

**Love for nation**  
Actress Sonam Kapoor says she is proud to represent India and its craftsmanship on global platforms

LEISURE | P2

**No relief**  
Israeli forces raid one of the last functioning hospitals in Gaza's north and bombard south with airstrikes killing at least 28

INTERNATIONAL | P10

**Unclaimed deposits up**  
There has been a 28% annual increase in unclaimed deposits with banks to ₹42,270 crore as on March 2023

BUSINESS | P11

**Hardik gets top honour**  
Indian men's hockey team midfielder Hardik Singh wins the FIH Player of the Year award for 2023

SPORTS | P12

**Starc most expensive player in IPL history**

AGENCIES  
Dubai, Dec 19: Mitchell Starc surpassed his Australian bowling partner Pat Cummins to become the most expensive buy in IPL history with an eye popping bid of ₹24.75 crore as pacers attracted big moolah at the auction here, Tuesday.  
Not long after Cummins fetched an unprecedented pay packet of ₹20.50 crore from Sunrisers Hyderabad, Starc raised the bar when Kolkata Knight Riders made a multi-million dollar bid for the left-arm pacer who last played in the IPL in 2015.  
Such are the unpredictable ways of IPL that the one third of the formidable Australian pace trio, Josh Hazlewood, went unsold in the first round of auction from a base price of ₹2 crore.  
Gujarat Titans and KKR were involved in a long and exhilarating bidding battle for Starc before the latter lapped him up for a record deal. **MORE P12**



**RESCUE OPS:** A rescuer uses a sniffer dog to search for survivors at collapsed houses following a massive earthquake in Dahejia Township of Jishishan Bao'an, Dongxiang, Salar Autonomous County in Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture, northwest China's Gansu Province, Tuesday. At least 127 people were killed and over 700 others injured when a powerful earthquake of 6.2 magnitude jolted a mountainous region of northwestern China late Monday night, the deadliest in the quake-prone region in nine years. (REPORT ON P10)

**SHORT TAKES**

**World Odia Language Conference in Feb '24**

**Bhubaneswar:** The Odisha government Tuesday decided to organise a World Odia Language Conference in February next year to further strengthen, spread and popularise the language in the state and outside. The decision of 'Biswa Odia Bhasha Sammilani' (World Odia Language Conference) was taken at the Heritage Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. "The Sammilani (conference) will be held for three days and the date of the event will be decided later," Odia Language, Literature and Culture Department Minister Ashiwini Patra told reporters after the meeting. **P4**

**Heroin worth over ₹1cr seized in Keonjhar**

**Bhubaneswar:** A 46-year-old person was arrested after heroin worth more than ₹1 crore was seized from his possession in Keonjhar district, police said, Tuesday. Acting on a tip-off, a team of the Special Task Force of the Crime Branch conducted a raid near Jodiaghatai area along the National Highway-49 Monday and seized 1.080 kg of the narcotics substance from the drug peddler, an officer said. **P4**

**Allahabad HC dismisses mosque body pleas**

**Prayagraj:** The Allahabad High Court Tuesday dismissed pleas challenging the maintainability of a 1991 suit seeking the 'restoration' of a temple where the Gyanvapi mosque now exists in Varanasi, while observing that the 'religious character' of a disputed place can only be decided by the court. The high court dismissed five connected petitions filed over the years by the mosque management committee and the Uttar Pradesh Central Sunni Waqf Board. **P9**

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**



This new building can accommodate more than 1,500 MPs provided they are not from the opposition

**Opposition mukt**

With 49 more suspensions Tuesday, a record 141 Opposition MPs thrown out of both Houses during Winter Session

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** A day after 78 suspensions in both the Houses, Lok Sabha Tuesday suspended 49 more Opposition MPs for unruly behaviour, including Korapat MP Saptagiri Ulaka, as the turmoil continued in the Parliament over the security breach in Lok Sabha December 13. The INDIA bloc's strength has reduced to almost one third in the Lok Sabha.  
With total number of MPs facing action in both Houses of Parliament going up to record 141, the INDIA bloc coalition has announced nationwide anti-government protests, Friday.  
Among the 49 members suspended Tuesday were National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah, Congress members Shashi Tharoor and Manish Tewari, NCP leader Supriya Sule and SP member Dimple Yadav.  
Soon after the commencement of proceedings in the lower House, the Opposition MPs started raising slogans and demanded a statement from the Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the security breach. At 12:30 pm, Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal moved a motion to suspend 18 MPs from Congress, 10 from JD(U), six from DMK, four from TMC, three MPs from



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge with suspended MPs during their protest in the Winter Session of Parliament

NCP, two each from J&K NC and SP, and one each from IUML, BSP, VCK and AAP. The tally of suspended MPs in the Lok Sabha has increased to 95 Tuesday.  
There are a total of 522 MPs in the Lok Sabha. The INDIA bloc has a total strength of 133 MPs but only 38 of them are eligible to attend the Winter Session now.  
In Rajya Sabha, the INDIA bloc has around 95 MPs, of which 45 were suspended. The BJP alone has 93 of its members in the Rajya Sabha.  
On his suspension from the Lok Sabha, Congress MP Saptagiri Ulaka said that the government is trying to bulldoze the Opposition's voice in the House. **MORE P9**

**Class X dropout at 27%, not 49.9%: Govt**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 19:** The Odisha government Tuesday claimed that the dropout rate in Class X was 27 per cent in the state in 2021-22 and not 49.9 per cent as stated by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in the Lok Sabha a day before.  
School Education Programme Authority Director Anupam Shah asserted that the Centre's data did not include the number of students admitted to various industrial training schools after passing 10th standard.  
He also said the School and Mass Education department will soon clarify its stand on the prevailing dropout rates at the school level.  
Responding to a question on



Odisha registering the highest dropout rate of 49.9 per cent in Class X in 2021-22, he said, the data released by the Centre was old.

"The data released by the Centre did not include the number of students admitted to different industrial training schools. The overall dropout rate at present (2022-23) in Odisha would be 17 per cent," Shah said.  
He explained that the dropout rate is calculated by comparing

the number of students in Class XI in a year and the same in Class X in the previous year.  
"However, there is no mention of students who pass the 10th standard and take admissions to technical and vocational schools, polytechnic and open schools across the state," the official said.  
The dropout rate in Class X stands at 20.6 per cent as of 2021-22 with Odisha being the worst performing state in this regard followed by Bihar, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan informed the Lok Sabha Monday.  
Following the Minister's statement, Opposition BJP and the Congress slammed the BJD government in the state over the 'rising' dropout rates in schools.

**MARKET WATCH**

INDEX	VALUE	VIATION
SENSEX	71437.19	↑ 122.10
NIFTY	21453.10	↑ 34.40
DOLLAR	83.18	↑ ₹0.11
EURO	91.02	↑ ₹0.32
GOLD	₹62,582	↑ ₹291
SILVER	₹74,939	↑ ₹529

**WEATHER**

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	25.7°C	25.4°C
Min Temp	13.8°C	13.5°C
Humidity	75%	72%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

**FORECAST**  
DRY WEATHER VERY LIKELY

**INDIA BLOC MEETING**

**LET'S WIN FIRST: CONGRESS CHIEF**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Tuesday proposed Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's name as the opposition INDIA bloc's PM candidate, saying he could be the 'first Dalit prime minister' of the country, but no decision was taken on it.  
Several leaders, including MDMK leader Vaiko, confirmed this after the meeting of the Opposition grouping and said Kharge told the

leaders that it is important to win first and increase the strength of the alliance while everything else can be decided later.  
Though Kharge's name was proposed with several leaders backing him, no final decision on the issue was taken during the meeting, sources said.  
After his name was proposed as a candidate to become the country's first Dalit prime minister at a meeting attended by leaders of 28 Opposition parties, Kharge said, "I work for the down-trodden. Let's win first, then we will see. I don't seek anything."

**How a T'gana man kills friend, 5 kin to grab property**

INDO ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad, Dec 19:** The sensational case of serial murders of six members of a family in Telangana has been solved with the arrest of five accused, including a juvenile, police said Tuesday.  
Main accused Prashanth, 30, along with two hired men, killed his friend, his wife, two children, and two sisters in a pre-planned manner to grab his property worth ₹25 lakh.  
The murders were committed in a span of 15 days in Medak, Nirmal, Kamareddy and Nizamabad districts. Since the main accused was close to the family, he trapped them one after the other with false information. The main accused's juvenile brother and mother are also among the accused arrested by police.  
Kamareddy Superintendent of Police (SP) Sindhu Sharma said Prashanth and Prasad, 33, resi-

dents of Makloor village in Nizamabad district, were childhood friends. In 2018, a case was registered against Prasad after a woman committed suicide after he recorded her video and circulated it. He subsequently went abroad for a job and returned home in 2022. The SP said Prashanth, who had lent Prasad ₹3.5 lakh for going to Gulf, demanded his money back and convinced Prasad to transfer his house in his (Prashanth's) name.  
As Prasad was facing a social boycott in village for being responsible for the woman's suicide, he, along with the family, shifted to Palwancha village in Machareddy mandal of Kamareddy district.  
Prashanth, who wanted to sell Prasad's property, realized it was not possible if Prasad and his family members were alive and hatched a plan to eliminate them. Prashanth murdered Prasad



Accused Prashanth (L) and the victims

November 29 with the help of Vamshi and Vishnu - whom he had promised to give ₹60,000 - in a forest near Makloor with stones and sticks, and buried his body. Fearing Prasad's family might lodge a missing complaint, Prashanth told them that he was hiding at some place due to the pending case registered against him.  
The accused took a rented car December 1 and took Prasad's wife Shanvika, 30, and sister Shravani, 24, to Nizamabad and kept them in a lodge with the

**Parl to look like N Korean assembly**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Congress MP Karti Chidambaram said Parliament will soon resemble the North Korean assembly. "We're going to resemble North Korean assembly and only thing missing is synchronised clapping when the PM walks in. This is going to be a token house," he said. Shromani Akali Dal MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal said, "The graveyard of the Constitution is visible here". "Opposition MPs whose job is to raise questions in Parliament are thrown for doing their job...This is the new India... See it," she said outside Parliament.  
Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said, "It's clear that they (govt) want an Opposition-mukt Lok Sabha and they will do something similar in Rajya Sabha."

**9-YR-OLD DELHI GIRL RAPED, MURDERED**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** A nine-year-old girl was allegedly abducted, raped and then murdered by her 52-year-old landlord, who dumped her body in a canal in outer Delhi's Swaroop Nagar, police said, Tuesday.  
The police have launched a search to recover the girl's body.  
The victim's family has demanded capital punishment for the accused, who has been arrested. The locals and her family members staged a protest in their locality demanding justice. The accused had allegedly lured the girl on the pretext of giving her a car ride December 12 while she was playing outside her residence, police said.

**Prasad's twin children with him to meet their father.**

Prashanth, his two accomplices and his brother, a juvenile, took the Chaitrik and Chaitrika (both 7) to Mendora in Nizamabad district and after killing them, threw their bodies off a bridge.  
Prashanth then brought Prasad's mother Susheela and another sister Swapna, 27, to Nizamabad.  
He also brought his mother to the lodge where the two women were staying and convinced them to follow his directions to meet Prasad.  
December 13, the accused took Swapna to an isolated place and murdered her and set the body on fire using petrol.  
The Sadasiv Nagar police found the burnt remains the next morning, registered a case, and started an investigation.  
The police examined CCTV footage in the area and narrowed down on the accused.

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# leisure



## OPPENHEIMER IS MY MOST SUCCESSFUL FILM: NOLAN

Filmmaker Christopher Nolan says that Cillian Murphy-starrer *Oppenheimer* is his most successful film to date. "I made a film about Robert Oppenheimer, which is R-rated and half in black-and-white - and it made a billion dollars," Nolan explained.

## AMANDA PAUSES PODCAST AFTER FAILING TO LAND GUESTS

Amanda Bynes paused her podcast after just one episode because she couldn't get the guests she wanted. The actor launched *Amanda Bynes + Paul Sieminski: The Podcast* but it won't be returning to the airwaves until she secured the guests.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

You may be alone, but not necessarily lonely. You may want to listen to your inner voice, and express your true self creatively. Spend the evening with a loved one who can hear the music in your silence too, suggests Ganesh.

#### TAURUS

Today, you may experience the juxtaposition of pleasure and pain. Household tasks may weigh you down around afternoon. Later in the day, you will be able to achieve whatever you desire solely on account of your determination and mental strength. Pleasure awaits in the warmth and company of your soul mate, says Ganesh.

#### GEMINI

If you are into retail business, planetary positions indicate today is a day for bumper sales. You will set records in making profits. After work, you may want to take your beloved out shopping. Though it may burn a hole in your pocket, the returns you get once you reach home will be worth every penny!

#### CANCER

Ganesh says that you will carve out your path for progress. You will get respect and recognition from people. Business rivals and illness may bother you. Beware of enemies' actions. Your alertness will thwart their designs.

#### LEO

You will get good co-operation from your colleagues and subordinates. In your personal life also you will gain the support of your spouse and your friends. Other people will be accommodating of your problems and will try to solve them for you.

#### VIRGO

An easy-going day full of fun and light moments will help you vent all that pressure built up inside you. Ganesh predicts a progressive and profitable day for you. Expect to honour invitations to social events or even parties.

#### LIBRA

Ganesh says that you will try to enhance your skill regarding new technological inventions and will want to learn about the same in your spare time. Ganesh says that if you wish to gain success you need to first leave your ego behind. Only then will you be able to stride ahead on the path to progress.

#### SCORPIO

Don't put off cultivating healthy eating habits, says Ganesh. You should do better to control over-indulging in food as it may lead to obesity. Ganesh advises you to stick to a healthy lifestyle, especially when it comes to meals.

#### SAGITTARIUS

Life is bubbling within you and you shall be in a hyper-elevated state of bliss today. Your high-spirits and energy will inspire you to perform at your best. Moreover, your inner voice will be loud and bellowing. Make the most of this super day, says Ganesh.

#### CAPRICORN

Things may just fall in to your lap today. You will help those in need but will get extremely upset when the outcome is not as per your expectations, feels Ganesh. It is not an encouraging sight and it will affect your confidence adversely. But, you are over-reacting, as these disappointments are not as big as they seem. Keep your chin up and get ready for a new tomorrow.

#### AQUARIUS

You want to spread peace and joy all around, and today you may achieve that. You, however, may have to sacrifice your own preferences and interests to ensure that the problems get solved. It is a noble thing to play the role of peace maker, but people may take you for granted, feels Ganesh. You may feel that you are leading by example, but turn back, probably nobody is following you.

#### PISCES

Take one cautious step at a time today, says Ganesh. You will discuss intimate matters at home and official matters at work but be careful about whom you trust and deception from someone close might lead to worry and stress in the future.

## Nargis admits being in love

**Mumbai:** Twelve years ago, Nargis Fakhri made her Hindi movie debut with Imtiaz Ali's *Rockstar* and witnessed overnight fame. A dozen years later, the actress, after being linked many of her co-stars, finally seems to have found love finally.

According to reports, Nargis is seeing Kashmir-born, LA-based businessman Tony Beig.

Nargis, who has never opened up about her relationship, says, "I don't want to go into the details, but yes, I have someone in my life. I am very happy." She adds, "I am a very lucky person that I am loved by many. I love to do things with people I care

about. And it doesn't have to be just in a relationship. No, I am not an obsessed girlfriend. Everybody who is with me loves my company so much that they miss me when I am not around."

Asked, when would she make things official with Tony and she replies, "What is official (today)? Even married ones aren't official."

When you say you are in love, all the chemicals go in the wrong direction, but you are not functioning properly. That is the wrong (idea of) love. Good love is the stable; it is the one that makes you normal and home."

AGENCIES



## 'I represent India's diversity, resilience'

**Mumbai:** Actress Sonam Kapoor said that the West has finally realised how India can now contribute to fashion globally and she is proud to represent her country and its craftsmanship to the world.

The *Neerja* actress said: "I think the West didn't understand the power of our impact in this part of the world before."

"We are developing nations, but that is slowly changing, and we, as people here, have our voices as individuals and spending power as clients, making it difficult to be ignored anymore. Whenever I am at an international event, I make sure to wear from an Indian or South Asian designer."

She added: "Whenever represent India, I represent the diversity, resilience, and coexistence that the country enjoys."

Sonam strongly believes whatever is made in India has great value. "The fact that we have such a strong cultural heritage and ancient civilisation means that whatever is made in India has great value. It's a multicultural place where people from many faiths live together in harmony, and representing that is of utmost importance," explained the actress.

AGENCIES



## Box office obsession has ruined culture of filmmaking: Manoj

**Mumbai:** Sandeep Reddy Vanga's *Animal* continues to roar at the box office (BO). Despite facing a clash with the Vicky Kaushal starrer *Sam Bahadur* and the release of Manoj Bajpayee's critically acclaimed film *Joram* a week later, *Animal* witnessed a rise in its daily collection. Amid the roaring success of the Ranbir Kapoor film, Manoj

Bajpayee spoke about the excessive chatter surrounding a film's box office business. In a recent interview, Bajpayee asserted, "I've always spoken against the obsession with box office. I've always believed that it has ruined the culture of filmmaking in our country. Numbers being thrown at people's faces isn't the right thing to do."

Later, Manoj explained that the audience also discussing the "box-office numbers" has caused more harm.

"In a conversation with them, they'll suddenly quote the amount that a film has made. They feel that if a film has collected Rs 100 crore or above, it's a very good film and that it qualifies for all kinds of honours in this country," said the three-time National Award-winning actor.

AGENCIES



## Tara unperturbed over competition

**Mumbai:** Tara Sutaria began her cinematic journey with Karan Johar's *Student Of The Year 2*. With almost five years of experience, a thrilled and excited Tara recently discussed why competition with newcomers like Suhana Khan and Khushi Kapoor doesn't rattle her.

"I don't look at it as a competition at all. I did my first

film with Ananya Panday who was launched at the same time. What people call competition is not competition for me at all. Whether it comes to our features or the way that we act, deliver dialogue or dance, everyone has created their own space," explained the *Tadap* actress.

She went on to add: "The movies they are doing are very

different from each other. I don't think it's too crowded in the industry right now or anything. I cannot say it for everyone, but at least for my journey so far that weird sense of competition between me and anyone is not there."

AGENCIES

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

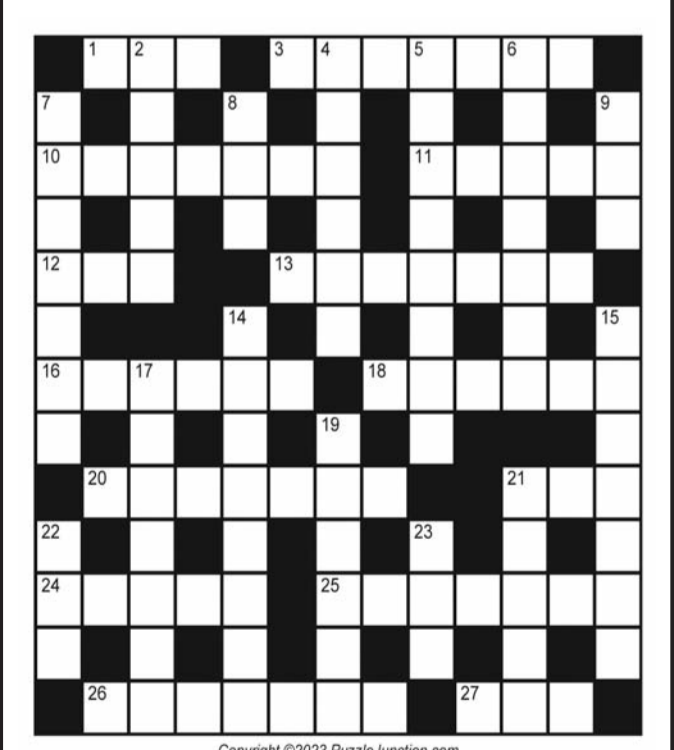


### BREVITY



### FUN post

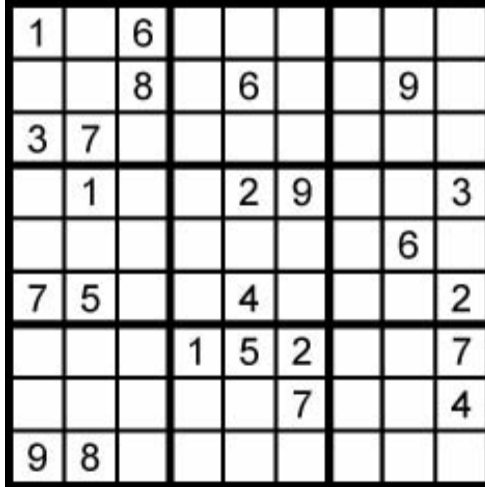
### CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Lyric poem
  - 3 Impertunity
  - 10 In plain sight
  - 11 Rustic digs
  - 12 Average
  - 13 Colourless gas
  - 16 Weather map line
  - 18 Copyreader
  - 20 Rambled
  - 21 Feathery wrap
  - 24 Tranquility
  - 25 Apple grove
  - 26 Put away
  - 27 Family hangout
  - Down
  - 2 White Cliffs site
  - 4 Vacation spot
  - 5 Risky venture
  - 6 Storage locker
  - 7 Marine merrymaker
  - 8 Slough
  - 9 Serengeti grazer
  - 14 Sea cows
  - 15 Gofers' jobs
  - 17 Pariah
  - 19 Knock down a peg
  - 21 Fire
  - 22 Choose
  - 23 Frigid

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

## MUSICAL EVENING

Eminent singer Suresh Wadkar and his wife Padma Wadkar perform at Toshali Crafts Mela being organised at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday



## HC raps Vig judge for denying bail to 2 officials

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 19:** The Orissa High Court has come down heavily on a Special Vigilance Judge for denying bail to two persons accused in a corruption case and sending them to police remand despite the HC granting them anticipatory bail.

According to the case details, the two government employees were booked under Section 13(1)(c) of the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act and 409, 468, 471, 477-A and 120-B of the IPC for misappropriating ₹23,63,940 of government funds.

Fearing arrest, the duo moved the HC seeking anticipatory bail. The HC allowed the bail after imposition of certain conditions.

After the bail and completion

of the investigation, a chargesheet was submitted in the case. Upon submission of the chargesheet, the trial court took cognisance of the offence and summoned the two officials.

In response to the summons, the duo appeared before the trial court and filed bail applications. However, the court did not grant them bail, instead remanded them to custody.

The counsel appearing for them argued that the order of rejection of bail is illegal as in doing so the Special Vigilance Judge lost sight of sub-section (3) of Section 438 of CrPC whereby the court was required to issue a bailable warrant keeping in mind the order passed by the HC under Section 438(1) of the CrPC.

The Vigilance counsel, on the



other hand, submitted that as an alternative remedy is available with the two, the instant petition under Section 482 of the CrPC deserves no merit and hence, should be dismissed.

The HC observed that the trial judge failed to appreciate the position of law settled by the

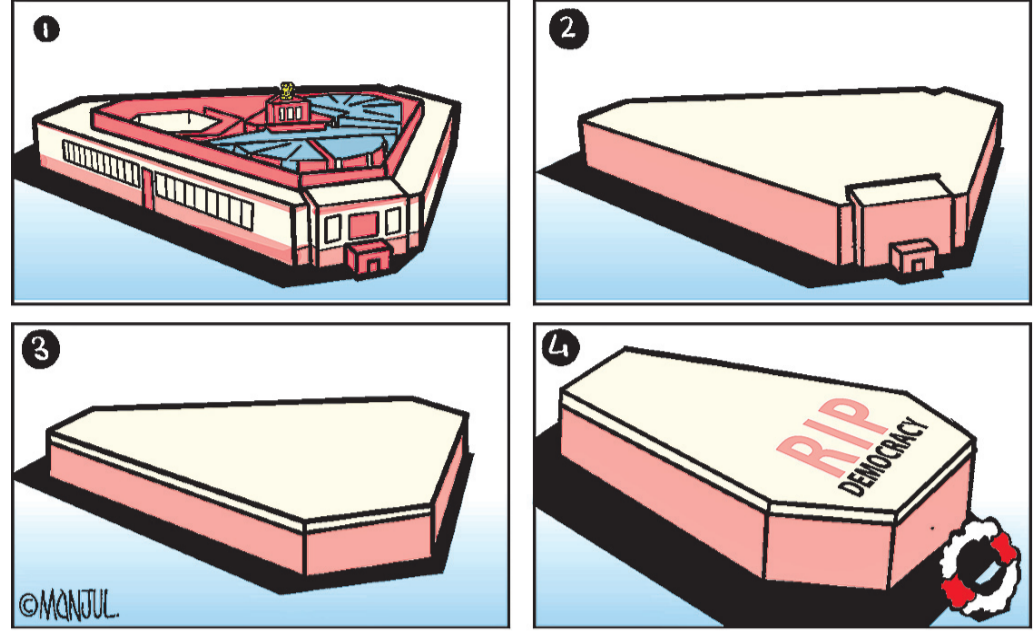
top court, which has made it clear that the lifespan of anticipatory bail extends till the conclusion of the trial.

After going through the submission of the counsel for the Vigilance, the HC was of the view that the investigating agency did not require the remand of the petitioners.

"Therefore, it was inappropriate for the trial court to reject bail to the two pursuant to their appearance on summons," the HC observed.

The High Court took serious exception to the development and disapproved the order passed by the Special Vigilance Judge as it disregarded the hierarchical set-up of the judicial institution by passing an order which virtually nullified the effect of the HC order.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## Cold wave sweeps state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 19:** Cold wave continues to sweep Odisha with 11 places in the state recording minimum temperatures below 10 degrees Celsius, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Tuesday.

G Udayagiri in Kandhamal district was the coldest place in the state at 6.5 degrees Celsius followed by Kirei in Sundargarh district at 7 degrees Celsius, it said.

Stating that there is no large change in the minimum temperature at many places, the IMD said the present situation is likely to prevail for the next four to five days. A total of 11 places in the state recorded night temperatures at and below 10 degrees Celsius during the last 24 hours. G Udayagiri and Kirei were followed by Phulbani at 8.5 degrees Celsius, Koraput (8.7), Keonjhar (8.8), Sundargarh (9), Jharsuguda (9.2), Daringbadi in Kandhamal district at 9.5 degrees Celsius, Angul and Rourkela each at 9.6 degrees Celsius and Ranital in Bhadrak district at 10 degrees Celsius.

The twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack continued to reel under cold wave as the minimum temperatures were recorded at 13.8 degrees Celsius and 13.5 degrees Celsius respectively.

# Mayurbhanj will do magic: Pandian

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 19:** Mayurbhanj has done magic by helping the BJD win 53 Zilla Parishad (ZP) seats out of 56 in the latest rural polls. Cooperation from all will definitely help the party secure all 56 seats soon and do the magic again, 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian said during his visit to the district, Tuesday.

Addressing a gathering at Chhau Ground in Baripada, Pandian termed BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik as the people's leader and went on to narrate about the CM's vision and efforts for a transformed and empowered Odisha.

At the age of 77, the CM has been working day in and day out for Odisha. "Witnessing his actions round-the-clock encouraged me to follow his path," Pandian said.

In his veiled attack on the Opposition, Pandian highlighted state's development journey by citing initiatives like LAccMI and BSKY. "Isn't Odisha transforming?" he asked.

"The Chief Minister is like our father, our guru. He is the driving force behind 4.5 crore people of Odisha. He has been working 24x7 just to see a smiling Odisha, an empowered Odisha," Pandian said.



The 5T Chairman added he is Biju Patnaik's son and has been the CM for five times. "It doesn't matter to him if he becomes the CM for the sixth time. But his vision is for good governance and a new Odisha. The CM seeks cooperation and blessings from Mayurbhanj for it," Pandian said.

"It isn't BJD government; it's your government - people's government. This government will do as per your wishes and advice. The people of Odisha are Naveen and Biju Babu's family. People's faith in BJD and Naveen Patnaik has grown immensely," he said.

Before addressing the gath-

ing at Chhau Ground, the 5T Chairman attended a programme of Nua-O at Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanjdeo University. Pandian spoke to students at the university ground in Baripada and inspired the youth to join in building a new Odisha.

He said that Nua-O has created great opportunities for the youth.

## SUSPENSION OF MPs INDIA bloc leaders seek President intervention

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 19:** INDIA bloc leaders Tuesday sought the intervention of President Droupadi Murmu over the suspension of 141 opposition MPs from Parliament.

They demanded that the MPs be allowed to participate in the remainder of the winter session.

Forty-nine Lok Sabha MPs were suspended from the House for disrupting proceedings Tuesday, a day after 78 opposition members were suspended from Parliament. With the fresh suspension, a total of 141 MPs from both houses have been suspended since December 14.

Strongly condemning the suspension of the opposition MPs, a delegation of INDIA bloc leaders led by Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Sarat Pattanayak submitted a memorandum to the President through state Governor Raghubar Das. Terming the suspension of the MPs as 'unfortunate and undemocratic', the INDIA bloc leaders, in their memorandum, said that it was an almost unprecedented move.

"Debate and discussion are a cardinal principle of democracy. But the present Modi dispensation does not like any debate and discussion in Parliament," the memorandum read.

Addressing a gathering at Chhau Ground in Baripada, Pandian termed BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik as the people's leader and went on to narrate about the CM's vision and efforts for a transformed and empowered Odisha.

In his veiled attack on the Opposition, Pandian highlighted state's development journey by citing initiatives like LAccMI and BSKY.

Pandian said the people of Odisha are Naveen and Biju Babu's family. People's faith in Biju Janata Dal and Naveen Patnaik has grown immensely, he added.

This programme will help them showcase their talent and develop their overall personality. Along with this, they can also achieve remarkable success in their academic career, he added.

BJD Organisational Secretary Pranab Prakash Das, School and Mass Education as well as Revenue Minister Sudam Marndi, Women and Child Development Minister Basanti Hembram, MP Mamata Mohanta and Morada MLA Rajkishore Das among others accompanied Pandian during the district visit.

## Guv writes to CM on people's issues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 19:** Governor Raghubar Das has drawn the attention of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to certain issues faced by the people of Angul and Dhenkanal districts.

Das undertook a visit to Angul and Dhenkanal districts from December 5 to 7.

In a letter to Patnaik December 13, Das said, "During my interaction with them (people), they have brought out various issues pertaining to them... which may kindly be considered by the state government for appropriate action."

The Governor also shared his personal experience in the letter

to the CM, sources said Tuesday.

In Dhenkanal district, the Governor visited an old age home at Joranda being run by Maharshi Dayananda Seva Mission, which wants the land to be in its name to provide basic facilities to the inmates.

During his visit to Turang panchayat in Banarpal block of Angul district, ASHA workers urged the government to construct a 'Mamata Gruha' for health check-up and counselling of pregnant women, the Governor said.

The Governor also narrated how the people brought to his notice about the water pollution caused by mining operations of

Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) and its adverse impact on the health of the local residents. The Governor also mentioned about depleting groundwater level in the area.

Locals drew the attention of the Governor about non-conduct of the meeting of the Rehabilitation and Periphery Development Advisory Committee (RPDAC) during the last two years. As a result, the grievances of the people in the area are not being redressed, the letter said.

People of the area have also drawn the attention to the huge loss caused to the farm sector due to the elephant menace. They claimed that the Forest depart-

ment has not been taking any steps to tackle jumbo menace.

Meanwhile, opposition BJP and Congress criticised the BJD government and alleged that the Governor's findings in the two districts were just the tip of the iceberg. "The entire state is facing a similar situation," alleged BJP leader Mohan Charan Majhi.

Former Odisha Pradesh Congress (OPCC) president and Dalit leader Jayadev Jena said there is no point in the BJD government's claim of transformation in different sectors. Governor's visits have laid bare the truth behind the development taking place in the state, he said.

## Mo Bus passengers taken for a ride by crew in twin cities

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 19:** Of late, Mo Bus, operating in regions like Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, has drawn flak for causing 'inconvenience' to its passengers.

Several Mo Bus passengers have alleged that they are fed up with the unruly behaviour of drivers and conductors on certain routes.

Ananya Dasgupta, a final year mass communication student at Birla Global University who regularly boards Mo Bus on Route No.18 (from Jagatpur in Cuttack to Baramunda ISBT) to attend her classes, alleged that seats reserved for women are always occupied by male passengers. "When the conductor's intervention is sought in this regard, he/she simply turns it down, showing utter insensitivity," she added.

She stated that Mo Bus conductors are forcing the passengers to bring exact change for fare. They also threaten the passengers, who don't have small denomination currencies, to alight from the bus.

When contacted, Capital Region Urban Transport (Crut) general manager Sanjay Kumar Biswal said, "Crut has a policy of strict action against alleged misbehaviour by drivers or even passengers. We undertake an internal assessment with concerned parties, including depot manager, driver and conductor, a day after the complaint is lodged. Subsequently, action, as deemed fit, is taken by Crut managing body."

Manas Das, a sexagenarian



passenger, alleged that Mo Bus conductors don't care a fig to the concerns of senior citizens. Das, a regular passenger of Route No. 23 (which moves from IGKC Hospital to Bhubaneswar Railway station), he added that seats reserved for senior citizens are usually occupied by young people.

"Upon complaining to the conductor, I was asked to get down at the next stop," he rued.

Five days ago, there was a hue and cry in a moving Mo Bus on the way to Biju Patnaik International Airport on Route No. 18 when a differently-abled passenger from Ganjam district, G Pabitra Reddy, was denied a seat by the conductor. Reddy said that it was very difficult for him to stand in the jam-packed bus and finally he had to get down at Pal Heights Square. Upon enquiry, the bus

conductor stated that the seat was earlier occupied by two young passengers. Despite, repeated requests they did not budge to offer the seat to Reddy, he added.

A month back, Mo Bus had added Route No. 25 to its fleet with an aim to cover Mancheswar and Dumduma. However, several students of Rama Devi University have alleged that since last week the bus has stopped coming to Khandagiri area.

Meanwhile, numerous passengers have also alleged that Route No. 20 (Patrapada to Khurda bus stand) is infamous for gross misconduct of bus crew members.

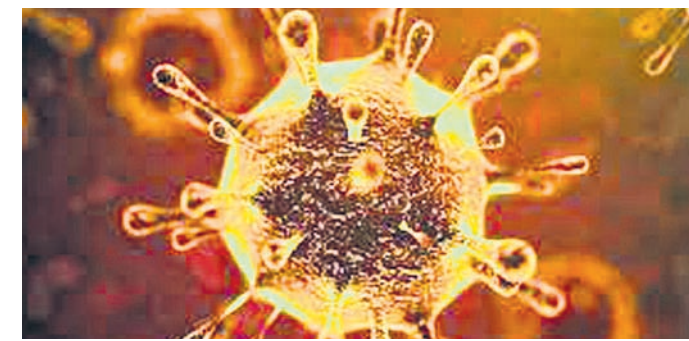
Several people have alleged that they fail to board the bus as the driver willfully ignores halting at scheduled stoppages.



**ODISSI TREAT:** Artists perform at International Odissi Festival being organised at Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Odissi Research Centre auditorium in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

# Govt keeping close watch on new Cov variant: Director

Director of Health Services advised people who notice symptoms to take Covid tests while also informing that there are enough beds in state for treatment of patients



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 19:** A day after the Centre asked states and Union Territories to maintain constant vigil amidst an uptick in Covid-19 cases, state Director of Health Services Bijay Kumar Mohapatra Tuesday informed media that the state government is keeping a close watch on emergence of JN1, the new Omicron

sub-variant.

Mohapatra also said that the government may issue guidelines if necessary as JN1 has not yet been detected in the state. "In the case it is detected, genome sequencing will be undertaken," he said.

"As per the advice of the Central government, we will continue surveillance of symptomatic cases in the state. As of

today, there are enough beds and logistics for treatment of Covid patients in state. People who notice any symptom should undergo a Covid test immediately," he added.

It is worth mentioning that the Union Ministry for Health had issued an advisory to states Monday regarding the fresh surge in Covid cases and detection of the first case of JN1 in Kerala. In a letter to the states and UTs, Union Health Secretary Sudhansh Pant had highlighted the need for maintaining constant vigil over Covid situation in the country.

Keeping in view the upcoming festive season, the Health Secretary had advised the states to implement requisite public health measures to minimise the risk of an increase in transmission by maintaining respiratory hygiene.



CHRISTMAS FEVER: A baker busy preparing dough for cakes in Sutahat area of Cuttack, Tuesday, as the mood for Christmas celebrations set in

# 1st World Odia Language Conference in Feb, 2024



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 19:** The state government Tuesday decided to organise a World Odia language conference in February next year to further strengthen, spread and popularise the language in the state and outside.

The decision of 'Biswa Odia Bhasha Sammilani' (World Odia Language Conference) was taken at the Heritage Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Tuesday.

"The Sammilani (conference) will be held for three days and the date of the event will be decided later," Odia Language, Literature and Culture Department Minister Ashiwini Patra told reporters after the meeting.

Briefing reporters, Chief Secretary P K Jena said that this is for the first time that the state government has decided to hold such a conference which will be a huge event and be participated

by the Odias language experts, researchers, scholars, writers, teachers and above all students. There will be a series of associated events during the three-day conference, Jena said.

OLLC department secretary Sujata R Karthikeyan said the objective of the conference is to create awareness among the youths on the Odia language. As students are the future of any nation, the youths should be made familiar with the use of the Odia language in digital platforms, she said.

Karthikeyan said language experts from within the state, country and globe would be invited to the event.

"It will be a mega event and first of its kind in the state," the OLLC secretary said, adding that the department has taken several measures for the promotion of the Odia language including the opening of Odia University at Satyabadi in Puri district.

# Engineers indispensable to infra development: Arukha

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 19:** Engineers are indispensable to development of infrastructure and living conditions in a society, said State Finance Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha at the 78th annual conference of Odisha Diploma Engineers Service Association here Tuesday.

Joining the event as the chief guest, Arukha said that from blocks in the suburban and remote areas of the state to the Capital Bhubaneswar, diploma engineers are making their presence known by providing their valuable services to the progress of the state.

"Technology is widely needed and used in every field of life. The idea of harnessing natural resources in improving the standard of living of human beings and its practical and successful implementation at the grass root level is possible only through diploma engineers. Like building a bridge over a river for the convenience of transportation, junior engineers build the bridge that connects science and technology with society," said the minister.

Notably, the Odisha Diploma



**Shrikant Mahapatra said the engineers are contributing to several programmes being implemented by the government to build better infrastructure**

Engineers Service Association has a membership of more than 8,500 professionals who are working across all departments of the state government such as Water Resources, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water, Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture and Farmers

Empowerment, Steel and Mines and Trade and Transport.

"The engineers are contributing to several programmes being implemented by the government to build better transport facilities and infrastructure in rural areas. Be it Biju Setu Yojana, Mukhyamantri Sadak Yojana, building concrete roads, highways, buildings, hospitals, supply of drinking water, electricity, rural infrastructure, diploma engineers are everywhere," said association president Shrikant Mahapatra.

Arukha also said that the functioning of the 46 district-level committees and all 314 block-level committees of the union indicates the strength of the association.

# IIMT holds seminar on safety skill mgmt

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 19:** A seminar on "Need of Safety Skill in Management of Incident and Accident" was conducted recently at Interscience Institute of Management & Technology (IIMT) Bhubaneswar in joint collaboration with Institute for Project Management (IPM) and Vision@Wellbeing.

The chief guest of the programme Odisha University of Technology & Research (OUTR) vice chancellor Bibhuti Bhusan Biswal and chief speaker Factories and Boiler (Safety) Deputy Director Malay Kumar Pradhan underlined the need of safety skill in management of incident and accident to prevent fire accidents in hospitals, schools, colleges, factories and

in running trains. Addressing the event, IIMT Director Srikanta Patnaik and IPM Director Bikram Keshari Swain said that need of safety skill is also required to protect the productivity activities of the industries.

Safety skill experts including Priti Ranjan Behera, Security Officer of IOCL, Paradeep, Sushil Kumar Panigrahi, Security Officer, Southern Distribution Division of Tata Power, Berhampur, Bansidhar Raut, Asit Kumar Patry, Dinesh Kumar Sahu, and Asutosh Das shared their safety skill knowledge among the participants.

Administration Dean Jagamohan Patnaik, introduced the guests and IIMT Assistant Professor Srujani Mohanty coordinated the programme.



# INDIA bloc to protest against suspension of MPs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** The opposition INDIA bloc will hold a nationwide protest December 22 against the suspension of 141

**CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT**

I Sonali Garg, W/o. Rajeet Santuka, R/o. Jaunlia Patti, Choudhury Bazar, Po-Telenga Bazar, Cuttack 753009 do hereby declare that my name as per my Aadhaar, Passport and for all purposes is Sonali Garg. My name in the Birth Certificate of my child 'Ananya Santuka' has wrongly been written as Sonali Garg Santuka. Thereby I declare that Sonali Garg and Sonali Garg Santuka are one and the same person for all purposes.

MPs from Parliament, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge announced Tuesday after a meeting of the coalition.

He said the coalition also passed a resolution condemning the suspension and calling the action "undemocratic".

As many as 49 more opposition lawmakers were suspended from Lok Sabha on Tuesday for unruly behaviour, taking the total number of MPs suspended in both Houses of Parliament to 141.

Addressing a press conference after the INDIA bloc meeting, Kharge said, "If we have to save democracy we will have to fight together and all of us are ready for this fight." This is for the first time in India's history that such a thing has happened, Kharge said. "The issue that we had raised in the House was not a wrong one....How did those people enter Parliament? Who facilitated their entry?"

"We had been saying from earlier, Home Minister (Amit Shah) or Prime Minister (Narendra Modi), should come to House and apprise the House about the incident. But they did not agree.

I do not understand. Parliament is going on, they go for inauguration in Ahmedabad...Modi ji goes to his constituency, is giving speeches everywhere, why did he not come to Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha. Their intention is to finish democracy," Kharge said.

This is the first instance that so many people have been suspended, he said.

The prime minister and the home minister are thinking that no one is better than them at ruling over the country. "We have united to change that mindset", the Congress chief said.

A nationwide protest will be held on December 22 against the suspension of MPs, he said.

While the opposition bloc has slammed as "undemocratic" the suspension of MPs for display of placards demanding a statement from Home Minister Amit Shah on the December 13 security breach in Parliament, the government justified the action saying the suspended MPs insulted the Lok Sabha Speaker, Rajya Sabha Chairman and the institution of Parliament.



PEDAL TIME: Participants and organisers pose for a picture during the 40th State Road Cycling Championship, 2023-24 being organised in Puri, Tuesday

# Plant physiology award to Panda

**Bhubaneswar:** The Orissa Botanical Society (OBS) conferred Prof Gadadhara Mishra Memorial Plant Physiology Award 2023 on Debabrata Panda of Central University of Odisha (CUO) at the 46th annual conference of OBS organised on the premises of Dhenkanal Autonomous College, Monday. Panda is the assistant professor of Biodiversity and Conservation of Natural Resources. The felicitation ceremony was held in the presence of National Botanical Research Institute Director Ajit Kumar Shasany, OBS President Santilata Sahoo and OBS Secretary Sujata Mohanty among others. At CUO, Panda collected more than 130 vital genetic resources of indigenous rice, 30 local finger millets, 30 local accessions of Niger and 8 different wild edible Yams from different tribal pockets of Koraput. He also took the initiative for conservation and commercialization to boost the local economy of tribal people. His research scholar Alokika Panda also received the Best Oral Presentation award in this conference. CUO vice chancellor Chakradhar Tripathi, while hailing Panda and Alokika, encouraged them to do more research on local crops to boost the local economy of tribal people. School of Biodiversity Dean Sharat Kumar Palita also commended Panda.

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# No let-up in smuggling of black stones in Jajpur

### RULES FLOUTED WITH IMPUNITY BECAUSE OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF INFLUENTIAL PERSONS, SAY LOCALS



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, Dec 19:** Smuggling of black stones from the non-leased mines under the Dharmasala block in Jajpur district are being rampantly done with the miners extracting stones more than the permissible limits, sources said Tuesday. It is also helping the local crusher units as they can hoard black stones more than the allotted quantity. Sources said that there are 90 black stone mines in Dharmasala tehsil. Out of these, 25 have been leased out. Smuggling and illegal extraction of stones from the other 65 quarries are rampant, the sources added. They pointed out that tehsil and Minor Minerals department officials are aware of the loot, but remain silent due to obvious reasons. They alleged that the officials are associated with the smugglers. Dharmasala tehsildar Subhankar Mohanty recently

holders lodged complaints with the director, Mines department and the district collector. The guideline warrants merging of the contract of the black stone quarry with that of the crusher units, updated and valid no objection certificates (NOC) and consent to establishment (CTE). Only then mining of the quarries are allowed. However, in most cases rules are flouted with impunity due to the presence of influential persons, sources said. Similarly, hoarding of raw materials or finished goods beyond the permitted quantity must not be done in a unit at any given time, the rules state. A transparent updated register of the details of goods must be maintained at all times for surprise checks. This also is not done regularly. Rules also state that transport vehicles must be permitted with optimum loadings. Overloading of the vehicles at the supply points will attract heavy penalties in addition to action as per law. It has been said that CCTV cameras must be installed at the crusher units, but most of the units do not have a single one. Sources said that due to the flouting of the rules, the state government is losing several crores annually in revenue. An official on condition of anonymity said that the tehsildar has sought the cooperation of owners of crusher units. The tehsildar has sent a guideline to the units after some lease-



ANNUAL FUNCTION: Students of Delhi Public School at Sambalpur performing a mythological act during their 13th annual function Monday night

# Diarrhoea situation under control: ADM

### Out of 580 persons admitted to hospitals, 244 have already been discharged

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, Dec 19:** The additional district magistrate (ADM) of Sundargarh, Dr Subhankar Mohapatra said Tuesday that the diarrhoea situation is improving in this town and the number of patients seeking admission to hospitals is slowly decreasing. However, he urged people to remain cautious and maintain personal hygiene. "The diarrhoea situation is improving given the discharge and

admission rates, but we cannot lower our guard. Through the media, I request all to remain careful," Mohapatra said at a press conference here Tuesday. "We have sufficient medicines to tackle the situation, so there is nothing to worry," the ADM added. Mohapatra however, contradicted the death toll which has appeared in sections of the media. "Officially we have reports of five deaths from the Rourkela Government Hospital. I cannot comment on the fig-



ures provided by private medical facilities," Mohapatra informed. Mohapatra also talked about the number of patients admitted to various hospitals. "A total of 580 patients infected with diarrhoea have been admitted to hospitals. Out of them, 429 are from the Rourkela urban area. So far 244 patients have been discharged," Mohapatra said. He added that the Ispat General Hospital (IGH) has

kept five ICU beds reserved for diarrhoea-hit patients and Dr PK Mohapatra has been appointed as the nodal officer. Mohapatra when asked about the reason behind the outbreak of the disease informed that investigations are still on. "However, stool samples suggest the presence of E Coli bacteria. Only after we have a final report we can give a proper explanation for the outbreak of the disease," stated Mohapatra. Mohapatra however, gave a clean chit to WATCO when asked about the leaks found in some of the main water distribution pipes.

# Man injured in bear attack

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kantabanji, Dec 19:** A man suffered serious injuries in a bear attack near Ramod Chowk at Larki village under Turekela police limits in Bolangir district in the wee hours of Tuesday. The injured person was identified as Dasratha Parabhoi, 60, a resident of the above-mentioned village.



Locals said Dasratha had gone to a nearby forest to relieve himself when a bear suddenly attacked him from the rear. Hearing his agonising screams, his family members rushed to the spot, rescued him and took him to the Kantabanji hospital. He was discharged after doctors treated him. On being informed, the officer of Larki forest under Kantabanji range, Sunil Kumar Chhatria, reached the spot. He tried to identify the tracks of the bear. "We have heard about the bear attack on Dasratha, but are yet to receive any formal written complaint on the matter," Chhatria said.

# Inter-state train dacoity gang busted: 5 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, Dec 19:** The Government Railway Police (GRP) here busted an inter-state train dacoity gang late Monday night and arrested five persons. The miscreants were waiting at a secluded place on platform No 4 at the railway station here. They were planning to board a train to commit dacoity, officials said. Those arrested have been identified as K Gurumulu, 34, of Vizianagaram, D Cheena, 28, of East Godavari, J Hari, 22 and M Ramakrushna, 32 of Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh and Ranjan Kumar Sahu, 20, a resident of Deogarh. Officials said they were



planning to board a late night train and rob passengers. GRP officials informed that during night patrolling they were tipped off about the presence of miscreants at a secluded spot on the Palasa side of platform No 4. Accordingly they conducted a

raid and arrested the five. During interrogation police found out that the group used to collect plastic bottles at the station during the arrival and departure times of trains. Accordingly they planned their operations. They did not use mobile phones as they were afraid that calls might be tracked, but instead met in person to plan their next move. Police seized two laptops, two packets of chilli powder, two knives, a torch and three iron rods from the possession of those arrested. All the accused were forwarded to court Tuesday after police registered a case (No-133/23) against them.

# Kidnapped girl found in Sundargarh

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, Dec 19:** The six-year-old girl who was kidnapped Monday evening from Deogarh town was rescued Tuesday from a locality in Sundargarh district, police said. Pihu Agarwal, six, was abducted when she was returning from tuition with her grandmother (paternal). Three persons came on a bike and accosted them. They then snatched Pihu from the elderly lady and sped away. Pihu's father, an established cloth merchant in Deogarh, immediately informed the police. Deogarh police officials launched a manhunt to nab the

kidnappers. Search and raids were conducted at different places in the district but nothing bore results. However, things took a dramatic turn in the wee hours of Tuesday. Laxmikant Mishra, a resident of Badagaon under the same police station woke up when he heard sounds of a girl crying around 3.30am in the morning. On opening the door, he found the girl standing. "The girl was crying and was pleading to me to save her," Laxmikant told the media Tuesday. Laxmikant then woke up the house owner Govind and the two informed the Badagaon police station. Accordingly the information was then passed on

to the officials of Deogarh police station. The parents of the girl arrived Tuesday morning and the family was reunited. "By god's grace and due to the efforts of Laxmikant, I got my daughter back. I am also thankful to the officials of Deogarh and Badgaon police stations. They helped me out in this hour of difficulty," said Pihu's father Ashok Agarwal. Talking about the case, SDPO Abhishek Panigrahi said, "The girl has been handed over to her parents and Deogarh police will now take over the investigations. We are satisfied that the girl has been safely rescued. We will talk to the girl once she gets over her trauma.

# Tourist guide dies in mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada, Dec 19:** A tourist guide died after he slipped and suffered a heavy fall from a staircase of the Ashok Kalyan Mandap here, Monday night, police said Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Atal Bihari Hota, 45, a PET of Masigaon High School in Nabarangpur district. He also doubled up as a government tourist guide for pilgrimage of elderly persons, officials said. Police said that Hota had come here with 144 elderly pilgrims and five other guides. He was staying Monday at the Ashok Kalyan Mandap owned by Rayagada Municipality. Misfortune struck after dinner: As he was going down the staircase, he slipped and fell down. He probably died on the spot, police officials informed Tuesday.

# Youth gets 20 yrs RI for raping minor

**KEONJHAR:** A fast track POCSCO court here Monday awarded 20 years of rigorous imprisonment to a 20-year-old youth after convicting him for the rape of a six-year-old minor. The convict was identified as Dana Kundkela a resident of a locality under Daitari police station limits. The judge also slapped a penalty of ₹25,000 on Kundkela. In default, the convict has to undergo an additional one year of rigorous imprisonment, the judge observed while pronouncing the order. The judge passed the order after examining the statements of 16 witnesses and studying the medical, forensic and police investigation reports. Public prosecutor Gyanendra Nath Jena gave this information to mediapersons here, Tuesday. The court has also ordered the district legal services authority (DLSA) to pay ₹6 lakh as compensation to the victim, he added. Jena pleaded the matter on behalf of the Odisha government. The incident took place March 15, 2022 when Kundkela intercepted the victim while she was returning home alone after witnessing a football match near his village. He took her to a deserted place and raped her. The victim after returning home narrated her ordeal to her parents. After two days they lodged a complaint at the Daitari police station. On receiving the complaint, police registered a case under the POCSCO Act and arrested Kundkela.

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

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**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
**E-AUCTION FOR CATERING UNIT OVER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION**

Sl. No.	STATION NAME	LOCATION OF UNIT	LOT NO.
1	NUAGAON ROAD (NXNR)	Platform No. 1	Catg-KUR-NXNR-GMU-79-23-1
2	MALATIPATPUR (MLT)	Platform No. 2&3	Catg-KUR-MLT-GMU-132-23-1
3	BEGUNIA (BYZA)	Platform No. 1	Catg-KUR-BYZA-GMU-101-23-1
4	BHUSANDPUR (BBDP)	Platform No. 1	Catg-KUR-BBDP-GMU-92-23-1
5	SOMPETA (SPT)	Platform No. 1	Catg-KUR-SPT-GMU-136-23-1
6	KENDUJHARGARH (KDJR)	Platform No. 1	Catg-KUR-KDJR-GMU-134-23-1
7	KATHAJODI P.H (KTJ)	Platform No. 1	Catg-KUR-KTJ-GMU-77-23-1
8	JAKHAPURA (JKPR)	Platform No. 1	Catg-KUR-JKPR-SMU-135-23-1
9	CHILKA (CLKA)	Platform No. 1	Catg-KUR-CLKA-SMU-44-23-1
10	BHUBANESWAR (BBS)	Platform No. 6 (Pillar No. 29 & 30)	Catg-KUR-BBS-SMU-133-23-1

Category of Station: E (for Sl. No. 1 to 6, 8 & 9), F (for Sl. No. 7), A-1 (for Sl. No. 10), Type of Unit: Catering Stall (for Sl. No. 1 to 5 & 7 to 10), FFJ Stall (for Sl. No. 6), Category of Stall (GMU/SMU): GMU (for Sl. No. 1 to 7), SMU (Other Backward Caste) (for Sl. No. 8 & 9), SMU (FF/WW/etc.) (for Sl. No. 10), Size of Unit: 8'x6' (for all Sl. Nos.).  
Date & Time of E-auction: 22.12.2023 from 11:00 hrs. onwards (for all Sl. Nos.).  
For complete information, please visit website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)  
PR-897/O/23-24 Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, Khurda Road

# Human skeleton found in Keonjhar

**PATNA:** The skeleton of a person was found inside a cashew forest near Chatarapani village in Saharapada block under Patna police limits in Keonjhar district Tuesday. Police are yet to ascertain the identity of the deceased person. Police also found a trouser, a pair of shoes and a towel lying close to the skeleton. On being informed, Patna police station IIC, Bibatsa Pradhan along with his team reached the spot and initiated an investigation. Preliminary investigations suggest that the skeleton is more than a month old, police said. Police are now trying to ascertain whether the person died on the spot or the body was dumped after the person had died at some other place. "Forensic tests will reveal various details. Then only we can ascertain the reason behind the person's death," Pradhan informed.

# Marine ecology research deal inked

PNN & AGENCIES

**Berhampur, Dec 19:** Authorities of the Berhampur University (BU) here said Tuesday that the educational institution has signed an MoU with an international think tank for collaborative research in the field of marine ecology. The aim of the research will be to increase the livelihood opportunities for the fishermen in the Bay of Bengal region. Odisha has a 480-km long coastal line and thousands of people depend on the sea for their livelihood, Vice-Chancellor of the university, Geetanjali Dash said. The university inked the agreement with the Bay of Bengal Programme



Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO) which serves as a think tank on trans-boundary and contemporary national issues of the member countries concerning fisheries management. The current members of the organisation are Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka while Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand are cooperating non-contracting parties. The MoU was signed Monday between Sachidananda Nayak, Registrar of Berhampur University and P Krishnan, director, BOBP-IGO in presence of Dash. According to the MoU, the two entities have agreed to jointly carry out various academic activities for five years. The activities include student and scientist exchange programmes, collaborative research and exploring external funding opportunities. The students, researchers and teachers of

marine science and environment science and other departments of the university would also benefit from the MoU, Dash informed. The collaborative research on the marine ecology and livelihood improvement of the fisherfolk will also help policymakers while formulating programmes for the state, the VC added.

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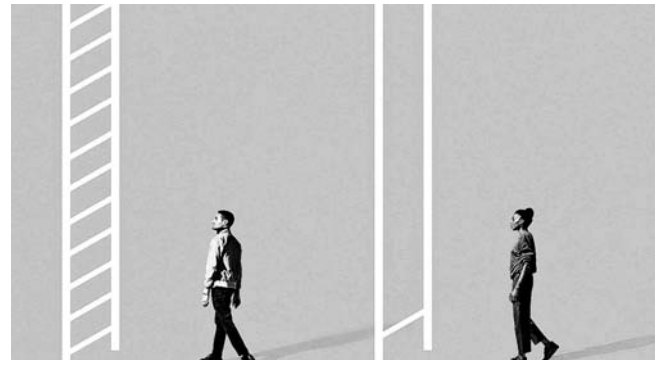
Offers are invited in sealed envelope from interested parties for sale of our following vehicle on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS"

Sl.No.	Branch/Office	Type of Vehicle/Model	Registration No.	Registration Date	Floor Price of the Vehicle
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Detailed notification and tender documents are available in Bank's website [www.bankofindia.co.in](http://www.bankofindia.co.in) Any corrigendum / addendum will be published in BOI website only.  
Last date & Time of submission of offers is up to 05.00 PM on 04.01.2024.  
Date: 19.12.2023 Zonal Manager, Bhubaneswar Zone

FOCUS GENDER

# SYSTEMATIC NEGLECT



Over the course of centuries, research and policies focused on men became the default, whereas initiatives that account for women are “women-centered.” But if men are treated as the default, virtually no aspect of women’s lives ends up being built or optimised for them

90% of cases, women experienced stronger side effects and more adverse reactions.

That analysis arose from the observation that women taking Ambien, a sleep medication, were experiencing severe side effects, including a higher rate of traffic accidents the morning after. As it turned out, researchers found, the recommended dose produced much higher blood concentrations and drug-elimination times in women than in men. The US Food and Drug Administration now recommends that women receive half the “standard” dose.

Making matters worse, when it comes to health issues that primarily affect women, research tends not to be funded at all. In nearly 75% of cases where a disease primarily affects one sex, the pattern favours men: “men’s diseases” are overfunded, and “women’s diseases” are underfunded.

Women’s needs also take a backseat to men’s when it comes to tackling sexual violence. Because women are overwhelmingly the victims of such crimes, preventing sexual violence is treated entirely as a “women’s issue” – one that has no consequences for men, even though they comprise the majority of perpetrators. Policies are so focused on the victims – for example, improving outdoor lighting, establishing helplines,

and creating “safe spaces” – that the source of the violence is never addressed.

Likewise, health-related data have been collected primarily from men, which poses serious risks as artificial intelligence trained on such data is applied in health care. For example, if a man reports pain in his left arm and back, a medical app – trained on data establishing cardiovascular disease as a predominantly male issue – will recommend that he seek help for a potential heart attack. That same app might suggest that a woman is experiencing depression and thus does not need urgent care, even though women are hardly immune to heart attacks.

AI has the potential to harm women in other ways, too. In 2015, Amazon scrapped its AI recruiting tool for exhibiting bias against women. Having “learned” to assess applications by observing patterns in resumes submitted over the previous decade – resumes that had come overwhelmingly from men – the computer model rated male candidates more highly. This should not be surprising, given women account for only 12% of AI researchers and 6% of software developers. Several other companies that continue to use AI software for recruitment do not monitor it for bias. Despite considerable evidence

showing that advances toward gender equality play an important role in driving economic progress, analysis focusing solely on macro aspects of growth disregards gender. Ignoring the fact that government spending, taxation, and monetary policy have different consequences for men and women can lead to flawed economic assessments, undermining the effectiveness of policies and the accuracy of forecasts.

For example, women’s unpaid labour as primary caregivers is unaccounted for in macroeconomic policy. Tasks like cooking, cleaning, fetching water, and caring for children and the elderly have substantial economic value, accounting for between 10-60% of GDP. As a result of gender-blind analysis, women are overworked and underpaid. Increasing the share of women in the workforce needs to be accompanied by policies that reduce and redistribute this unpaid labour.

Consider the debate over India’s economic prospects. With India having recently overtaken China in population, some analysts predict that it will also surpass China in economic growth. But, as Ashwini Deshpande and Akshi Chawla explain, this works only if the population increase is reflected the workforce, and in India, low female labour-force participation limits the effect.

Gender plays a crucial role in countless other policy areas, including the single biggest challenge of our time: climate change. Like most of the other issues addressed by the Sustainable Development Goals, the effects of global warming, including climate-related disasters, disproportionately affect women.

When half the global population is treated as an afterthought, research is less accurate, policy is less effective, and human welfare is diminished. That will not change until accounting explicitly for women becomes the norm in every sphere of research, product design, tech, and policy.

The writer is Economist-Editor at the International Economic Association. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

We have every one of us a role to fulfill, a work to do, a place which we alone can occupy.



THE MOTHER

## Demise Near



Navika Mehta

AS A RESULT OF GENDER-BLIND ANALYSIS, WOMEN ARE OVERWORKED AND UNDERPAID

It may not be a coincidence that Hong Kong’s Chief Executive John Lee met Chinese President Xi Jinping 18 December in Beijing when a landmark national security trial for pro-democracy media mogul of Hong Kong, 76-year-old Lai Chee-Ying, also known as Jimmy Lai, began in the territory. Jimmy Lai was the publisher and owner of the now banned Apple Daily and Next Digital. Predictably, Xi showered praise on Lee for running the Hong Kong government and “fully approved” of the job he has done during the past year. But Xi’s words that Lee has brought order “from chaos” and is paving the way for prosperity are obviously hyperboles. The ground reality is just the opposite. A majority of the population in Hong Kong is groaning under an oppressive regime and its growth trajectory is not as promising as is being made out.

On the other hand, the case of Lai typifies the state of affairs in Hong Kong where pro-democracy supporters and movements are ruthlessly being suppressed by the autocratic rule imposed by Xi. For, Lai stands accused of violating the draconian national security law Beijing clamped on Hong Kong in 2020. He founded the Apple Daily news outlet to champion freedom of speech and expression. But, it was shut down after a massive police raid and arrests of editors and journalists. This only followed the pattern adopted by all autocratic and tyrannical governments elsewhere in the world. He is charged with one count of sedition and three counts of violations of national security law. He has pleaded not guilty to all four allegations. The national security law is a highly controversial measure. It was imposed on Hong Kong to steamroll mass protests against the introduction of a Bill that would have allowed extraditions to the mainland. The Bill was eventually shelved. The security law runs counter to the arrangement made allowing Hong Kong to retain certain freedoms under China’s “one country, two systems” policy. The imposition was accompanied by a rigorous crackdown on dissent, including hundreds of arrests of pro-democracy activists and opposition legislators.

The Chinese authorities and their followers in Hong Kong stress that the stability of the city has been restored by the law, while critics say Hong Kong’s basic freedoms and various rights have been severely compromised. That such claims of the Chinese authorities are far from the truth becomes clear when one considers Xi’s wholesome praise of the conduct of Hong Kong’s district election held 10 December. He called the election a “remoulding” of the city’s district council system and claimed it was “smoothly completed.”

The election was a mockery of the people’s democratic rights since the rules were changed to ensure only “patriots”, as defined by Beijing, could take part as candidates. The overhaul disqualified all candidates from the pro-democracy camp, which had won over 80% of the total seats in 18 districts and took an absolute majority in all district councils in the 2019 election, when over 90% of all seats were elected by popular vote. The proportion of popularly elected seats was slashed to less than 20% this time. The turnout sank to a historic low of 27.54% from a record high of 71.23% in 2019.

It all reflects Hong Kong’s democracy-loving citizens’ aversion to Chinese repression and rejection of a process they believe is fake. Sadly, this phenomenon of suppressing people’s will by governments is becoming a common sight across the world. The demise of democracy seems to be near.

## Plain Hypocrisy

It is seen to be believed how a large part of the world, especially the US, could shut its eyes to the surging violence unleashed on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank. Going by accepted parameters, nothing short of genocide is taking place by Israel, armed to the teeth itself and getting steady supply of ammunition from the US. Volker Türk, the UN human rights chief, has called the situation “potentially explosive,” warning the violence would get even more intensified and discrimination against Palestinians more painful. What is worse, Israel PM Benjamin Netanyahu is in denial mode about the inhuman treatment being meted out to the Palestinians hounded out of their homes, packed like cattle in military trucks to the southern part of Gaza, while the WHO fears public health disaster is staring in the face of the displaced millions. The Israeli human rights organisation B’Tselem, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and a UN rapporteur have said that Palestinians are already subject to a form of apartheid.

Unfortunately, acts of ethnic cleansing and forced displacement in Gaza are being reported that are glossed over by allies of Israel as “evacuations” and Israel’s self-defence against “terror.” While that may be partially true, the truth is hundreds of thousands of civilians living under Israel’s occupation are under threat of bombs and bullets along with apartheid laws and policies.

What is being witnessed in Palestine is, in the assessment of human rights groups, genocide as defined in the 1948 Genocide Convention. According to it acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group are to be classified as genocide. This is done in five ways - killing members of the group, causing them serious bodily or mental harm, imposing living conditions intended to destroy the group, preventing births, and forcibly transferring children out of the group. Many genocide and international law experts across the world agree that what Israel has committed in Gaza is at least meeting the first three acts in this list.

Last week 55 scholars in holocaust and genocide studies published an open letter condemning Hamas’ October 7 attack on Israel. In the same breath they castigated Israel for the continuing forced displacement of Palestinian civilians in Gaza which, according to them, raises the question of genocide, especially in view of the intentions expressed by Israeli leaders. Significantly, activists are moving courts in the US and launching peaceful public protests to make Israel and countries supporting its genocidal activities accountable. Human and constitutional rights organisations have taken their case on the Gaza genocide to courts in the US. Centre for Constitutional Rights (CCR), a non-profit legal advocacy organisation, published its legal analysis of what it calls US complicity in Israel’s unfolding genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. It took its case directly to Congress notifying representatives that if they vote for an aid package to Israel they could face criminal and civil liability for aiding and abetting genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. It went on to file a lawsuit accusing President Joe Biden and his secretaries of State and Defence of enabling Israel’s genocide. It submitted before the US District Court for Northern California that the Biden administration’s unconditional support for Israel constitutes a breach of US responsibilities under customary international law, as codified in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Katherine Gallagher, the lead lawyer for CCR’s lawsuit against Biden and his officials, explained at a presentation in New York City that the US actions in support of Israel, including sending expedited military and economic aid, blocking UNSC resolutions to implement a ceasefire and giving Israel advanced weapons that few other states get, clearly cross the lines of complicity in genocide. The US administration reacted by moving the California District Court to throw out the lawsuit on jurisdictional grounds. But the plaintiffs say the US is bound by the Genocide Convention it ratified to stop a genocide. The WHO has also said the healthcare situation in Gaza is “catastrophic” and warned that disease is spreading among the 1.9 million Palestinians in Gaza forced from their homes by Israel. The situation is likely to worsen because of overcrowding in areas where civilians are seeking shelter. Another international organisation - Save the Children - said that in Gaza it had documented cases of more than 7,000 children under the age of five who were so malnourished that they required urgent medical treatment to avoid death.

The war must stop and Israel’s conscience needs to wake up.

IN JEST THIS

# Facts about Santa you may not know



Melvin Durai

SANTA HAS RESISTED OFFERS FROM ELON MUSK AND OTHER BILLIONAIRES TO UPGRADE HIS MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

It’s almost that time of year – time for Santa Claus to bring smiles to millions of children around the world. Perhaps you know him by another name, such as Father Christmas, Saint Nicholas or “Santa Baby.” He’s the jolly old man with the white beard and red suit who delivers gifts to children all over the world on the night before Christmas.

Here are some facts about Santa that you may not know: Santa makes deliveries to more households in a single day than Swiggly and Zomato in a whole year. It’s one of the great feats of mankind, but Santa has humbly declined to have his name entered in the Guinness World Records.

Travelling through the sky on a sleigh pulled by nine reindeer, Santa has yet to hit a single airplane. But a few years ago, he did come close to hitting a Chinese spy balloon.

Santa has resisted offers from Elon Musk and other billion-

aires to upgrade his mode of transportation. Musk wrote a letter to Santa, offering to build an electric sleigh, one that would allow Santa to shoot across the Atlantic Ocean in mere minutes. “Imagine how many more deliveries you could make per hour,” Musk wrote. But Santa did not want to lay off his reindeer, nor did he want to travel in a sleigh emblazoned with a large ‘X.’

Santa does not age. He has been a 70-year-old man for the last 100 years or so. How does he do it? Scientists aren’t sure, but they believe it has to do with a vegetarian diet, lots of yoga, and completely ignoring politics.

Santa has several toy factories in the North Pole, but about 10 years ago, he named his biggest toy factory “China.” He was tired of receiving letters from children asking why so many of the toys he delivers are labeled “Made in China.”

Santa has been facing pressure

to lose weight, ever since Christmas Eve of 2012, when he got stuck in a chimney. Thankfully his reindeer were able to pull him out. But the much-publicised incident has led to calls from doctors and other health professionals for Santa to go on a diet. Santa has resisted these calls, partly because he loves ice cream and there’s plenty of it in the North Pole. Santa also believes that his girth makes him more lovable and safer. Would kids be eager to sit on the lap of a skinny Santa? Would a skinny Santa be blown off the sleigh when it’s traveling at breakneck speeds? “Self-acceptance is important,” Santa says. “Love me just the way I am.”

Self-acceptance is also one of the reasons that Santa has never dyed his hair or beard. Having white hair is part of his identity. Some well-meaning people have mailed hair-colouring products to the North Pole, but Santa has refused to

try them. “I love my white hair,” he says. “I’d rather die like this than dye like that.”

Animal rights groups have expressed concern about Santa’s treatment of his reindeer. They believe that the reindeer are being overworked. But Santa has argued that the reindeer get plenty of rest 364 days of the year. He has also signed a pledge to never whip his reindeer, even if they accidentally run into a Chinese balloon.

Santa has traditionally kept “naughty or nice” lists, giving the best gifts to children who have been nice throughout the year. But Santa recently suspended this practice after hearing from psychologists concerned about the long-term psychological damage to children who are labeled “naughty.”

Santa has no plans to retire, even if most people consider him old. “It’s not about your age,” Santa says. “It’s about your ability to get things done. And I still get the job done.”

### Fitting honour

Sir, That the BCCI has decided to ‘retire’ MS Dhoni’s iconic No. 7 jersey is a fitting honour and recognition for his immense contribution to Indian cricket, including the three ICC trophies that he won as captain. In 2017, BCCI had taken a decision to retire the No. 10 jersey of the legendary Sachin Tendulkar, which marked the end of an era in Indian cricket. Cricket Australia too has retired jersey No. 64 in memory of the late Phil Hughes. Certain jerseys become symbols of greatness, honour, and remembrance, and retiring them speaks volumes of the indelible impact and legacies left behind by iconic sportspersons. And it is a way of ensuring that legacies are never forgotten, and they remain eternally woven into the fabric of the games the athletes graced.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

### Reforms must

Sir, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar’s recent statement that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has become like an old club whose members continuously deny new members’ admittance is apt. The need for the UNSC to be reformed is not new. For a long time, India, along with other countries, has made such demands in various global forums. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had stated at the G20 conference in September that the global system should be founded on the reality of the present day. In this regard, he especially mentioned the UNSC. Jaishankar also stated at the United Nations General Assembly’s 78th session that if reforms are not accepted, the UN will become irrelevant and people will begin to look elsewhere for solutions to their concerns. The worldwide scenario was entirely different after World War II, when a new global organisation in the form of the United Nations came into being. However, a lot has changed since then. The need for reform is also being expressed within the United Nations. Last week, the President of the United Nations General Assembly, Dennis Francis, stressed the need to reform the Security Council, saying that this institution is becoming paralysed. Although the five permanent member countries of the Security Council have given verbal support to these demands, they have not expressed any interest in implementing them.

Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST  
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RELIGIOUS CONVERSION CASE

# Top court relief for varsity officials booked by police

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** The Supreme Court Tuesday granted interim protection against arrest to the Vice-Chancellor and other higher officials of the Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture Technology and Science (SHUATS), who were booked by Uttar Pradesh Police for allegedly persuading a woman to adopt Christianity by offering her a job and other allurements.

"There shall also be an interim order protecting the petitioners from arrest in connection with FIR No. 305/2023 dated November 4, 2023 registered with Bawar Police Station, District Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh," ordered a vacation bench of Justices Aniruddha Bose and KV Vishwanathan.

Further, the bench stayed operation of the impugned judgment passed by the Allahabad High Court which had ordered the accused to surrender before the court on or before December 20, 2023 and apply for regular bail.

It said: "Issue notice. There shall be a stay of operation of the impugned judgment... passed by the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad till January 12, 2024 or until further order, whichever is earlier."

The matter has been ordered to be listed before the appropriate bench January 3.

In an order passed December 11, a division bench of Justice Rahul Chaturvedi and Justice Mohd Azhar Husain Idrisi of the High Court had refused to quash FIR lodged against varsity officials under section 376D (gang rape) and other IPC sections, and relevant sections of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021 and Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956.

It said: "No God or true church or temple or mosque would approve such types of malpractices. If someone has chosen to get himself converted to a different religion, then it is totally another aspect of the issue. In the instant case prevailing upon the tender mind of a young girl pro-



2024 or until further order, whichever is earlier."

viding gifts, clothing and other physical amenities and then asking her to get her baptised in an unpardonable sin."

The High Court had said the allegations levelled in the FIR were extremely serious and horrifying, and asked the superintendent of police (SP) of Hamirpur to personally supervise the investigation and submit a report before the concerned magistrate within 90 days.

In her complaint, the woman alleged that she belonged to a lower middle-class family and was trapped by another woman who took her regularly to a church and she was regularly subjected to sexual exploitation by the accused, including the VC of SHUATS, formerly known as Allahabad Agricultural Institute.

In the FIR, she said that she was pressurised to bring other women for conversion and other illegal works.

Meanwhile, the accused had pleaded that the victim was offered a job at SHUATS and when she was sacked from her service in 2022, she tailored a story as mentioned in the FIR, just to rope in all the higher officials of SHUATS, including the vice-chancellor.

## Calcutta HC refuses to change date of TET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Dec 19:** The Calcutta High Court Tuesday refused to grant a prayer by BJP MP Dilip Ghosh and another person for change of date of a Teachers' Eligibility Test (TET) in West Bengal since it coincides with the December 24 Bhagavad Gita chant programme, scheduled to be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Submitting that the programme, 'Ek Lakh Gita Path' at the Brigade Parade Ground in the heart of the city, will be attended by the Prime Minister and will lead to congregation of a large number of people, counsels for Ghosh and an examinee prayed that the date for the examination be changed.

The BJP has said that several religious groups have come together to organise the massive event and will be an apolitical programme.

Holding that the directions sought for cannot be granted, the court observed that the authorities of the state government and the Kolkata Police will ensure that the examinees are not disrupted in any manner from reaching the five centres.

A division bench presided by Chief Justice T S Sivagnanam said that it is for the West Bengal Board of Primary Education, academicians and administrative authorities to take into consideration all factors before fixing a date for the examination.

# UP govt approves Amitabh Kant Committee proposals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow/Noida, Dec 19:** The Uttar Pradesh cabinet Tuesday approved the implementation of recommendations from the Amitabh Kant Committee report on real estate projects, in a move that could bring relief to lakhs of homebuyers in the state.

The approved recommendations include providing immediate registry and sub-lease deed rights to homebuyers and benefits of 'zero period' to developers in terms of penalties for delay during Covid-19 from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2022.

The approval came after a proposal of the Industrial Development Department for the resolution of legacy stalled housing projects, UP cabinet minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said during a press briefing in Lucknow. "The cabinet has approved the implementation of the recommendations of a central committee headed by Ex-CEO of Niti Ayog Amitabh Kant," said Khanna, the state's Minister for Finance and Parliamentary Affairs.

"For this, two main points were considered that buyers interest was taken into account. Those who have bought homes should get its possession and registry immediately," he said.

Along with this, the Cabinet has approved implementation for 'zero period' relief to real estate projects as mentioned in the recommendations of the report, he said.

However, these approvals do not apply to commercial, sports or entertainment projects but to all others, the minister added.

Citing an estimate by the Indian Banks Association, there



are about 4.12 lakh homes across the country which could not be completed due to the poor financial status of the developers. "Of these stalled homes, around 2.40 lakh are in the national capital region, including Noida and Greater Noida," Khanna said.

Some industry estimates have pegged the number of stalled homes in Noida and Greater Noida to around 1.50 lakh, with citizens' groups and homebuyers' associations in the twin cities frequently holding protests demanding implementation of the recommendations of the Amitabh Kant Committee report. Khanna said if the

committee's recommendations are implemented, the interests of homebuyers will be protected and fully constructed houses will be available to homebuyers on time in stalled projects.

"This will give a boost to the economic development of the area and the Centre's committee has been formed especially for those people who had incomplete houses in Noida, Greater Noida and NCR or those who did not get possession," he said. Khanna said the second point was that in the circumstances arising out of Covid-19, the benefit of 'zero period' should be given from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2022.

## UP to have more cybercrime PSs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, Dec 19:** The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet Tuesday approved the opening of 57 cyber crime police stations in the state.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna told reporters that a decision in this regard was taken at the meeting of the cabinet, which was presided over by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Khanna said that the cabinet gave its approval to establish cyber crime police stations in the state's 57 districts, including Ghaziabad, Raebareli, Sitapur, Hardoi, Kanpur Dehat, Etawah, Baghpat, Barabanki, Mainpuri and Rampur.

He said the establishment of these cyber crime police stations will cost over Rs 127.24 crore.

Asserting these police stations will be established soon and help in controlling cyber crime, the minister said there are 18 district cyber crime police stations operating in the state till now.

Khanna said that the cyber crime police stations were till now under the inspectors general, adding they will now be under the superintendents of police.

# ED CONDUCTS RAIDS AT BENGAL FOREST DEPT

AGENCIES

**Kolkata, Dec 19:** Enforcement Directorate (ED) Tuesday conducted raids at the West Bengal Forest Department office.

Minister Jyotipriya Mallick has already been arrested by the ED in October this year for his alleged involvement in the case.

Mallick - was the State Food & Supplies minister from 2011 to 2021 - the period believed by ED when the alleged ration distribution scam took place. After the 2021 West Bengal elections, Mallick was made the State Forest minister.

It is not yet clear whether the fresh raids are in connection to any irregularities in the State Forest Department or in connection with the ration distribution case.

Sources said that possibly some files relating to the ration distribution system may have been kept at the Forest Department.

They said that there are possibilities that the fresh ED raid might be fallout of the central



THE ED HAS ALSO STARTED ENQUIRING ABOUT THE DETAILED PROJECT REPORTS (DPRS) OF THE PROJECTS OF THE DIRECTORATE FOR WHICH TENDERS WERE FLOATED

THERE ARE ALLEGATIONS THAT THE OUTSOURCED AGENCIES WHICH PREPARED THE DPRS FOR THE DIRECTORATE ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE TENDER PROCESS WITH DIFFERENT IDENTITIES WHICH WAS A CLEAR VIOLATION OF NORMS AS SPECIFIED IN THE PROCESS

agency initiating a preliminary probe last month in connection with the alleged tendering irregularities in the Zoo Directorate of West Bengal.

The ED has also started enquiring about the detailed project reports (DPRS) of the projects of the directorate for which

tenders were floated. There are allegations that the outsourced agencies which prepared the DPRs for the directorate also participated in the tender process with different identities which was a clear violation of norms as specified in the process.

## UP Congress wants Rahul, Priyanka, Kharge to contest from state

**UPCC PRESIDENT AJAY RAI SAID THE STATE "IS THEIR HOME BESIDES BEING THE CORE OF INDIA'S POLITICAL DESTINY"**



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, Dec 19:** The Congress unit in Uttar Pradesh has urged senior party leaders Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadera and Mallikarjun Kharge to contest the 2024 Lok Sabha elections from the state.

UPCC president Ajay Rai said the state "is their home besides being the core of India's political destiny".

"Therefore, on behalf of the cadres, workers and the people of Amethi and Rae Bareli, we have urged the leadership to take the poll plunge from here." He said that Rahul Gandhi even compared Uttar Pradesh with Telangana's success story. "Congress was number three in Telangana, but hard work does not go in vain. The fortune has now changed in our favour," he quoted Rahul as saying.

On a possible seat sharing with the INDIA alliance partners, Rai said: "The decision on this count has been reserved by the leadership. Whatever they will decide will be followed by us in the state."

# Community radio brings out voice of WB's remote tea garden villages



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Siliguri (WB), Dec 19:** In a remote village among tea gardens in the northern part of West Bengal, an elderly retired army soldier narrates the stories of bravery during fights. In another such hamlet, a woman sings songs which are relatable to those living in all nearby villages.

As their voices are aired on a community radio, listeners hear

with rapt attention as they consider those expressions to be their own.

"Recently we visited Dupkin village where we came across a widowed woman who told us how listening to our community radio station helped her overcome depression," radio jockey (RJ) Samir told PTI.

Samir and other RJs who work for Radio Salesian 90.8 FM, a community radio station, visit re-

mote hill villages 6,500 feet above sea level in Darjeeling district to meet local Nepali-speaking people and make programmes on issues affecting them.

In a community radio, local people produce and broadcast their own programmes and participate in operating the station.

"From the first week of November this year, our RJs have started moving out to villages every Saturday. We have an

## The RJs try to create awareness among the villagers about having names in the voters' list and the importance of voting

ambitious plan to reach out to 40 remote villages," said Father CM Paul, founder-director of Radio Salesian and vice principal of Salesian College.

These villages are often not easily accessible by vehicles, compelling the RJs to cover a portion of the journey on foot, Fr Paul told PTI.

He said the RJs bring out what is happening in those remote villages and the issues like transport, water, sanitation, health, education and unemployment faced by the villagers.

"After talking to the villagers, our RJs try to help them with their issues and also tell them about government schemes which are likely to mitigate their problems," Fr Paul said.

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION, MOHANA**  
No. 4713 Date: 18.12.2023  
**1st CORRIGENDUM**  
No. O-1950: The following works of tender invited vide this office Tender Identification No. Online Tender 10/MOHANA/2023-24 is hereby cancelled due to unavoidable circumstance.  
Sd./ Executive Engineer  
RW Division, Mohana  
OIPR-25148/11/0019/2324

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA "e" Procurement Notice**  
Bid Identification No.: Online-AGL-23 of 2023-2024  
1. Name of the Work : Building Work  
2. Estimated Cost : Rs.14.80 to Rs.17.00 Lakhs.  
3. Period of Completion : 04 (Four) & 06 (Six) Calendar Months.  
4. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal : From 22.12.2023 to 29.12.2023 upto 5.00 P.M.  
5. Last Date/Time for receipt of bids in the Portal : 29.12.2023 upto 5.00 P.M.  
6. Name & Address of the OIT : Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Angul  
Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.  
Sd./ Executive Engineer  
R.W.Division, Angul  
OIPR-25096/11/0022/2324

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA "e" Procurement Notice**  
e-mail ID: rw\_sambalpur@yahoo.co.in, Phone No.: 0663-2401850  
No. 6276 Dated: 18.12.2023  
Bid Identification No. TENDER ONLINE SBPR - 15 of 2023-24  
1. Name of the Work : Road Works as per DTGN available in the website: www.tendersodisha.gov.in  
2. Total No. of Work : 01 (One) No.  
3. Estimated Cost : Rs.20.98 lakhs  
4. Period of Completion : 01 (One) Calendar Month  
5. Period and time of availability of bid document in the portal for bidding : 21.12.2023 at 11.00 A.M. to 29.12.2023 upto 5.00 P.M.  
6. Date and time of opening of Tender : 30.12.2023 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 be published in the website: www.tenderodisha.gov.in.  
Sd./ Superintending Engineer  
Rural Works Division, Sambalpur  
OIPR-25076/11/0021/2324

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, RAIRANGPUR (MAYURBHANJ)**  
Letter No.5982/ Date: 18.12.2023  
"e" Procurement Notice for Building Works  
Bid Identification No-RWDRRP-17/2023-24  
No.O-1949:1.Name of the Work: Construction of Smart Class Room Ground Floor under Infrastructure grant to non govt added college for the year 2023-24 of Gorumahisani iron higher secondary school in the district of Mayurbhanj. 2. Estimated Cost: From Rs.22.12 lakhs (approximately). 3. Class of Contractor: "B" & "C" Class or relevant Class of works license. 4. Period of Completion: 06 (Six Calendar Months). 5. Tender Paper Cost: Rs.6000/-. The details are as follows:  

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender Online for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of opening of Tender in O/S.E.R.W. Division, Rairangpur, Technical Bid & Financial Bid
		From	To		
S.E.R.W. Division, Rairangpur	RWDRRP-17/2023-24	22.12.2023 at 11.00 A.M.	02.01.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.	01.01.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.	03.02.2024 at 11.30 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website: www.tendersodisha.gov.in.  
Sd./- Er. D. Behera  
Superintending Engineer, R.W.Division, Rairangpur  
OIPR-25107/11/0021/2324

I saw with my own eyes what happened there and what has been done to the people of Manipur. In my 19 years of political life, I have never experienced what I experienced in Manipur. It is as if one person has been torn into two pieces. It is like someone has torn one whole state of the union. So, it is important that the violence (in Manipur) is stopped immediately

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

Mothers and daughters of the country are crying after seeing the video from Manipur that showed two women being paraded naked by a mob. This anarchy has to stop... It is due to Centre's policies that the country is burning

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

The continuing violence in Manipur - over 100 dead, over 60,000 in relief camps; houses and properties gutted - is a matter of national concern. For normalcy to restore, BJP state government must quit followed by meaningful dialogue with all stakeholders

SITARAM YECHURY | CPI(M) GENERAL SECRETARY

If Prime Minister Narendra Modi's supporters think he is like the Sun, then why is he not shining over violence-battered Manipur? The double engine government has got derailed in the BJP-ruled Manipur

UDDHAV THACKERAY | SHIV SENA (UBT) PRESIDENT

The politics of hate of the RSS and the politics of vote of the BJP are responsible for the situation in Manipur

AKHILESH YADAV | SP CHIEF

# VIOLENT FACE-OFF

## What provoked clashes

On May 3, members of the Kuki and Naga tribes, who inhabit Manipur's hills and are regarded as Scheduled Tribes, launched a protest against the possible extension of their benefits to the dominant Meitei. The Meitei have sought special benefits for more than a decade, but received a fillip in April after the Manipur High Court recommended the government should consider the demand and set a deadline of mid-May. Meiteis account for half of Manipur's population and extending limited affirmative action quotas to them would mean they would get a share in education and government jobs reserved for Kukis and Nagas. Meiteis have traditionally lived in Manipur's more prosperous valley region that makes up 10% of the state's area. They have also had better access to employment and economic opportunities. Nagas and Kukis live in the poorly developed hills. The development imbalance favouring the valley over the hills has been a point of contention and rivalry between the ethnic groups. The groups coexisted peacefully until unrelated events in recent months exposed old faultlines. Manipur shares a nearly 400-km (250-

Ethnic violence broke out in Manipur May 3, when a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the majority Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe status. Meiteis account for about 53% of the state's population and live mostly in the Imphal valley, while tribals, including Nagas and Kukis, constitute 40% and reside mostly in the hill districts.

According to government figures, as of 15th September, 175 people have been killed in the violence

mile) border with Myanmar and the coup there in 2021 pushed thousands of refugees into the Indian state. Kukis share ethnic lineage with Myanmar's Chin tribe and Meiteis feared they would be outnumbered by the arrival of the refugees.

**What has happened since**  
Mobs looted police stations when the clashes began, with many weapons and ammunition going missing. The state fractured on ethnic lines, with rival Meitei and Kuki militias setting up blockades to keep out members of the opposing community. Many people have been forced to flee their homes, taking shelter in relief centres or nearby states. Reprisal attacks have seen the firebombing of homes and places of worship.

**How has the government responded**  
Sporadic violence has continued after the peak of the clashes despite tens of thousands of extra security personnel being deployed, marking a rare security failure for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government in a state ruled by his party.

Home Minister Amit Shah toured Manipur's capital in June and demanded the return of weapons seized from police stations during the unrest. He also promised an "impartial investigation" into the violence. Modi was criticised by opponents for not speaking about the conflict for more than two months after clashes began. He broke his silence in July, after the publication of a graphic video showing a baying mob parading two women naked, saying that the incident had filled his heart with "pain and anger".

Around 1,108 people have been injured while 32 are missing. 4,786 houses have been burnt and 386 religious structures have been vandalised. The violence has left more than 70,000 people displaced from their homes.



**SHAME**

The video showing two women from one of the warring communities in Manipur being paraded naked by men from the other side went viral July 19, resulting in massive outrage across the country on crimes allegedly being committed in the northeastern state. The video, which drew widespread condemnation, shows the men constantly molesting the two helpless women, who cry and plead with their captors to spare them the horror. The case was handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on a reference from the Union Home Ministry. As the two women were catapulted to the centre stage of national attention with a 26-second video of the May 4 mob violence in Manipur's Senapati district going viral, Opposition parties disrupted Parliament proceedings. The anguish found echo in the Supreme Court where a bench headed by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud took cognisance of the video and asked the Centre and Manipur government to take immediate action.



## SC steps in

As Manipur sank deeper into ethnic violence, the Supreme Court August 7 ordered setting up of a committee of three former women High Court judges to oversee relief and rehabilitation of victims and compensation to them besides asking former Maharashtra police chief Dattatray Padsalgikar to monitor the probe in criminal cases. Observing that its effort is to restore people's faith in the rule of law in the strife-torn state, the top court also decided to monitor the overall situation there. The court said the three-member panel will be submitting reports to it directly. A bench chaired by Chief Justice D Y

## 'Ensure dignified burial'

The Supreme Court November 28 issued directions for ensuring dignified burial or cremation of those killed during the Manipur ethnic violence after it was informed about 94



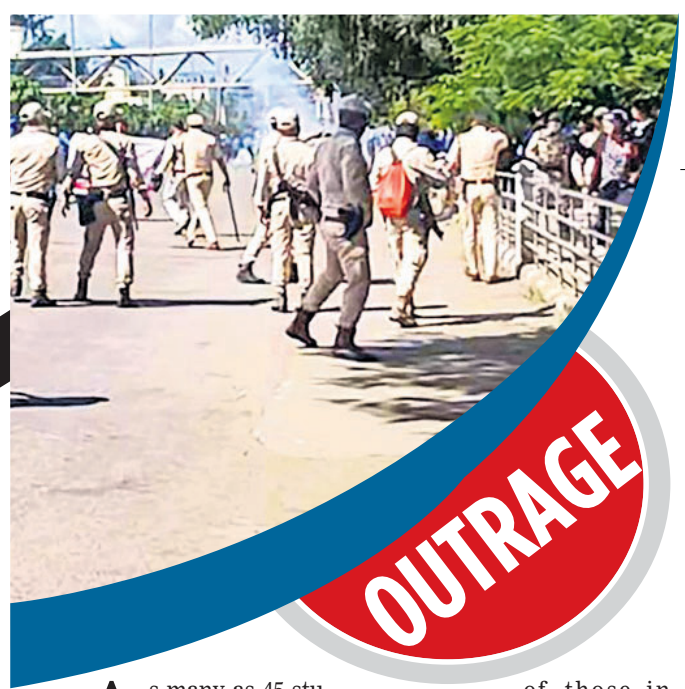
Chandrachud said the committee will be headed by former Jammu and Kashmir High Court Chief Justice Gita Mittal and include Justices (retd) Shalini P Joshi, a former judge of the Bombay High Court and Asha Menon, an ex-judge of the Delhi High Court.

unclaimed bodies kept in mortuaries and said it does not want to "keep the pot boiling" on the issue. A bench headed by Chief Justice D Y

Chandrachud perused a report filed by the apex court-appointed all-woman committee of former high court judges, headed by Justice (retd) Gita Mittal, regarding the position on dead bodies. The report said 94 unclaimed bodies were being preserved in mortuaries maintained by the state authorities. The top court said it would not be either appropriate or proper to keep the bodies, which have not been identified or claimed, indefinitely in the mortuaries.

## EDUCATION RELIEF

The Supreme Court December 4 came to the rescue of 284 students from ethnic violence-hit Manipur by giving them the option of attending classes online at Manipur university or getting relocated to Assam University in Silchar or the North East Hill University in Shillong. The top court was hearing a plea filed by the Manipur University EIMI Welfare Society on behalf of the 284 students, who are currently residing in various places across the country, seeking relocation to other central universities so they don't lose out on education due to the violence in the state.



## OUTRAGE

As many as 45 students were injured in Manipur's Imphal Valley September 26 as the police fired tear gas shells and baton-charged a mob protesting against the killing of two youths who were allegedly kidnapped in July, officials said. The two youths were identified as Phijam Hemjit (20) and Hijam Linthoingambi (17). The students of Imphal-based schools and colleges brought out the protest rallies hours after photos of the bodies of the two youths went viral on social media, demanding arrest of those involved in the killing. The protesters clashed with the police near Sanjenthong in Imphal East district when security forces stopped them from advancing towards the Chief Minister's secretariat. Students also took out rallies at Uripok, Old Lambulane, Singjamei in Imphal West district demanding arrest of those involved in the killing of the two youths. Similar clashes between students and security forces were reported from Thoubal, Kakching and Bishnupur districts.

**Rahul's convoy stopped**

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was stopped by local police and tear gas fired near his convoy when the 53-year-old scion of the Congress party was on his way to visit Manipur. Rahul Gandhi was travelling to Churachandpur district, one of the worst affected areas in the violence, when security forces stopped his convoy at Bishnupur, about 20 kms from Imphal, citing security fears. Tear gas shells were then fired to disperse a crowd that had started gathering in the area. Rahul's convoy returned to Imphal and he reached Churachandpur by helicopter, Meghachandra Singh, Manipur state Congress president, said.



Police in Manipur filed criminal charges against four journalists, accusing them of misrepresenting facts in a report about the violent clashes between ethnic groups earlier this year. The four were senior journalists working on a report, which was released in September, for the Editors Guild of India that was seeking to assess how coverage of violence in the state was being conducted. The report stated that there "are clear indications that the leadership of the state became partisan during the conflict". Manipur's Chief Minister N. Biren Singh accused the journalists of trying to "provoke clashes" with the coverage. In a statement, the Editors Guild urged the government to drop the cases, saying it was shocked by the Chief Minister's comments. The New Delhi-based Press Club of India also demanded that the charges be withdrawn. "This is a strong arm tactic by the state government which amounts to intimidation of the apex media body of the country," it said.





# national

## of the day quote

While preparing the curriculum for the future, all the stakeholders should keep in mind the overall development of the students. It should be ensured that students not only gain academic knowledge but also learn life skills as well

**DROUPADI MURMU** | PRESIDENT

India did not accede to the pressure from developed countries on the issue of fossil fuels at the UN climate conference in the UAE

**BHUPENDER YADAV** | ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

It is inappropriate for persons holding prominent positions to conduct themselves in a way that goes against established protocols

**PINARAYI VIJAYAN** | KERALA CM

## SHORT TAKES

**Kerala logs 115 COVID cases**

**Thiruvananthapuram:** As Kerala reported 115 fresh COVID-19 infections in the last 24 hours taking the total active cases of the virus in the state to 1,749, the Health Department Tuesday said there was no need to be worried. According to data on the Union Health Ministry's website, of the 142 COVID cases reported in the country till 8 am Tuesday, 115 were from Kerala. Kerala Health Minister Veena George, in a statement, said there was nothing to be worried about as the state is well prepared to handle the virus infection.

**Section 144 in Churachandpur**

**Churachandpur (Manipur):** The Manipur government has imposed prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC for two months in Churachandpur district following fresh violence, according to an official order. Various parts of the northeastern state have been rocked by ethnic strife since May this year. Incidents of sporadic violence were reported from several places in Churachandpur district, especially in Thingkanphai village, Monday. "There are still chances of breach of peace due to the confrontation between the two groups of people... and the situation is still tense," the district magistrate said in an order.

**Oreva CMD's bail rejected**

**Ahmedabad:** The Gujarat High Court Tuesday rejected the bail application of Oreva Group CMD Jaysukh Patel, the main accused in the October 2022 Morbi suspension bridge collapse that killed 135 persons. Dismissing Patel's bail plea, the court of Justice Divyesh Joshi observed that prima facie it appears that the accused allowed the suspension bridge to be kept open for the public despite knowing the possibility of such an unfortunate incident occurring for want of proper maintenance.

**Major crackdown**

**Jammu:** More than 50 people, were either detained or arrested Tuesday in a major crackdown against those harbouring Rohingya immigrants and facilitating their stay with illegal papers in Jammu, police said. About a dozen FIRs were registered during the day-long drive aimed at ensuring national security and safeguarding the interests of the residents of Jammu and Kashmir, Inspector General of Police, Jammu zone, Anand Jain said here Tuesday.



The previous governments did nothing for the people of Jharkhand, particularly the weaker section of the society. The poor people, including widows, had to run from pillar to post to get their pension

**HEMANT SOREN** | JHARKHAND CM

## RAMAN SINGH ELECTED SPEAKER OF CHHATTISGARH ASSEMBLY

Senior BJP MLA and former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh was Tuesday unanimously elected as the Speaker of Chhattisgarh Assembly. The first session of the newly-elected Assembly began Tuesday



# Row over TMC leader mimicry of Dhankhar



TMC's Kalyan Banerjee mimicks Rajya Sabha chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar while staging a protest along with other suspended MPs during the Winter Session of Parliament, in New Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** Suspended from Parliament, opposition leaders Tuesday staged protests on the stairs of the building with Trinamool Congress leader Kalyan Banerjee breaking into an impromptu skit mocking Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar and Rahul Gandhi making a video of the performance, sparking a political controversy.

The targeting of the Vice President drew sharp reactions from the BJP as the Rajya Sabha chairman himself termed the opposition actions as "shameful" and "insult" of his background as a farmer and "position as a Jat".

"Imagine what must be going through my heart when your senior leader videographs a

Member of Parliament mocking the institution of the chairman... Don't take on my background as a farmer," Dhankhar said in Rajya Sabha, addressing Congress leader P Chidambaram.

The institution of the chairman, he added, has been ravaged and that too by a political party that has ruled for so long. "A member of Parliament videographing another one, for what I had suffered, I tell you, on Instagram, Mr Chidambaram (who was present in the House), your party put a video that was withdrawn later on that was shame to me. You used Twitter, the official handle of the spokesperson to demean me, insult me, insult my position as a Jat, insult my position as

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi termed this as a mockery of democracy and the constitutional institutions

The opposition members cheered Kalyan Banerjee and Rahul Gandhi soon started making a video of the Trinamool leader's performance mocking the Vice President

chairman," Dhankhar said. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi termed this as a mockery of democracy and the constitutional institutions. In a post on X, he said, "The I.N.D.I.A alliance reaches a new low as suspended TMC MP mimics a constitutional position, and the so-called messiah of democratic values, @RahulGandhi, stands there laughing at it. They are a disgrace to democracy, to the people they represent, and to the nation."

The BJP also termed Banerjee's conduct as condemnable. "This is an example of how the opposition is sabotaging parliamentary democracy. TMC leader Kalyan Banerjee is mocking the Vice President in the Parliament premises, and Rahul Gandhi is recording the video; nothing can be more unfortunate than this," Rakesh Sinha, the BJP Rajya Sabha member said.



Students perform 'Mallakhambh' during the Uttarakhand Sports Mahakumbh-2023 at Maharana Pratap Sports College Raipur, in Dehradun, Tuesday

## ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

### PM speaks to Netanyahu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday held a "productive" conversation with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu on the Israel-Hamas conflict including "shared concerns" over the safety of maritime traffic in the region.

In the phone talks, Modi emphasised on an early and peaceful resolution of the conflict, including the release of all hostages, through "dialogue and diplomacy" as well as continued humanitarian assistance to the affected people.

The Prime Minister's office (PMO) said Modi received a phone call from the Israeli prime minister. "Had a productive exchange of views with PM @netanyahu on the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, including shared concerns on the safety of maritime traffic," Modi posted on X.

"Highlighted India's consistent stand in favour of early restoration of peace & stability in the region with continued humanitarian assistance for the affected," he said. There have been concerns over the safety of maritime traffic in the region.

A missile reportedly fired by Yemen's Houthi militants hit a commercial tanker in the Red Sea off the coast of Yemen last week triggering concerns. In a state-

ment, the PMO said Netanyahu briefed Modi on the recent developments in the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict.

"The two leaders shared concerns regarding the safety of maritime traffic," it said. "The prime minister reiterated the need for continued humanitarian aid for the affected population and emphasised an early and peaceful resolution of the conflict, including the release of all hostages, through dialogue and diplomacy," it added.

The PMO said the two leaders agreed to remain in touch. Israel has been continuing its military offensive in Gaza as part of its retaliation to the unprecedented attack on Israeli cities by Hamas on October 7. Hamas killed around 1,200 people in Israel and kidnapped more than 220 others some of whom were released during a brief ceasefire. Around 17,000 people have been killed in Gaza in the Israeli offensive, according to the Hamas-run authorities in Gaza.

# HC orders speedy trial in Gyanvapi case

The mosque management committee said it will meet Wednesday to decide the next course of action, indicating that it would appeal against the order

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Prayagraj, Dec 19:** The Allahabad High Court Tuesday dismissed pleas challenging the maintainability of a 1991 suit seeking the "restoration" of a temple where the Gyanvapi mosque now stands in Varanasi, while observing that the "religious character" of a disputed place can only be decided by the court.

The court dismissed five related petitions -- on maintainability and also against a survey of the mosque premises -- filed over the years by the masjid

management committee and the Uttar Pradesh Central Sunni Waqf Board.

The High Court held that the suit filed before the district court is not barred by the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 that forbids "conversion" of the "religious character" of a place from what existed on August 15, 1947.

In an important observation, Justice Rohit Ranjan Agarwal said the Act did not define "religious character" and this can only be determined through evidence presented in court by the opposing parties. "Either the



Gyanvapi compound has a Hindu religious character or a Muslim religious character. It can't have dual character at the same time," the judge said.

He ordered that the trial in this case of "vital national importance" should be concluded as soon as possible, preferably within six months. "In the national interest, it is required that the suit must proceed ex-

peditiously and be decided with utmost urgency with the cooperation of both the contesting parties without resorting to any dilatory tactics," he said, cautioning against any "unnecessary adjournment" in the lower court.

The mosque management committee said it will meet Wednesday to decide the next course of action, indicating that it would appeal against the order. "We will fight the legal battle till our last breath," committee's joint secretary Syed Muhammad Yasin said.

The 63-page order on the Gyanvapi mosque-Kashi Vishwanath temple issue follows other significant court rulings over the past months on temple-mosque disputes in Uttar Pradesh.

## Navy rescues injured sailor from hijacked ship

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** The Indian Navy has evacuated one of the 18 crew members onboard a Malta-flagged hijacked cargo vessel off the coast of Somalia to provide medical care after he was injured by the pirates, officials said Tuesday.

It is learnt that the sailor, a Bulgarian national, was injured in firing by the pirates. The sailor was evacuated by frontline ship INS Kochi. "The Indian

Navy rendered assistance in evacuation of an injured crew member from the hijacked vessel MV Ruen in the early hours of Monday," said an official.

"The injured crew member had sustained injuries during the piracy incident but was reported to be stable. Towards ensuring his safety, the Indian Navy ship was successful in ensuring his release by the hijackers," he added.

The official said the injured sailor has been taken to

Oman. "The injured crew member was medically managed onboard the ship but due to urgent medical attention required, which was beyond the scope of the ship, he has been transferred ashore at Oman," the official said.

Indian Navy spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal said the naval force remains committed to rendering assistance to the mariners at sea. The Navy swiftly responded after receiving a call for help from vessel MV Ruen December 14.

# Can artificial rain dissipate toxins in the air?

While the precise cost of cloud seeding experiments in India remains undisclosed, an estimated Rs 1 crore is believed to be required to induce rain in approximately a 100 sq km area

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 19:** As the skies over several parts of north India turn blue again and pollution levels improve from 'severe' but continue to be 'very poor', the question of whether cloud seeding can really be a long-term solution gathers urgency.

It is a tempting prospect and nothing more, say scientists, stressing on the need to tackle the problem at its root. Artificial rain is not just expensive - an es-



timated Rs 1 crore to induce rain in an approximate 100 square kilometre area - but also offers temporary respite.

"The respite artificial rain offers is short-lived... The return of polluted air swiftly restores hazardous levels, highlighting the need for more sustainable solutions," Sunil Dahiya, an analyst with the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, said.

"Artificial rain can't be induced to last for days and over such large geography as NCR

or north India which limits its usage as air pollution reduction technology for the region," he added. Cloud seeding involves dispersing particles of salt, such as silver iodide or chloride, onto clouds using aircraft. These salt particles serve as nuclei, promoting the formation of ice crystals within the clouds. Subsequently, the moisture present in the clouds adheres to these crystals, leading to rainfall.

The long-discussed issue came under the spotlight again when

the Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur announced its success with cloud seeding tests to combat persistent air pollution in the Delhi-NCR region, generating a mix of excitement and scepticism.

Sachchida Nand Tripathi, a distinguished expert in sustainable energy engineering at IIT Kanpur, explained that the technique involves injecting salts into clouds to induce rain formation.

"IIT Kanpur has in its possession an aircraft equipped with a cloud seeding device. The aircraft can fly up to 10,000 feet for about four hours. The institute has also developed its novel seeding solution of salts which has been tried for cloud seeding to initiate artificial rains," Tripathi, the winner of the Infosys Prize 2023, for his research on large-scale sensor-based air quality network, said. "Data from India and other

countries show an enhancement of about 20 per cent in rainfall in seeded clouds compared to non-seeded ones," he said. The sustainable impact of this process is under scrutiny, Tripathi added.

While the precise cost of cloud seeding experiments in India remains undisclosed, an estimated Rs 1 crore is believed to be required to induce rain in approximately a 100 sq km area. The tentative estimate came from an IIT Kanpur team headed by Manindra Agrawal, professor at the Computer Science and engineering department at the institute.

For several weeks in November and early December, the air quality index (AQI), which measures the concentration of PM 2.5 or fine particulate matter in the air, consistently surpassed the 400 mark in Delhi-NCR. This was nearly ten times the acceptable limit.

## Elgar Parishad case: Navlakha gets bail



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Dec 19:** The Bombay High Court Tuesday granted bail to activist Gautam Navlakha, arrested in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case.

A division bench headed by Justice A S Gadkari said Navlakha's plea seeking bail was "allowed". The National Investigation Agency (NIA) urged the court to stay operation of the order for a period of six weeks so that it could file an appeal in the Supreme Court.

The bench stayed the order for three weeks. Navlakha, who was arrested in August 2018, was in November last year permitted by the Supreme Court to be placed under house arrest. He is residing in Navi Mumbai at present. The high court granted Navlakha bail on a surety of Rs 1 lakh.

He is the seventh accused in the case to be granted bail. In April this year, a special court had refused to grant bail to Navlakha, noting that there was prima facie evidence to show that the activist was an active member of banned outfit CPI (Maoist).

In his appeal filed in the High Court, Navlakha said the special court had erred while refusing bail to him.

This is Navlakha's second round of appeal in the High Court seeking regular bail.

# international



**The enemy has suffered heavy casualties and to a large extent wasted its reserves while trying to show at least some results of its so-called counteroffensive to its masters**  
VLADIMIR PUTIN | RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

## ICELAND VOLCANO ERUPTS

A volcanic eruption started Monday night on Iceland's Reykjanes Peninsula, turning the sky orange and prompting the country's civil defence to be on high alert



### of the day quote

**I will continue to fight for our fundamental freedoms while bringing together those throughout America who agree that every woman should have the right to make decisions about her own body — not the government**  
KAMALA HARRIS | US VICE PRESIDENT

**Our ultimate aim is to build a safer, more peaceful and prosperous Pakistan -- with associated benefits for our own people, for the region, and the wider world**  
ANWAARUL HAQ KAKAR | PAK'S INTERIM PM

**Since October 7, the world has seen a sharp and worrying increase in hate, hate speech and hate crimes. I am reaching out to you, near or far, with a single, clear message: Hate has no place in our world**  
DENNIS FRANCIS | PRESIDENT, UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### SHORT TAKES

#### Leaders of TNA to meet SL President

**Colombo:** Leaders of Sri Lanka's main Tamil party TNA will meet President Ranil Wickremesinghe this week to discuss their outstanding issues, including the release of Tamil prisoners who have been held under a stringent anti-terrorism law. Tamil National Alliance (TNA) leaders are meeting Wickremesinghe on his invitation December 21 as part of the President's ongoing dialogue with the Tamil community.

#### Two PIOs jailed

**London:** Two Indian-origin men have been sentenced to a total of 34 years' imprisonment in Britain after a London trial found them guilty of smuggling drugs hidden amid farm produce from Africa and South America. Anand Tripathi, 61, and Varun Bhardwaj, 39, were also convicted of evading import duty payable on cigarettes which came hidden alongside biscuits from Chennai, Bombay Mix snacks from Mumbai and coconut fibre used to manufacture doormats from Sri Lanka.

#### Militants kill 10

**Kampala (Uganda):** At least 10 people have been killed by militants with ties to the Islamic State group during an attack in Uganda's western district of Kamwenge, the East African nation's military said Tuesday. The Allied Democratic Forces militants attacked the village early Tuesday morning, said the Uganda People's Defence Forces spokesperson Brig. Gen. Felix Kulayigye, without providing further details.

# POWERFUL QUAKE HITS CHINA

**MORE THAN 100 DEAD**  
More than 700 injured in the earthquake



**THE QUAKE WAS CHINA'S DEADLIEST SINCE 2014, WHEN MORE THAN 600 PEOPLE DIED IN SOUTHWESTERN YUNNAN PROVINCE**

- Epicentre was in sub-zero temperatures when quake occurred
- Cold wave makes rescue work tougher, more urgent
- More than 1, 55,000 homes damaged or destroyed in Gansu

AGENCIES

**Beijing/Jishishan, Dec 19:** At least 127 people were killed and over 700 others injured when a powerful 6.2-magnitude earthquake jolted a mountainous region of northwestern China late Monday night, the deadliest quake in the quake-prone region in nine years.

Qinghai province is adjacent to the Tibet Himalayan region which is prone to frequent earthquakes due to shifting of continental plates.

While 536 people were injured in Gansu, 182 people were wounded and 20 others missing in Qinghai, the state-run *Xinhua* news agency reported.

According to the China Earthquake Networks Centre, the shallow quake jolted Gansu and Qinghai provinces at 11:59 pm Monday, with a focal depth of 10 kilometres. The epicentre of the earthquake Liugou township is about 8 km from the county seat of Jishishan Bao'an, Dongxiang, Sala autonomous county in Linxia Hui autonomous prefecture in Gansu. The earthquake damaged 1,55,393 houses in Gansu. The epicentre of the earthquake in

## MAJOR EARTHQUAKES IN 2023

The year 2023 has seen its share of significant earthquakes, causing widespread damage and loss of life

**TURKEY-SYRIA:** An earthquake of moment magnitude (Mw) 7.8 struck southern and central Turkey and northern and western Syria 6 February. There was widespread damage and tens of thousands of fatalities. The confirmed death toll stood at 59,259: 50,783 in Turkey and 8,476 in Syria.

**HERAT, AFGHANISTAN:** Four large earthquakes measuring Mw 6.3 each and their aftershocks affected Herat Province in western Afghanistan in early October 2023. The first two earthquakes occurred 7 October near the city of Herat, followed by many aftershocks. On 11 and 15 October, two other magnitude 6.3 earthquakes struck the same area. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated 1,482 fatalities, 2,100 injuries, 43,400 people were affected, and 114,000 people requiring humanitarian aid.

**MARRAKESH-SAFI, MOROCCO:** An earthquake with a moment magnitude of 6.8-6.9 struck Morocco's Marrakesh-Safi region on 8 September, 2023. At least 2,960 deaths were reported, with most occurring outside Marrakesh. Damage was widespread, and historic landmarks in Marrakesh were destroyed. The earthquake was also felt in Spain, Portugal, and Algeria.

**NEPAL:** A moment magnitude 5.7 earthquake struck Jajarkot District, Karnali Province, Nepal 3 November 2023 killing 154 people and injuring at least 375. The earthquake was widely felt in western Nepal and northern India and is the deadliest to strike the country since 2015.

Gansu was only 5 km away from the boundary between the two provinces. Within 50 km of the epicentre, there are 22 townships in Qinghai, *Xinhua* reported.

Wang Wen, vice mayor of Haidong city in Qinghai, told the media that local departments will carry out safety checks on in-

frastructure like the supplies of power, water and gas, as well as communications to ensure that people's basic necessities are met.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang have ordered all-out rescue efforts to minimise casualties after the earthquake.

Xi asked local authorities to rescue and treat the injured people promptly, and closely monitor the earthquake situation and weather changes to prevent secondary disasters.

Monday night's quake was China's deadliest since an earthquake killed 617 people in Yunnan province in 2014.

Residents interviewed by Shanghai-based media outlet *The Paper* Tuesday said many people were asleep when the quake struck and did not have time to take shelter.

According to the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post*, a woman, who lives 90 km from the epicentre, said her house collapsed and she escaped being buried because she was still awake.

Videos and photos circulating on social media showed firefighting crews trying to pull out residents buried under rubble and others showed quake victims taking shelter on the road while wrapped in quilts amidst biting cold.

The quake has destroyed several rural roads, leading to power outages and telecommunication failures. The maintenance crew has been working overnight to

## Israel keeps pounding Gaza

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Rafah (Gaza Strip), Dec 19:** Israeli forces raided one of the last functioning hospitals in Gaza's north and bombed the south with airstrikes that killed at least 28 Palestinians, pressing ahead with their offensive Tuesday with renewed backing from the United States, despite rising international alarm.

The air and ground war, launched in response to Hamas' October 7 attack into Israel, has killed nearly 20,000 Palestinians, displaced some 1.9 million, demolished much of northern Gaza



and sparked attacks on US and Israeli targets across the region. Assaults on ships in the Red Sea by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels have led major shipping companies — as well as the oil and gas giant BP — to suspend trade through the vital

waterway, prompting the US and its allies to launch a new mission to counter the threat.

But after meeting with Israeli officials Monday, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said he was "not here to dictate timelines or terms."

His remarks signaled that the U.S. would continue shielding Israel from growing international calls for a cease-fire as the United Nations Security Council was set to hold another vote Tuesday, and would keep providing vital military aid for one of the 21st century's deadliest military campaigns.



Crime Scene Unit members inspect the passenger train that was set on fire during a countrywide strike called by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, ahead of the general election in Dhaka, Bangladesh

## Why are some black holes bigger than others?

Black holes are dense astronomical objects with gravity so strong that nothing, not even light, can escape. Anything that crosses the boundary of a black hole's gravitational influence, called the event horizon, will fall into the black hole. Inside this deep, dense pit, it is never to be seen again. Black holes litter the Universe. Some smaller black holes are sprinkled randomly throughout galaxies like our Milky Way. Other gigantic ones, called "supermassive" black holes, lie at the centers of galaxies. Those can weigh anywhere between a million to a billion times the mass of our Sun. So you might be wondering: How can astronomers possibly see something so dark and so big?



mous scientists, Albert Einstein and Karl Schwarzschild, first pitched the idea of a black hole. They thought that when a large star dies, its core might shrink and shrink until it collapses under its own weight. This is what we astronomers call a "stellar mass black hole," which is just another way of saying it's comparatively very small. Stellar mass black holes are only a few times bigger than our Sun. Supermassive black holes are more of a mystery, though.

**GROWING BLACK HOLES**  
What do black holes look like? Most of the time, they are not actively growing, so they are invisible. But we can tell they're there because stars can still orbit around them, just like Earth around the Sun. When something is orbiting an invisible object at high speeds, scientists know there must be a massive black hole in the middle. This is the case for the closest supermassive black hole to us, which lies at the center of the Milky

- There are lots of types of black holes out there in the universe
- Some are small and invisible, and some grow to gigantic proportions
- Black holes can't just keep sucking in everything in the universe — eventually there is nothing close enough to the black hole to fall in, and it will become invisible again

Way — safely millions of miles away from you. Meanwhile, when a hungry black hole is eating up gas in a galaxy, it heats that gas up until you can see a glowing ring of X-rays, optical light and infrared light around the

black hole. Once it exhausts all of the fuel near the event horizon, the light dies down once again and it becomes invisible.

### OUTLINES AROUND BLACK HOLES

One of the most famous "white outlines" is the image of a black hole from the movie "Interstellar." In that movie, they were trying to show the white-hot, glowing ring of gases that are falling into the actively growing black hole.

In real life, we don't get such a close-up view. The best image of the ring around a real black hole comes from the Event Horizon Telescope, showing scientists the supermassive black hole at the center of a galaxy called M87. It might look blurry to you, but this doughnut is actually the sharpest image ever taken of something so far away.

## More offensive actions against US, Kim warns

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Seoul, Dec 19:** North Korean leader Kim Jong Un threatened "more offensive actions" to repel what he called increasing US-led military threats after he supervised the third test of his country's most advanced missile designed to strike the mainland US, state media reported Tuesday.

Kim's statement suggests he is confident in his growing missile arsenal and will likely continue weapons testing activities ahead of next year's Presidential election in the United States. But many observers say North Korea still needs to perform more significant tests to prove it has functioning missiles targeting the US mainland.

After watching Monday's launch of the Hwasong-18



intercontinental ballistic missile, Kim said the test showed how North Korea could respond if the United States were to make "a wrong decision against it," according to the official *Korean Central News Agency*. Kim stressed the need to "never overlook all the reckless and irresponsible military threats of the enemies... and to strongly counter them with more offensive actions," KCNA said in its latest report.

**of the day quote**

I would like to warmly compliment the government for introducing a progressive and forward-looking Telecommunications Bill in Parliament. The Bill suggests groundbreaking reforms by streamlining India's licensing landscape

**GOPAL VITTAL** | BHARTI AIRTEL MD AND CEO

We are incredibly delighted to achieve this historic milestone, welcoming aboard 100 million passengers in a year. This milestone is also a validation of our strategy which has been executed so diligently

**PIETER ELBERS** | CEO OF INDIQ

We have set forth a robust commitment to drive meaningful change in our carbon footprint

**VIKAS SINGH** | MMT-C PAMP INDIA MD AND CEO

**SHORT TAKES**

**Nifty to rise 10% in '24: HDFC Sec**

Mumbai: Indian equity markets will rise by up to 10 per cent in 2024, a domestic brokerage said Tuesday. About Nifty target for end-2024, HDFC Securities' head of retail research Deepak Jasani said he expects a rise of 8-10 per cent from the current levels. The 50-share benchmark closed at 21,453 points, which is over 17 per cent higher than the close in the year-ago period. To a question about the elections, the company's managing director and chief executive Dhiraj Relli said the outcome of the general election will have a "limited impact" on the market as investors have already started pricing in the incumbent BJP retaining power after the impressive win in the state polls, and political stability because of that.

**Vedanta gets nod to raise ₹3,400cr**

New Delhi: Mining conglomerate Vedanta Ltd Tuesday said a committee of directors formed by the company's board has approved raising up to Rs 3,400 crore through non-convertible debentures (NCDs). The company will issue NCDs on a private placement basis in one or more tranches. "The duly authorised Committee of Directors at its meeting held today... Considered and approved for raising, on a private placement basis, up to 3,40,000 nos secured, unrated, unlisted, redeemable, non-convertible debentures (NCDs) of face value Rs 1,00,000 each aggregating up to Rs 3,400 crore in one or more tranche(s)," the company said in a stock exchange filing.

**ONDC, Meta announce pact**

New Delhi: Meta and Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) Tuesday announced a partnership to help small businesses unleash the power of digital commerce. The partnership is aimed at enabling and educating small business operators to drive conversational buyer and seller experiences on WhatsApp through an ecosystem of Meta's business and technical solution providers. ONDC will help these business solution providers become seller apps, bringing the businesses they service onto the ONDC network and helping them drive commerce. Over the next two years, five lakh MSMEs will also be digitally upskilled through the Meta Small Business Academy.



**We welcome all regulations that balance user safety, providing safe internet along with innovation and growing the economy of the country**

**SANDHYA DEVANATHAN** | META INDIA VICE PRESIDENT

**FRESHER HIRING BY IT COS LIKELY TO DECLINE**

Hiring of freshers is likely to decline in the current fiscal as major IT companies look to freeze intake of freshers, according to a report. In its hiring outlook for fresh IT/engineering graduates in the fiscal year 2023-24, TeamLease Digital said that 1.55 lakh freshers are likely to be hired in the IT/Tech sector this fiscal compared to 2.3 lakh freshers in the previous financial year.



**Unclaimed deposits rise by 28% to ₹42,270cr**

**BANKS SEND UNCLAIMED DEPOSITS OF ACCOUNT HOLDERS LYING IN THEIR ACCOUNTS FOR 10 OR MORE YEARS TO RBI'S DEPOSITOR EDUCATION AND AWARENESS FUND**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

New Delhi, Dec 19: There has been a 28 per cent annual increase in unclaimed deposits with the banks to Rs 42,270 crore as on March 2023, Parliament was informed Tuesday.

As compared to Rs 32,934 crore unclaimed deposits with public and private sector banks in FY22, the amount increased to Rs 42,272 crore at the end of March 2023, an increase of 28 per cent.

As much as Rs 36,185 crore unclaimed deposits were with public sector banks while Rs 6,087 crore were with private sector banks at the end of March 2023.

Banks send unclaimed deposits of account holders lying in their accounts for 10 or more years to RBI's Depositor Education and Awareness (DEA) Fund.

RBI has taken various steps to



reduce the quantum of unclaimed deposits and return such deposits to rightful claimants, Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat K Karad said in a written reply to Rajya Sabha.

As per the RBI's direction, banks have been advised to display the list of unclaimed deposits in accounts that are inactive or inoperative for ten years or more on the banks' websites and find the whereabouts of the customers, or legal heirs in case of deceased account holders, in order to return unclaimed deposits to the rightful claimants.

RBI asked banks to formulate board approved policy on clas-

sification of unclaimed deposits; and put in place a grievance redressal mechanism for quick resolution of complaints, record keeping, and periodic review of unclaimed deposit accounts, he said.

A centralised web portal, Unclaimed Deposits Gateway to Access Information (UDGAM), to search unclaimed deposits across multiple banks, has been set up by RBI, he said.

Further, he said, RBI has launched campaign '100 Days 100 Pays' for banks to trace and settle the top 100 unclaimed deposits of every bank in each district within a 100-day timeframe, commencing from June 1, 2023 to September 8, 2023.

At the end of campaign, major 31 banks (which comprised of more than 90 per cent of unclaimed deposit balances with the DEA Fund), have refunded Rs 1,432.68 crore in the campaign.

**RBI move to check evergreening of loans**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

Mumbai, Dec 19: In a move to curb 'evergreening' of loans, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Tuesday barred banks and NBFCs from investing in any scheme of Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) having investment in companies that have taken loan from the lenders concerned in the past 12 months.

Banks and NBFCs, which are Regulated Entities (RE) under the RBI, make investments in units of AIFs as part of their regular investment operations.

Venture capital funds, angle funds, infrastructure funds, private equity funds and hedge funds, among others, are AIFs.

In a circular, RBI said, "certain transactions of REs involving AIFs that raise regulatory con-

cerns have come to our notice."

These transactions entail substitution of direct loan exposure of REs to borrowers, with indirect exposure through investments in units of AIFs, it said.

RBI said that in order to address concerns relating to possible evergreening through this route, REs cannot make investments in any scheme of AIFs which has downstream investments either directly or indirectly in a debtor company of the lender. Further, it has directed lenders that such investments would be required to be liquidated within 30 days. In case, REs are not able to liquidate their investments within the prescribed time limit, they should make 100 per cent provision on such investments, it added.



**Sensex, Nifty hit new record highs**

**BUYING IN FMCG, OIL SHARES AMID POSITIVE GLOBAL CUES**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

Mumbai, Dec 19: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty scaled new lifetime high levels in intra-day trade Tuesday before closing with gains on the back of buying in FMCG and oil shares and positive global cues.

In a volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 122.10 points or 0.17 per cent to settle at 71,437.19. During the day, the barometer jumped 308.62 points or 0.43 per cent to reach its all-time intra-day high of 71,623.71.

The broader Nifty climbed 86.4 points or 0.40 per cent to hit its record peak of 21,505.05. It finally closed higher by 34.45 points or 0.16 per cent at 21,453.10.

Buying in FMCG, oil and gas, power and select banking shares supported the recovery while losses in IT and auto shares capped gains, analysts said.

Among the Sensex firms, Nestle rose the most by 4.66 per cent. NTPC rose by 2.16 per cent, Reliance Industries by 1.53 per cent, State Bank of India by 1.04 per cent and Hindustan Unilever

by 1.03 per cent. ITC, Power Grid and Bajaj Finance were the major gainers. Wipro, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Technologies, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finserv and Maruti were among the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 0.31 per cent while smallcap index climbed 0.10 per cent.

Among the indices, energy jumped 1.49 per cent, FMCG climbed 1.24 per cent, utilities (0.75 per cent), oil & gas (0.46 per cent) and power (0.39 per cent).

Commodities, consumer discretionary, IT, auto, teck and capital goods were among the laggards.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai settled in the positive territory, while Hong Kong ended lower.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.30 per cent to USD 77.72 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 33.51 crore Monday after continuous buying, according to exchange data.



**IPO boom seen on prospects of political stability**

**REUTERS**

Mumbai, Dec 19: Hopes of policy stability in India after victories for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party in key state polls this month should extend a boom in initial public offerings (IPO) into 2024 as companies rush to tap investor demand, bankers say.

The \$6.8 billion raised by Indian IPOs so far this year is 16% less than in all of 2022, Dealogic data shows, but outperforms a plunge of 36%, to about \$5 billion, in Hong Kong listings, which are set for their weakest year in two decades.

The victory of BJP in three of four major Indian states gives it a boost ahead of general elections due by May, and expectations of stability will spur more fundraising in 2024, bankers said.

"The state election outcome was more positive than expected, and has given investors more conviction leading up to the final elections, boosting confidence," said Subhrajit Roy, India head of global capital markets for Bank of America. At least five companies plan to raise \$500 million each, or more, in India listings next year, including three backed by SoftBank - Ola Electric,



retailer FirstCry, and food delivery firm Swiggy.

More than a dozen others, from lenders to drugmakers and technology firms, have hastened preparation work on IPOs after the state poll results, bankers say, without identifying them.

"Issuers are stepping up the pace on their listing timeline to tap the current market sentiment," said Mahesh Natarajan, Nomura India head of equity capital markets. "The number of deals in the pipeline has multiplied as compared to last year."

India's market benchmark Sensex is up nearly 17% this year and stands at a record, after hav-

ing risen for seven straight weeks until last week, in its longest winning run since January 2018. India's market share of IPO volumes has also grown this year amid economic slowdown and geopolitical concerns in China and a slump in U.S. listings.

India's share of global IPO proceeds is at an all-time high of 5.98%, Dealogic says, almost doubling in two years, while its share of Asia IPO proceeds has also grown to 9.9% this year from 5.9% in 2018.

The year's major new Indian listings included Mankind Pharma, which raised \$500 million in May, the same month that

saw Nexus Malls raise \$400 million, while Tata Technologies raised \$360 million in November.

The fundraising activity has also been boosted by domestic growth that has beaten estimates, along with upward revisions of economists' projections, making the country a rare bright spot for global investors.

"India's relevance to the world is ever-increasing, as one among the few economies continuing to outperform against a global slowdown," Nomura's Natarajan said. Other IPO hopefuls in 2024 include Warburg Pincus-backed India First Life Insurance, which is eyeing a January listing, while National Securities Depository Ltd is targeting a listing in the first quarter, two sources with direct knowledge said.

Both companies, which received regulatory approval for their IPOs more than six months ago, did not respond to queries seeking comment. Top bankers are seeing multiple pitches every week, and expect the momentum to continue into 2024.

"This is the most momentum we have seen in at least 18 months ... all the signs are there for a record year (in 2024). India's bullishness seems given today," Bank of America's Roy said.

**Google to pay \$700mn to US states, consumers**

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Washington, Dec 19: Google has agreed to pay \$700 million and make several other concessions to settle allegations that it had been stifling competition against its Android app store — the same issue that went to trial in another case that could result in even bigger changes.

Although Google struck the deal with state attorneys general in September, the settle-

ment's terms weren't revealed until late Monday in documents filed in San Francisco federal court. The disclosure came a week after a federal court jury rebuked Google for deploying anti-competitive tactics in its Play Store for Android apps.

The settlement with the states includes \$630 million to compensate US consumers funnelled into a payment processing system that state attorneys general alleged drove up the prices for

digital transactions within apps downloaded from the Play Store. That store caters to the Android software that powers most of the world's smartphones.

Like Apple does in its iPhone app store, Google collects commissions ranging from 15% to 30% on in-app purchases — fees that state attorneys general contended drove prices higher than they would have been had there been an open market for payment processing. Those com-

missions generated billions of dollars in profit annually for Google, according to evidence presented in the recent trial focused on its Play Store. Consumers eligible for a piece of the \$630 million compensation fund are supposed to be automatically notified about various options for how they can receive their cut of the money.

Another \$70 million of the pre-trial settlement will cover the penalties and other costs.

**IT sector swallows tougher terms amid scramble for contracts**

*The \$245-billion sector, which gained immensely from the pandemic-induced boom in digital services, has struggled in recent quarters as clients slashed spending on discretionary projects amid inflationary pressures and recession fears*

**REUTERS**

Bangalore, Dec 19: India's information technology firms are accepting tougher contract terms to win large deals from clients as they compete for fewer orders in an uncertain global economy, industry insiders and analysts say.

The \$245-billion sector, which gained immensely from the pandemic-induced boom in digital services, has struggled in recent quarters as clients slashed spending on discretionary projects amid inflationary pressures and recession fears.

That is forcing companies including Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and HCLTech to accept contract conditions

such as guaranteeing minimum cost savings, billing the client only if certain goals are achieved and reviewing cost overruns.

"Whenever economic challenges appear and demand recedes, it becomes a buyer's market. The clients try to push more clauses including capping the pricing and asking for outcome-based deals," said former Infosys CFO V Balakrishnan.

"It was witnessed during 2008 when the global financial crisis happened, and in 2001 during the dot-com crash," he said.

Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys did not respond to Reuters' requests seeking comment. HCLTech declined to comment on specific deal terms.

More than 80% of more than 1,600 IT and business process management deals tracked in 2023 had some form of committed-savings clause, versus around 65% in 2019, data from IT research firm Everest Group showed.

Such cost-saving clauses are either baked into the pricing, or companies risk a cut in fees if the savings are not achieved, Everest Group CEO Peter Bender-Samuel said.

Contracts with such clauses that were signed this year include HCLTech's \$2.1 billion deal with Verizon and a \$454 million deal between Infosys and Danske Bank, a person familiar with the deal terms said.

Under the Danske Bank deal, which runs for five years, Infosys will digitise the lender's operations and take over its delivery centre in India, while the Verizon deal, which runs for six years, will see HCLTech become the U.S. firm's primary tech part-



ner for network deployments, according to exchange filings.

**TOUGH TIMES**

The tougher contracts are likely to add pressure on an industry that is already struggling. India's second-biggest software services exporter by sales Infosys has already predicted its slowest annual sales expansion in at least a decade for the current financial year ending March 2024.

The big IT firms classify contracts worth \$100 million or above as large deals and those above \$500 million as mega deals, which are typically struck when demand is low.

TCS, Infosys and HCLTech have won seven mega deals since May, company disclosures show, while Wipro did not win any mega deals. Its Chief Growth Officer Stephanie Trautman, who was leading the large deals

team, resigned earlier this month. The tougher terms tied to the large IT deals are an attempt by clients to hedge against the global economic uncertainty, deal advisors said.

"Clients are increasingly seeking predictable business outcomes and assurances to protect their interests in large deals that often span five years or more," said Avinash Baliga, partner at deal advisor Avasant.

The inclusion of committed-cost-savings clauses in deal agreements has climbed to 50-60% presently versus 20% in the last decade, Baliga added.

The clauses also reflect a rise in client maturity.

"Customers have become much more aware of the possibilities and scenarios that could play out during a deal tenure," said Ashutosh Sharma, vice-president and research director at Forrester India. "Now, clients are asking IT players too to share risks and rewards."

# BIDS GO BEYOND HISTORY

## RECORDS TUMBLE TWICE AS STARC, CUMMINS POCKET MEGA DEALS IN 2024 INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE AUCTION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



₹24.75 crore

Dubai, Dec 19: It was a day that nobody would have expected to be. The Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 players' auction witnessed bidding wars that was way beyond anyone's expectations. And the centre of it was the Australian pace duo of Mitchell Starc and his skipper Pat Cummins.

Starc became the most expensive player in the IPL history with an eye-popping bid of ₹24.75 crore, minutes after his bowling partner fetched a jaw-dropping ₹20.50 crore pay packet as pacers raked in the big moolah at the auction here Tuesday.

Not long after Cummins at-



tracted a mind-boggling bid from Sunrisers Hyderabad, Kolkata Knight Riders raised the bar by offering even a bigger pay packet for the left-arm pacer, who last played in the IPL in 2015.

Starc's payout was significantly more than Sam Curran got last year when Punjab Kings paid a then record ₹18.50 crore for the England all-rounder.

Such are the unpredictable ways of IPL that one third of the formidable Australian pace trio, Josh Hazlewood, went unsold in the first round of auction from a base price of ₹2 crore.

Among the fast bowlers, the others who broke the bank were Harshal Patel (₹11.75 crore to Punjab Kings), Alzarri Joseph (₹11.50 crore to RCB), Spencer Johnson (₹10 crore to Gujarat Titans), Shivam Mavi (₹6.40 crore to LSG), Umesh Yadav (₹5.80 crore to Gujarat Titans), Gerald Coetzee (₹5 crore to Mumbai Indians) and Shardul Thakur (₹4 crore to CSK).

Gujarat Titans and KKR were in-

involved in a long and exhilarating bidding battle for Starc before the latter lapped him up for a record deal. Starc, 33, has usually prioritised international duty over IPL but decided to enter the auction with one eye on the T20 World Cup that follows the IPL.

An intense bidding war followed for Cummins with MI, RCB, CSK, and SRH raising their paddles frenetically to secure the services of the fast bowling all-rounder. In the end, it was SRH who broke the bank for Cummins.

It was not the first time that Cummins attracted huge sums at the IPL auction. Ahead of the 2020 edition, KKR had paid ₹15.5 crore for his services.

In the batters category, Daryl Mitchell had a massive payday with CSK spending ₹14 crore for the New Zealand batter. SRH grabbed World Cup final hero Travis Head for ₹6.80 crore.

New Zealand batter Rachin Ravindra, with a base price of ₹50 lakh, was snapped

### New additions to squads (Price in ₹)

<b>CSK:</b> Daryl Mitchell (14 crore), Sameer Rizvi (8.40 crore), Shardul Thakur (4 crore), Mustafizur Rahman (2 crore), Rachin Ravindra (1.80 crore) & Avnish Rao Aravelly (20 lakh); <b>Funds remaining:</b> 1 crore	<b>Funds remaining:</b> 95 lakh
<b>DC:</b> Kumar Kushagra (7.20 crore), Jhye Richardson (5 crore), Harry Brook (4 crore), Sumit Kumar (1 crore), Shai Hope (75 lakh), Tristan Stubbs (50 lakh), Rasikh Dar (20 lakh), Ricky Bhui (20 lakh), Swastik Chhikara (20 lakh) & Rashik Dar (20 lakh); <b>Funds remaining:</b> 9.90 crore	<b>Total players:</b> 25 (Overseas: 8)
<b>GT:</b> Spencer Johnson (10 crore), Shahrulkh Khan (7.40 crore), Umesh Yadav (5.80 crore), Robin Minz (3.60 crore), Sushant Mishra (2.20 crore), Kartik Tyagi (60 lakh), Azmatullah Omarzai (50 lakh) & Manav Suthar (20 lakh); <b>Funds remaining:</b> 7.85 crore	<b>Total players:</b> 25 (Overseas: 8)
<b>KKR:</b> Mitchell Starc (24.75 crore), Sherfane Rutherford (1.50 crore), Gus Atkinson (1 crore), Manish Pandey (50 lakh), Chetan Sakariya (50 lakh), KS Bharat (50 lakh), Angkrish Raghuvanshi (20 lakh), Ramandeep Singh (20 lakh) & Sakib Hussain (20 lakh); <b>Funds remaining:</b> 1.35 crore	<b>Total players:</b> 25 (Overseas: 8)
<b>LSG:</b> Shivam Mavi (6.40 crore), M Siddharth (2.40 crore), David Willey (2 crore), Ashton Turner (1 crore), Arshin Kulkarni (20 lakh) & Mohd. Arshad Khan (20 lakh);	<b>Total players:</b> 25 (Overseas: 8)
<b>MI:</b> Gerald Coetzee (5 crore), Nuwan Thushara (4.80 crore), Dilshan Madushanka (4.60 crore), Mohammad Nabi (1.50 crore), Shreyas Gopal (20 lakh), Shivalik Sharma (20 lakh), Anshul Kamboj (20 lakh) & Naman Dhir (20 lakh); <b>Funds remaining:</b> 1.05 crore	<b>Total players:</b> 25 (Overseas: 8)
<b>PBKS:</b> Harshal Patel (11.75 crore), Rilee Rossouw (8 crore), Chris Woakes (4.20 crore), Tanay Thyagarajann (20 lakh), Vishwanath Pratap Singh (20 lakh), Ashutosh Sharma (20 lakh), Shashank Singh (20 lakh) & Prince Choudhary (20 lakh); <b>Funds remaining:</b> 4.15 crore	<b>Total players:</b> 25 (Overseas: 8)
<b>RCB:</b> Alzarri Joseph (11.50 crore), Yash Dayal (5 crore), Lockie Ferguson (2 crore), Tom Curran (1.50 crore), Saurav Chauhan (20 lakh) & Swapani Singh (20 lakh); <b>Funds remaining:</b> 2.85 crore	<b>Total players:</b> 25 (Overseas: 8)
<b>RR:</b> Pat Cummins (20.50 crore), Travis Head (6.80 crore), Jaydev Unadkat (1.60 crore), Wanindu Hasaranga (1.50 crore), Jhathavedh Subramanyan (20 lakh) & Akash Singh (20 lakh); <b>Funds remaining:</b> 3.20 crore	<b>Total players:</b> 25 (Overseas: 8)

It was a shock, of course. Nothing I could have dreamt of. But no doubt, there will be some pressure that comes with the territory. But having the extra experience I have from my last IPL, hopefully, helps. Humbling to still feel like I'm wanted or needed. My gameplay hasn't changed much across formats except a few things here and there. Hopefully, the experience can translate to some success

**MITCHELL STARC**

Obviously he (Starc) was a preferred player from skill set standpoint. Initially, we were not successful in some of the bids. Maybe that worked in our favour, because we did end up having money to do this. It shows the value of the player and the skill set he (Starc) possesses

**VENKY MYSORE, KKR CEO**

### TOP 10 BUYS IN IPL HISTORY

PLAYER	COUNTRY	TEAM	BP	SP	SEASON
Mitchell Starc	Australia	KKR	2 cr	24.75 cr	2024
Pat Cummins	Australia	SRH	2 cr	20.50 cr	2024
Sam Curran	England	PBKS	2 cr	18.50 cr	2023
Cameron Green	Australia	MI	2 cr	17.50 cr	2023
Ben Stokes	England	CSK	2 cr	16.25 cr	2023
Chris Morris	South Africa	RR	75 lakh	16.25 cr	2021
Nicolas Pooran	West Indies	LSG	2 cr	16.00 cr	2023
Yuvraj Singh	India	DC	2 cr	16.00 cr	2015
Pat Cummins	Australia	KKR	2 cr	15.50 cr	2020
Ishan Kishan	India	MI	2 cr	15.25 cr	2022

\* BP: Base Price, SP: Sold Price; Prices are in Indian Rupees.



<b>PAT CUMMINS</b> Australia ₹20.50 crore SRH	<b>DARYL MITCHELL</b> New Zealand ₹14 crore CSK	<b>HARSHAL PATEL</b> India ₹11.75 crore PBKS	<b>ALZARRI JOSEPH</b> West Indies ₹11.50 crore RCB	<b>SAMEER RIZVI</b> India (Uncapped) ₹8.40 crore CSK

# Hardik, Savita win FIH accolades

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lausanne (Switzerland), Dec 19: Indian men's hockey team midfielder Hardik Singh and women's side captain Savita Tuesday won the FIH Player of the Year and Goalkeeper of the Year (women) awards, respectively.

The awards were declared following a vote by an expert panel, National Associations – represented by their respective national teams' captains and coaches, fans and media.

With 114 caps to his name, Hardik is the next big thing in Indian hockey. He rightly showed that, when he became a vital cog in India's bronze-medal win at the 2020 Olympics and his performance have gone from strength to strength since then.

This is Hardik's second big award this year as he was also conferred the Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr Award for Player of the Year 2022. With his flamboyance in the midfield, he has become one of the pivotal members of the Indian team in recent years.

"When you've got a great team,



SAVITA PUNIA (L) AND HARDIK SINGH

### OTHER AWARD WINNERS

Women's Player of the Year: **Xan de Waard (The Netherlands)**  
Men's Goalkeeper of the Year: **Pirmin Blaak (The Netherlands)**  
Women's Rising Star: **Teresa Lima (Spain)**  
Men's Rising Star: **Gaspard Xavier (France)**  
Women's Coach of the Year: **Alyson Annan (Team China)**  
Men's Coach of the Year: **Andre Henning (Team Germany)**  
Women's Umpire of the Year: **Ayanna McClean (Trinidad & Tobago)**  
Men's Umpire of the Year: **Ben Gontgen (Germany)**

they make your game better and life easier. I am grateful for all those who have voted for me and thankful to the entire team and Hockey India for helping me reach this stage," said the current India vice-captain.

As for Savita, this is her third consecutive FIH Women's Goalkeeper of the Year award, having won the recognition in 2021 and 2022. The Indian custodian has been in prolific form throughout 2023. Starting from the Test matches in Australia to the Hangzhou Asian Games, Savita has been on top of her game.

The 33-year-old helped India emerge as the champions of the Asian Champions Trophy held in October in India. She will be looking to help India qualify for the Paris Olympics with a top three finish at the upcoming FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifier in Ranchi in January next year.

"Thankful to all my teammates and support staff who have helped me grow as an individual. This award will motivate me to work harder and get more success for our country. Lastly, thankful to all those who voted for me," she said.

# Gukesh outguns Sjugirov, jumps to top of table

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Dec 19: Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh scored his second straight win, outclassing Sanan Sjugirov in the fifth round of the Chennai Grand Masters Chess Championship here Tuesday. The victory and a full point took Gukesh to 3.5 points and gave him a clear lead in the eight-man field.

The 40-move win with black pieces also gave the 17-year-old Gukesh a push in the quest for qualification for the Candidates tournament next year. Gukesh had started the tournament with three straight draws before hitting the winning form.

His compatriot P Harikrishna, who was in joint lead after the fourth round, dropped to second spot with 3 points after a draw with Parham Maghsodloo, the GM from Iran. Ukrainian GM Pavel Eljanov moved up to 3 points after outwitting Serbian GM Alexander Predke. Gukesh will face Eljanov with the White pieces in the penultimate round Wednesday.

# De Zorzi helps Proteas level series with India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gqeberha (South Africa), Dec 19: Tony de Zorzi (119 n o, 122b, 9x4, 6x6) had a memorable outing Tuesday as the left-handed batter struck his maiden international century in the second ODI helping South Africa level the three-match series with the decider set to be played Thursday in Paarl.

It was a disappointing day at the office for the young Indian brigade as they were outplayed in all departments. After being invited to bat by home team skipper Aiden Markram, India were bowled out for 211. B Sai Sudharsan (62, 83b, 7x4, 1x6) continued his form scoring his second successive half century before his skipper KL Rahul contributing with a 64-ball 56 (7x4).

In response, the Proteas openers – De Zorzi and Reeza Hendricks (52, 81b, 7x4) – complemented their bowlers' efforts with a 130-run stand taking the match away from India. Arshdeep Singh (1/28) broke the stand getting rid of Hendricks in the 28th over.

Then, Rassie van der Dussen (36) joined De Zorzi at the middle and the duo shared 76 runs for the second wicket. And it was Rinku Singh (1/2) who bagged the consolation scalp of Van der Dussen with his part-time off-break, but it was too little and too late.

Earlier, South Africa fought back after Sai Sudharsan and Rahul show to bowl out India for a modest 211. The duo added 68 runs for the third wicket. None of the other batters could make it count as South African bowlers forced their way back into the game with regular strikes, dismissing the visitors in 46.2 overs.



Tony de Zorzi

Put in to bat, India found the going tough with South African seamers, especially Nandre Burger (3/30), exploiting the pace and bounce on offer at the St George's Park pitch to trouble the visitors.

Lizaad Williams broke the stand between Sai Sudharsan and Rahul, dismissing the former, who was a bit surprised by the extra bounce and ended up edging one to Klaasen. Sanju Samson then wasted the opportunity as he dragged one on to the stumps off Beuran Hendricks (2/34) as India slipped to 136 for four in 32 overs.

Rahul was removed by Burger and then five balls later, Rinku was stumped off Maharaj's bowling as the visitors were suddenly reduced to 169/6 before the tail-enders took the team past 200.

# India men go down fighting 2-3 against Germany

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Valencia, Dec 19: The Indian men's hockey team's woeful run in the five-nation tournament continued as it lost 2-3 against Germany to slump to its third consecutive defeat here Saturday.

Abhishek (9th minute) and Shamsher Singh (14th) found the back of the net for India in the first quarter before the Germans fought back with strikes from Malte Hellwig (28th), Christopher Ruhr (50th) and

### EVES TOO SUFFER DEFEAT AGAINST GERMANS

**VALENCIA (SPAIN):** Like their men's team, the Indian women's team also suffered a defeat – 1-3 – to Germany in the five-nation tournament here Tuesday. Captain Nike Lorez (11th minute), Hanna Carina Granitzki (23rd) and Charlotte Stapenhorst (52nd) scored for Germany, while Nikki Pradhan (34th) pulled one back for India. Germany took the game by the scruff of the neck in the first quarter. Captain Lorez slotted the ball past Bichu Devi Kharibam to put Germany in the lead early on. Granitzki doubled the lead for Germany in the second quarter through a penalty corner goal and presented India with a mountain to climb. After the halftime break, a reinvented Indian side sought to threaten the German goal. As the pressure continued to mount on the Germans, it was Nikki Pradhan, who powered a shot into goal from a penalty corner to give India a foothold in the contest. However, the momentum shifted back to Germany as Charlotte Stapenhorst's goal in the last quarter restored their two-goal lead and sealed the victory for her team.

Gonzalo Peillat (51st). India had earlier lost to Spain (0-1) and Belgium (2-7) respectively.

The Indians, though, started on a bright note and raced to a 2-0 lead in the first quarter through goals from Abhishek and Shamsher.

Hellwig found the back of the net for Germany late in the second quarter as India enjoyed a slender 2-1 lead at halftime.