alessandro Diddi said the outcome "showed we were correct."

business

of the day quote

Committed to our goal of digitising 10 million sellers by 2027, Meesho stands firm in driving innovation and embracing the government's historic decision to eliminate mandatory GST registration for small businesses selling online

The growth of the two-wheeler industry is at a positive upswing in India. Today, customers seek all-encompassing solutions for their vehicles. With this strategic tie-up, TATA Green Batteries will be available across TVS Motor's authorised dealerships in India

As India globalises and a lot of Indians keep travelling abroad for work or leisure it's imperative to remove their pain of buying multiple policies separately for India and overseas

SHORT TAKES

Govt takes U-turn

New Delhi: The food ministry has issued a fresh order reversing ban on the use of sugarcane juice for making ethanol and allowed utilisation of the juice as well as B-heavy molasses to produce the green fuel in the 2023-24 supply year. The revised order comes days after the Centre on December 7 banned use of sugarcane juice and sugar syrup for the 2023-24 supply year (November-October) in an order to ensure adequate sugar supply in the domestic market and check prices.

LIC hikes gratuity limit for agents

New Delhi: Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) has notified an increase in gratuity limit to Rs 5 lakh from Rs 3 lakh for its agents. The increase was affected by amending the Life Insurance Corporation of India (Agents) Regulations, 2017. These regulations may be called the Life Insurance Corporation of India (Agents) Amendment Regulations, 2023, LIC said in a regulatory filing Friday. These regulations came into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette dated December 6.

VW, Centre tie up

Chennai: Automaker Volkswagen India has partnered with Centre's Kendriya Police Kalyan Bhandar scheme to offer its products to personnel of central security agencies and their families. Under this initiative, Volkswagen India is making its entire range of cars available to beneficiaries of the KPKB scheme across the country. The KPKB scheme was launched as a welfare initiative by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2006. It caters to serving and retired members of the Central Armed Police Forces and their families.

Elevate's sales feat

New Delhi: Honda Cars India Saturday said its mid-sized Sports Utility Vehicle Elevate has crossed 20,000 sales mark since its launch in the domestic market in September this year. India is the first country to manufacture and sell the Elevate globally. Honda also aims to make India an important export hub for the new model to other parts of the world, catering to the robust demand for SUVs globally.



We in the steel sector need to understand that it is our responsibility to safeguard Mother Earth by embracing the concept of green steel and the latest technologies
JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | UNION STEEL MINISTER

BOARD OF TRADE MEET POSTPONED

The Board of Trade meeting to be chaired by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has been postponed to January 16, 2024, an official has said. Earlier, it was planned for December 17. Headed by the minister, the board includes participants from various states, Union territories, and senior officials from the public and private sectors



LPI ranking: 13 states, UTs among 'achievers'

The index aims at enhancing focus on improving logistics performance across states, which is essential for improving the country's trade and reducing transaction costs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 16: Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh, and Gujarat are among the 13 states and Union Territories that have again been categorised as "achievers" in the Logistics Performance Index (LPI) 2023, according to a report released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry Saturday. The index is an indicator of the efficiency of logistical services necessary for promoting exports and economic growth. As against 15 states and UTs, this year, the number has reduced to 13 as Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand have slipped into "aspirers" and "fast movers" categories, respectively, this year. Steps taken by Sikkim and Tripura have helped them move

up the ladder to the "achievers" category from "fast movers" in 2022. The other states and UTs in the "achievers" category are Delhi, Assam, Haryana, Punjab, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh. Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Andaman and Nicobar, Lakshadweep, and Puducherry have been categorised as "fast movers" in the report. Those in the "aspirers" category include Goa, Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. The report ranks states on the basis of their logistics ecosystem, highlights the key logistics-related challenges faced by the stakeholders and includes suggestive recommendations, according to the fifth LEADS (Logistics Ease Across Different States) 2023 report unveiled by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal. Goyal said the logistics sector will play a key role in taking the country's economy to about \$35 trillion by 2047. Citing a report of economic think tank NCAER, he said the country's logistics cost is estimated in the range of 7.8 per cent to 8.9 per cent. "Going forward, the aim to bring it down to the 5-6 per cent level is certainly doable," he said, adding that the government has taken a series of measures, such as investing huge amounts in infrastructure development to help promote cut logistics costs. He suggested the industry to focus on skilled manpower, enhanced participation of states, use of new technologies like AI, blockchain and data analytics, and steps to reduce carbon footprint will further help in the growth of the country's logistics sector.

Adani on a buying spree to rule media

After Quintillion Business Media and NDTV, Adani now buys majority stake in IANS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



New Delhi, Dec 16: Billionaire Gautam Adani's group has acquired a majority stake in news agency IANS India Pvt Ltd for an undisclosed sum as the group expands its presence in the media space. In a regulatory filing, Adani Enterprises - the firm that holds the group's media interest - said its subsidiary "AMG Media Networks Ltd has acquired a 50.50 per cent stake constituting equity shares of IANS India Pvt Ltd." The company did not disclose the acquisition price. Adani had forayed into media business in March last year when it acquired Quintillion Business Media, which operates business and financial news digital media platform BQ Prime. It thereafter in December took nearly 65 per cent stake in broadcaster NDTV. AMNL was the vehicle for these acquisitions as well. In the filing, it said, "AMNL has also signed a shareholders' agreement with IANS and Sandeep Bamzai, a shareholder of IANS, to record their interse-

rights with respect to IANS." IANS had a revenue of Rs 11.86 crore in the fiscal year 2022-23 (April 2022 to March 2023). "All operational and management control of IANS will be with AMNL and AMNL will have the right to appoint all directors of IANS," the filing said. "Pursuant to the acquisition as set out above, IANS is now a subsidiary of AMNL." A first-generation entrepreneur, Adani started off as a commodities trader in 1988 and expanded his business interests to become India's largest private player in infrastructure, with 13 ports and eight airports. Over the years it diversified into producing coal, energy distribution, data centres and more recently into cement and copper. It even bid and acquired 5G telecom spectrum to set up a private network.

AIR PASSENGER TRAFFIC RISES 9%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 16: Domestic air passenger traffic rose 9 per cent to more than 1.27 crore in November, according to official data released Friday. Last month also saw daily air traffic touching new highs multiple times. IndiGo remained the country's largest domestic carrier but its market share declined to 61.8 per cent in November from 62.6 per cent in October. However, none of the scheduled carriers had an On-Time Performance (OTP) score of more than 80 per cent in November. Official data released by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Friday showed that airlines flew 1.27 crore passengers in November compared to 1.17 crore in the year ago period. This marks a growth of 9.06 per cent on an annual basis. "Passengers carried by domestic airlines during January-November 2023 were 1,382.34 lakh as against 1,105.10 lakh during the corresponding period of previous year thereby registering annual growth of 25.09 per cent and monthly growth of 9.06 per cent," DGCA said. The domestic market share of SpiceJet rose to 6.2 per cent in November from 5 per cent in October. Its OTP stood at 41.8 per cent last month.

3-MONTH HIGH

Top buyer India's Nov palm oil imports jump

REUTERS

Mumbai, Dec 16: India's palm oil imports in November jumped nearly 23% from the previous month to hit their highest in three months as refiners preferred the tropical oil over rival soyoil and sunflower oil due to steep discounts, a leading trade body said Friday. Higher purchases by the world's biggest importer of vegetable oils could help lower palm oil stocks in top producers Indonesia and Malaysia and support benchmark futures. India's palm oil imports in November rose 22.8% from the



previous month to 869,491 metric tonne, the Mumbai-based Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) said in a statement. Imports of soyoil increased 10.8% to 149,894 tonne and those

- Soyoil imports rise 11%
- Palm oil imports up 23%
- Sunoil imports dip 16.3%

of sunflower oil fell 16.3% to a 17-month low of 128,707 tonne. Higher palm oil imports lifted India's total vegetable oil imports in November by nearly 13% from the month before to 1.16 million tonne, the association said. In November, palm oil's discounts to soyoil and sunflower oil widened, prompting buyers to increase palm oil usage, said a Mumbai-based trader.

India buys palm oil mainly from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, while it imports soyoil and sunflower oil from Argentina, Brazil, Russia and Ukraine. Domestic stocks of vegetable oil fell to 2.96 million tonne by December 1 from 3.14 million tonne a month earlier, the SEA data showed. Imports of soyoil in the past two months were well below normal levels, but they're expected to rise in December due to increased competitiveness following the recent price drop, said a New-Delhi-based dealer with a global trade house.

ENTERTAINMENT GIANT

Disney-Reliance merger may be beset with antitrust headaches



If a deal is struck between the firms, it would be the second to seismicly reshape India's TV and streaming landscape as Japan's Sony also plans to merge its biz with Zee

REUTERS

New Delhi, Dec 16: A merger of Walt Disney's India unit and billionaire Mukesh Ambani's media business would create an entertainment powerhouse in India, but lawyers say any deal would draw intense antitrust scrutiny and assets would likely need to be shed. Disney and India's Reliance, which each have a major streaming service as well as 120 TV channels between them, are looking at merging into an entity in which Ambani's group would likely have a majority stake, sources said this week. In particular, a deal could benefit Disney whose Hotstar streaming app has been losing market. CEO Bob Iger said last month that while Disney's TV channels were doing well in India, other parts of the business were struggling and it was seeking to "improve the bottom line." The Zee-Sony plan cleared a review by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) last year and could close in the coming weeks. The two companies have said they will divest three of Zee's Hindi TV channels as part of their agreement for

regulatory acceptance. Although Netflix and Amazon also compete in India's \$28 billion media and entertainment market, the emergence of two behemoths would probably create a duopoly wielding anti-competitive power over advertisers, users and content creators, antitrust lawyers said.

STREAMING BUSINESS

One key area of regulatory scrutiny for a Disney-Reliance merger would be their streaming businesses and their power over advertising during cricket - a sport that commands fanatical devotion in India. Disney Hotstar, India's biggest streaming app with 38 million users, owns the rights for International Cricket Council's matches in India until 2027, while Reliance's growing JioCinema app has the rights for popular cricket league IPL. The CCI would be worried that the "combined entity, due to its strong market presence in streaming can command their own rates and advertisers will be left without bargaining power," said Vaibhav Choukse, head of competition law at Indian law firm JSA.

TELEVISION BUSINESS

In TV too, there is much that might displease regulators. Viacom18's 38 channels include Comedy Central and Nickelodeon, while Disney, whose Star brand has been a household name for decades in India, has 80. Elara Capital estimates Disney and Viacom18 together will have the biggest share of the TV ads market at 43% while Zee-Sony would have 25%, making it difficult for others to compete.

This deal may get closer scrutiny because of the increased concentration of market power post the Zee-Sony merger. That makes their path to CCI approval more challenging

AVIMUKT DAR | FOUNDING PARTNER, INDUSLAW

Indian Bank		Zonal Office, Indian Bank Building, B-2 (East), Sahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar- 751007		E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE	
Sale of Immovable Property/ies mortgaged to Bank under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 54 of 2002)					
Whereas, the Authorised Officer of Indian Bank had taken possession of the following property/ies pursuant to the notice issued under Sec 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in the following loan accounts with right to sell the same on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS", "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WITHOUT ANY RECOURSE BASIS" for realization of Bank's dues plus interest as detailed hereunder and whereas consequent upon failure to repay the dues, the undersigned in exercise of power conferred under the said Act proposes to realize the Bank's dues by sale of the said property/ies. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the website https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp					
Sl. No.	Branch / Name & Address of the Borrowers / Guarantors / Mortgagors	Description of the Immovable / Movabale Properties	Date of Demand Notice/ Date of Possession / Outstanding dues / Nature of Possession	Reserve Price / EMD / Bid Increment Amount	
1.	JAGANNATH ROAD BRANCH (Ph.: 9938183086) A/c.: KDS Enterprises, Plot No.18, Road No.6, Jagannath Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751025, Borrower/ Mortgagor: Mr Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra, Prop. of KDS Enterprises, At/PO.: Boxi Chowk, Sivalik Homes, Block- A301, Dist: Jharsuguda-768201, Current Address: Plot No. 18, Road No.6, Jagannath Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751025, Guarantor: Mr Dinesh Mohan Dash, At/PO.: Khandapada, Bramhanosaila, Nayagarh-752077, Current Address: Plot No.18, Road No.6, Jagannath Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751025.	All the part and parcel of land in the name of Mr Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra situated in Mutation Khata No. 767/1079, Plot No. 1609/ 2711, Khata No. -767/1078, Plot No.- 1609/2710, Area: 2199.78 sq.ft, Mouza- Pudasana, PS.- Pipili, No. 53, Tahasil- Pipili, No-207, Dist Puri, Odisha, Boundaries: North- Sub Plot No.03, South- Sub Plot No.06, East- Rev. Plot No. 1607, West- Road.	08.12.2022 18.11.2023	Rs.26,95,000/- /	Rs. 2,69,500/- /
2.	PARADEEP PORT TRUST BRANCH (Ph.: 9437851084) Borrower/Mortgagor: Mr Gouranga Charan Behera, S/o: Late Sukadev Behera, Village: Janugani, PO.: Bagurai, Via: Madhab Nagar, Dist: Bhadrak-756100, Guarantor: Mr Debendra Nayak, S/o: Sri Baishnab Charan Nayak, Village: Kathagada, PO.: Bhatamundai, Via: Kujang, PS.: Paradeep, Dist: Jagatsinghpur- 754141.	All that part and parcel of land & building in the name of Mr Gouranga Charan Behera situated at Plot No. 2273/3859, 2272 & 2260/3858 of Khata No. 473/1113, Mouza: Bagurai, PS./Tahasil/Dist: Bhadrak, Total Land Area: Ac.0.167 dec.(7274.52 sqft.), boundaries: East- Road, West- Dharani Nayak (Plot No.2272(part) and 2273, North- Binay Kumar Swain, South- Subhas Panda (Plot No.2261).	20.11.2021 / 01.10.2022 /	Rs.87,58,000/- /	Rs. 8,75,800/- /
3.	JAGATSINGHPUR BRANCH (Ph.: 9438294905) Borrower/Mortgagor: Sri Rabindra Kumar Biswal, Co-Borrower: Mrs Rojalin Biswal, both are residing At: Badagaon, PO.: Tertang, Dist: Jagatsinghpur, Pin- 754108.	All the part and parcel of land & building in the name of Sri Rabindra Kumar Biswal situated at Hal Plot No. 1054, Mutation Plot No. 1054/1736, Hal Khata No. 106, Mutation Khata No. 304/1, Area: Ac.0.01 dec., Mouza: Iswarpur, PS.: Balikuda, Thana No.162, Dist: Jagatsinghpur, Odisha, Boundaries: East- Road, West- Bikel Lenka, North- Satyananda Lenka, South- Jogendra Biswal.	13.11.2022 / 24.11.2023 /	Rs.17,67,000/- /	Rs. 1,76,700/- /
DATE AND TIME OF E-AUCTION: 24.01.2024 (Wednesday) from 11.00 AM to 5.00 PM with unlimited extension of 10 minutes duration					
LAST DATE AND TIME FOR SUBMISSION OF EMD AND DOCUMENTS: ON OR BEFORE 23.01.2024 upto 05.30 PM					
DATE & TIME OF INSPECTION OF PROPERTIES: 15.01.2024 to 20.01.2024 between 10.00 AM to 5.30 PM (with prior appointment from bank) at their expenses					
DETAILS OF ENCUMBRANCES KNOWN TO THE SECURED CREDITOR: Not Known					
TERMS & CONDITIONS : (1)For detailed terms & conditions of the sale please refer to the link: https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp and https://ibapi.in . Prospective bidders may also contact the Authorised Officer / Branch as mentioned in above list. (2) This is also a 30 days notice to the borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors of the above said loan about holding of this sale on the above mentioned date. (3) On receipt of the entire sale consideration, the Authorised Officer shall issue the Sale Certificate as per rules. (4) All expenses relating the stamp duty and registration of Sale Certificate conveyance if any, shall be borne by the successful bidder. (5) The Authorised Officer will not be held responsible for any charge, lien encumbrance, property tax or any other dues to the Government or anybody in respect of the property under sale. (6) The Authorised Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject any bid or adjourn/postpone/cancel the sale without assigning any reason thereof. It may be noted that nothing in this notice constitute or deemed to constitute any commitment or representation on the part of the bank to sell the property.					
STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT), RULE 2002. Borrowers/Guarantors are hereby notified to pay the total dues along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of E-Auction, failing which the property will be auctioned / sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest & cost.					
Place : Bhubaneswar, Date : 16.12.2023			Sd/- Authorised Officer, Indian Bank		

HISTORIC TEST WIN



EVES PULVERISE ENGLAND BY 347 RUNS TO RECORD BIGGEST WIN IN WOMEN'S TEST HISTORY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Navi Mumbai, Dec 16: Deepti Sharma played the enforcer's role to perfection for the second time in as many days as the dominant India Women scripted a historic 347-run victory over England on the third day of the one-off Test here Saturday.

India set in motion the hunt for triumph while declaring their second innings closed at the overnight score of 186 for 6, leaving England to climb a huge mountain of 479 runs in their second innings.

The Indian bowlers led by off-spinner Deepti (4/32) and pacer Pooja Vastrakar (3/23) then bundled out England for 131 to celebrate a victory which now stands as the biggest in terms of runs in the history of women's

Test cricket, bettering Sri Lanka's 309-run victory over Pakistan in April 1998.

It was also India's first win over England at home in 15 Tests, having beaten them in away games twice in 2014, giving them a big boost ahead of the one-off Test against Australia starting here next week.

Over the course of the last three days the Indians did not show any rust of not having played Test cricket in two years, and a first at home after nine years, while being at their ruthless best.

But for all that slew of records, the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side should thank Deepti (8-2-32-4) who was in her elements after that sensational 5 for seven in the first innings, as England lacked gumption to fight even on a pitch that appeared to be far more gentle.

India did not have to wait for long for the first breakthrough this morning. It came in the form of Tammy Beaumont (17) with pacer Renuka Singh moving the ball in from outside the off to knock down her off-stump. England sunk deeper after

MILESTONE MOMENT

This is the biggest margin of win (in terms of runs) in the history of women's Tests. The previous best was Sri Lanka's 309-run win over Pakistan in Colombo in 1998. The win was also evs' first over England at home

The credit goes to the bowlers, whatever fields they were given they bowled according to that. Your job (as captain) becomes easier when your bowlers can bowl at the right spots. They bowled according to the plan
HARMANPREET KAUR | SKIPPER, INDIA

Today they bowled outstandingly. They showed exactly how to play in these conditions, as you would expect
HEATHER KNIGHT | ENGLAND CAPTAIN

suffering twin blows in Vastrakar's first over. Sophie Dunkley (15) played one straight into the hands of substitute Harleen Deol at gully.

Vastrakar then dealt England a body blow when she cleaned up first-innings star Nat Sciver-Brunton for a first-ball duck, getting the ball to nip back in and passing it through between the bat and the pad.

India also wasted two DRS reviews in haste — one each against Heather Knight and Danni Wyatt — but did not have

to work too hard for the third wicket.

An on-song Vastrakar had one nipping away after pitching to find an outside edge off Knight's bat, as Yastika Bhatia did the rest behind the stumps. Knight made a 20-ball 21 with four boundaries. England's misery continued when Wyatt edged a delivery to the first slip for Deepti's first wicket in the innings after making 12.

Deepti then had Amy Jones (5) pulling one straight to short mid-wicket, and in her seventh over of the innings, the 26-year-old hit the

timber twice to dismiss Kate Cross (16) and Lauren Filer (0).

While Deepti narrowly missed taking 10 wickets in the game to become the first Indian Women's player to do so, Rajeshwari Gayakwad (2/20) enjoyed some success.

The left-arm spinner had her first success in the form of Sophie Ecclestone (10) when the batter went for a sweep and missed to connect, while Lauren Bell (8) was caught by Jemimah Rodrigues at silly point for the final wicket of the game.

It was a perfect outing for India also given that all their debutants in the game — Shubha Sathesh, Rodrigues and Renuka — tasted success, but there also was a dampener in the form of Shubha missing the action on the second and the third day owing to a fractured finger.

BRIEF SCORES

India: 428 & 186 for 6 declared in 42 overs beat England: 136 & 131 all out in 27.3 overs (Heather Knight 21; Deepti Sharma 4/32, Pooja Vastrakar 3/23) by 347 runs.

KHELO INDIA PARA GAMES

Armless archer Devi bags gold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 16: Armless archer Sheetal Devi continued her stunning form as she won a gold medal in the Open category of compound section at the inaugural Khelo India Para Games here Saturday.

Sheetal's score of 141 was just enough to ward off a serious challenge from Uttar Pradesh's Jyoti Baliyan, who won the silver with 138, at the JLN Stadium here.

Sheetal, who won two medals, including a gold, at her maiden Asian Para Games in Hangzhou recently, did not have it easy. She had to dig deep into her skills and mental strength to pip Jyoti in a thrilling finish.

Sarita from Haryana won bronze with a score of 137.

Paralympians Harvinder Singh of Haryana and Vivek Chikara of Uttar Pradesh also finished among the medals in recurve archery. While Harvinder won gold, Chikara settled for

silver and Sahil from Haryana won the bronze.

Tokyo Paralympics silver medallist Bhavina Patel of Gujarat clinched gold in women's Class 4 table tennis event as she beat state mate Usha Rathod 3-0 (11-7 11-1 11-8) in the final.

Birmingham Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Sonal Patel added another table tennis gold for Gujarat as she beat Bihar's Vidya Kumari 3-0 (11-3 11-1 11-2) in the final of women's Class 1-3 event.

Hangzhou Asian Para Games silver winner Rudransh Khandelwal of Rajasthan continued his good form on the final day at the Karni Singh Shooting Range, as he claimed the gold medal in the men's 50m pistol SH1 event with a score of 223.4.

Khandelwal, who holds the world record in the same event, surpassed Haryana's Singhraj (216.4) who settled for silver. Rajasthan's Shiv Raj Sankhala won the bronze medal with a score of 194.7.



Odisha Masters: Ayush to face Sathish for title



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, Dec 16: World Junior championships bronze medallist Ayush Shetty edged out Indonesia's Alwi Farhan in a thrilling three-game match to set up an all-Indian final against Sathish Kumar Karunakaran at the Odisha Masters Super 100 badminton tournament here Saturday.

Ayush had lost to Farhan in the semifinals of the World Junior Championships to settle for a bronze in Spokane, US. On Saturday, the 18-year-old from Karnataka rallied his way to a 19-21, 21-14, 22-20 win to avenge the loss and enter his maiden Super 100 final here.

In a 73-minute battle, Ayush, who hails from Sanoor near Karkala in Karnataka, showed his grit as he recovered from a game down to outwit his Indonesian opponent.

On Sunday, Ayush will be up against compatriot Sathish, who will also be playing his first Super 100 final of his international career. He entered the summit clash after beating fellow Indian and defending champion Kiran George 18-21, 14-21 in a 41-minute semifinal.

The final tournament of the 2023 BWF World tour season will have Indian representation in four out of five finals with Unnati Hooda being the only one to miss out in women's singles.

JUNIOR MEN'S HOCKEY WORLD CUP

INDIA HAD ALSO FINISHED FOURTH IN THE LAST EDITION OF THE TOURNAMENT IN 2021 IN BHUBANESWAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kuala Lumpur, Dec 16: India's hopes of redeeming some pride in the junior men's hockey World Cup remained only a dream as they lost 1-3 to Spain in the bronze medal playoff here Saturday.

Goals from Nicolas Alvarez (25th and 51st minute) and Petchame Pau (40th) sealed the deal in Spain's favour as Sunil Jojo's 28th-minute penalty-corner strike was the only saving grace for the two-time junior world champion Indians, whose perennial frailty with penalty corner conversions came to the fore yet again Saturday.

This was India's second defeat to Spain in this edition of the tournament, having lost to the European team 1-4 in the pool stages.

Spain, following the win against the Uttam Singh-led side, equalled their best showing in the global tournament, adding to the bronze they had won in the 2005 edition in Rotterdam, beating India 6-5 on penalties.

Spain were clearly the dominant side and India would have lost by a bigger margin had it not been for some plucky saves by India goalkeeper Mohith Shashikumar after half-time.

India lose in bronze medal playoff



Mohith effected two brilliant saves in the 33rd minute when the Spanish attackers had virtually run over the Indian defence. Mohith's fine anticipation saw him save two shots at the goal to keep the scoreline 1-1.

Alvarez opened the scoring for Spain in the 25th minute, when he pulled away on the left flank all the way to the goal-

mouth before sending in a diagonal shot, which got deflected off the goalkeeper's gloves into the goal.

Three minutes later, India struck the equaliser with Sunil Jojo scoring from the follow-up of a penalty corner. Jojo's quick anticipation saw him score with a flick after the Spanish goalkeeper had saved the first at-

tempt.

On a day when India again failed miserably with PC conversions, quite like the semifinal against Germany where they wasted a dozen of them in the 1-4 thrashing, they also seemed to lack the will to go all out. Barring Jojo's 28th minute conversion, rest of the eight PC attempts went abegging.

Spain's high-pressure game saw Petchame Pau again give his team the lead in the 40th minute, sending the ball past Mohith.

India's disjointed defence took another goal in the 51st minute when Cabre Verdell's run on the left found Alvarez, who deflected the ball into the goal as Mohith drifted to the other corner.

As the timer clicked away, there was desperation in the Indian camp, which resulted in a couple of collisions, leading to Petchame limping off three minutes before the final hooter and Pere Amat also seeking the team physio's help.

India last stood on the podium in 2016 when they won the gold medal in the Lucknow edition of the tournament. Their first title triumph had come in Hobart in 2001, before finishing runners-up in Milton Keynes, England in 1997.

Hyderabad FC to face an on-song Odisha FC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: The Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar is set to witness a thrilling clash as Odisha FC, fresh from their AFC Cup triumph, squares off against Hyderabad FC in a much-anticipated Indian Super League (ISL) showdown Sunday.

Odisha FC, coached by the seasoned Sergio Lobera, is riding high on confidence after securing a spot in the AFC Cup knockouts with a 1-0 victory over Basundhara Kings FC. The team's impressive form in the continental competition has spilled over into the ISL, where they remain unbeaten in their last four games, notching up a couple of wins and draws.

Despite a slow start under Lobera's guidance, Odisha FC has found its rhythm, showcasing the trademark style and blueprint synonymous with the Spanish coach. In their previous encounter against Mohun Bagan Super Giant, they held a two-goal lead but settled for a draw. The Juggernauts will be eager to secure all three points against a struggling Hyderabad FC.

"I am happy because the game's working really well, and I am very proud of my players. They are very good professionals, they are improving every day," Odisha FC head coach Sergio Lobera remarked ahead of the game.

Hyderabad FC, still in search of their first win this season, managed a 1-1 draw against NorthEast United FC in their last outing. Thangboi Singto's side has faced challenges in converting opportunities into goals, leading to losses against Kerala Blasters FC and the Mariners. While not suffering heavy defeats, their lack of precision has cost them valuable points.

Currently positioned fifth after eight games, Odisha FC aims to close the six-point gap with league leaders FC Goa. Hyderabad FC, with four draws and five losses, has faced a challenging start to the season.



India eye ODI reboot from first Proteas fight

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Johannesburg, Dec 16: With a clutch of new-gen stars lining up to make their presence felt, India's journey into their ODI future will hit its first stop during the opening match against South Africa at the hulking Wanderers here Sunday.

Scepticism may be in the air about the relevance of an ODI series with a T20 World Cup in sight, but for India, and to a good extent for the Proteas as well, this face-off signifies the arrival of a fresh line, building up ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma have built lofty castles in white ball formats over the last decade and a half, but now they are in the evening of their careers, and the younger Indian names will perform need to carry forward their legacy.

None then will be in more

focus than KL Rahul, who will lead India in this three-match series.

The wicketkeeper-batter has stood-in as India skipper in the past, but a successful outcome here could potentially land the Bengaluru man the ODI captaincy for a longer duration.

While the likes of Rahul, Rituraj Gaikwad, if he has recovered from the illness that forced him to sit out of the T20Is, and Shreyas Iyer have showcased their prowess in the past, a few others will be eager to become part of the jostle for space in India's white ball scheme of things.

Rinku Singh has impressed everyone with his impact outings in the T20Is so far this year, and the team management will now be eager to see him graduate to the 50-over version, and the left-hander could make his ODI debut on the morrow.

The international opportunity might also come in the way



of Rajat Patidar, who has been churning out runs in domestic cricket for a few years now, and Bhardwaj Sai Sudarshan, who had a reasonable run in the Vijay Hazare Trophy for Tamil Nadu, for slots open the middle-order along with Tilak Varma.

The Indian think-tank will hope that these young names could tick a few boxes against a

South African attack that has a depleted look to it in the absence of rested Kagiso Rabada and injured Anrich Nortje.

India too will not have the three pacers who shored up their bowling in the recent ODI World Cup -- Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj.

While Bumrah and Siraj will

feature in the Test series, Shami has been ruled out of the tour after the BCCI medical team did not give him fitness clearance.

In the absence of these senior pros, the onus is squarely on the shoulders of bowlers such as Avesh Khan, Mukesh Kumar and Arshdeep Singh to marshal India's pace department and they will have to show more consistency despite producing a fine effort in the final T20I against South Africa at this venue.

It is a non-negotiable task for them because Bumrah or other seniors' continued availability cannot be guaranteed going forward. The Johannesburg surface showed a rather unexpected leaning towards spin in the third T20I Thursday, and in that scenario, India will be happy to have three experienced campaigners in their ranks in Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel and Yuzvendra Chahal.

The visitors can also look to

SQUADS

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

SOUTH AFRICA: Aiden Markram (Captain), Ottniel Baartman, Nandre Burger, Tony de Zorzi, Reeza Hendricks, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, Mhlangeni Mpongwana, David Miller, Wiaan Mulder, Andile Phehlukwayo, Tabraiz Shamsi, Rassie van der Dussen, Kyle Verreynne, Lizaad Williams.

MATCH STARTS: 1.30 PM

give a run to off-spinner Washington Sundar, who can also double up as a top-order batter. But among them, leg-spinner Chahal, who had some excellent matches in the Vijay Hazare Trophy for Haryana, will be eager to prove that he is still a relevant force in white ball cricket.