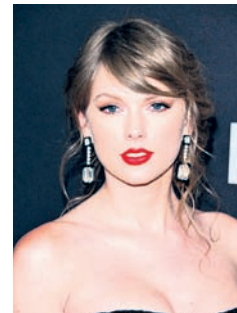


leisure



TAYLOR SWIFT BREAKS ELVIS PRESLEY'S RECORD

Singer-songwriter Taylor Swift has broken Elvis Presley's long standing record for the most weeks spent atop the Billboard 200 album chart by a solo artiste. She was there for 68, as 1989 landed on top of the chart for a fifth time in the final full tracking week of 2023.

UNIVERSAL OVERTAKES DISNEY AS HIGHEST-GROSSING STUDIO OF 2023

With *The Super Mario Bros. Movie*, *Oppenheimer* and *M3GAN*, Universal Pictures ranked as the highest-grossing studio at the 2023 box office. Universal's victory is notable because it marks the first time since 2015 that Disney was not the global box office leader.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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

TAURUS
You are likely to be in a mood to get away from the daily grind and take a much needed break. You would naturally try to stay free from future concerns and commitments and keep all your woes and worries aside for the day. An adventurous and fun filled outing or a trip to some happening resort, along with your friends and family members is a near certainty, assures Ganesh. Don't miss out on this opportunity.

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

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

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

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

LIBRA
Well, today is just not your day. The prospects sure aren't looking too good. However, there's no point in getting anxious over this triviality. Remember, 'not good' does not necessarily mean bad. In any case, if it's a stressful day you have had, be sure to have an equally enjoyable evening. Ganesh guesses that you may want to discuss certain intimate issues with your sweetheart today!

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

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

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

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

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

Dear Purusha on NYC's Times Square billboard



Bhubaneswar: Standing as a testament to an Odia film's universal resonance, Jhiliik Motion Pictures' *Dear Purusha* has featured on the Times Square billboard in New York City, according to the makers.

The development is viewed as a remarkable feat for the regional film industries in India.

Directed by Jit Chakraborty, the movie showcases the twists and turns in the lives of six couples. At the narrative's core is Chitragada, a valiant warrior advocating for men's perspectives, leaving audiences in suspense about the unfolding quest for justice.

Producer Jhiliik Bhattacharjee, who plays the central character Chitragada, said, "Being featured on Times Square is not just a win for *Dear Purusha* but a triumph for the entire film fraternity of Odisha. It's a testament to the power of storytelling to break barriers and connect with diverse audiences worldwide."

The film boasts an ensemble cast featuring renowned actors, including Choudhury Jayprakash Das, Maheswata Ray, Siddhant Mohapatra, Jhiliik Bhattacharjee, Nitu Singh, Samresh Routray, Pinky Pradhan, Bobby Mishra and BM Baisali, Partha Sarathi Ray, Ananya Mishra, Kuna Tripathy, Sukanth Rath, and others.

Iswar Barik is the director of photography, while Gaurav Anand scores the music for the movie. *Dear Purusha* is set to hit the big screens across Odisha January 11.



Mumbai: Actress Kareena Kapoor Khan, known for her candid and open nature, recently shared insights into her approach to life and her career in a video interview with Forbes India.

KAREENA'S APPROACH TO LIFE, CAREER

When asked about her openness and transparency, Kareena expressed, "I think that is also what has kept me alive and kept me in the industry for so long. It is because I have always been very open, very candid, about whatever I have done personally, professionally."

The *Jaane Jaan* actress emphasized that her authenticity is evident in everything she does, both personally and professionally. She believes in letting people know that when she commits to something, she does it wholeheartedly. Kareena said, "I just like people to know that if she's doing it, I will do it with my heart and that's the way my fans also know me."

The actress is set to appear in Rhea Kapoor's upcoming project, *The Crew*, where she will be joined by stellar co-stars Tabu, Kriti Sanon, and Diljit Dosanjh. Furthermore, her *The Buckingham Murders* had its premiere at the opening night of the MAMI Film Festival in Mumbai earlier this year, cementing her presence in the world of cinema.

Janhvi opens up on her rumoured beau

Mumbai: Actress Janhvi Kapoor, who is set to appear on the upcoming episode of the streaming chat show *Koffee With Karan* along with her sister Khushi Kapoor, has opened up about her rumoured boyfriend Shikhar Pahariya.

Janhvi Kapoor and Shikhar Pahariya have been papped together at numerous occasions and also engage on social media with their comments.

Talking about it, Karan Johar asked: "You have had an interesting path of love, you were dating Shikhar, and then you dated someone else and now you are dating Shikhar again. True or False?" "I won't say that but I will say this, he is, not just for me, but for her (Khushi), for dad and everyone in our family, he has been there from the start as a friend. Not in a way that made me feel like he is expecting anything or he is a pushover or any of those things. "He was just there in a very selfless dignified way and in a way that I have not seen many men capable of being there for another human being," said the *Mili* actress. *Koffee With Karan* streams on Disney+ Hotstar.

AGENCIES



MANANA'S 5-DAY THEATRE FESTIVAL KICKS OFF

Pasanda Palabhuta, a scathing attack on prevailing system

Bhubaneswar: Members of City-based theatre troupe Manana Natya Sanstha Wednesday presented Odia play *Pasanda Palabhuta* on the first evening of a five-day state-level theatre festival here at Rabindra Mandap. The event is part of the 45th Foundation Day celebration of the troupe.

Written by Sudhansu Nayak, the play was designed and directed by Manana's president Manoj Patanayak.

Legislature, executive, judiciary and the media are known as the four pillars of the democracy in India. But in today's times, these pillars, more often than not, fail to complement



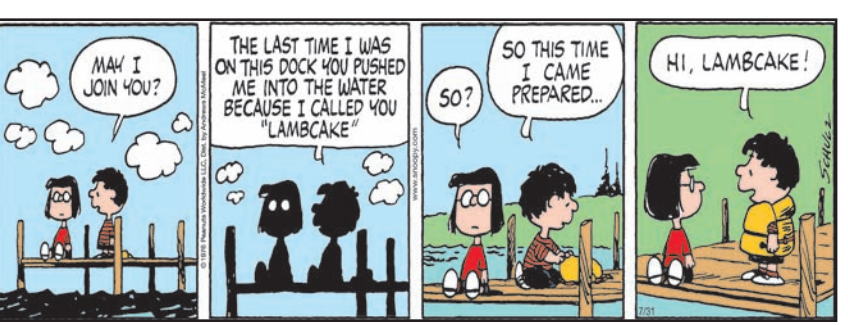
A scene from Odia play *Pasanda Palabhuta*

each other putting the very foundation of democracy under threat. The play launched a scathing attack on today's systems raising questions about several burning issues.

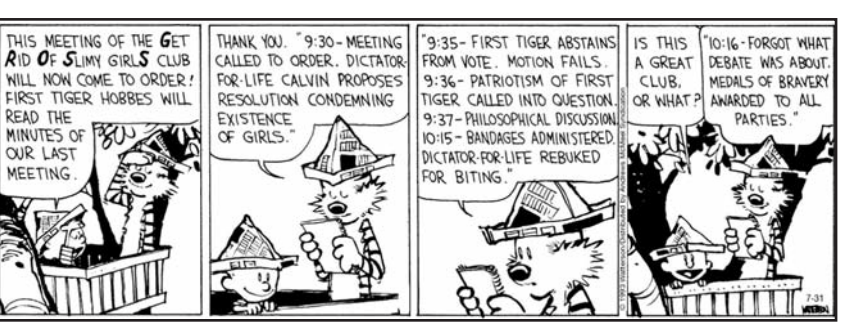
Niranjan Sahoo, Anuj Pattanaik, Ayaskanta Swain, Kalpana Rout, and Seema Sahu were among the actors who performed on stage.

Among the luminaries, Dilip Routray, Director, Odia Language, Literature and Culture Department, Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi President Padma Shri Aruna Mohanty and Amaresh Das, Assistant General Manager (Marketing & Communication) graced the occasion as guests.

PEANUTS



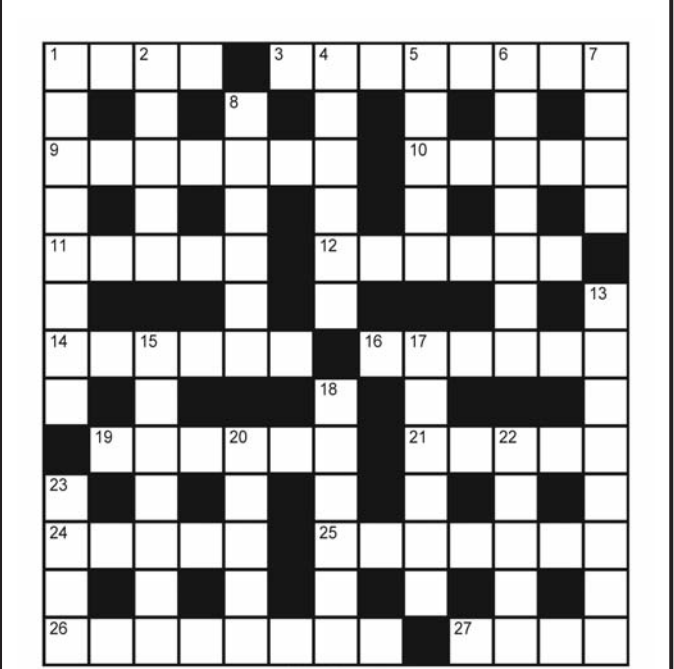
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



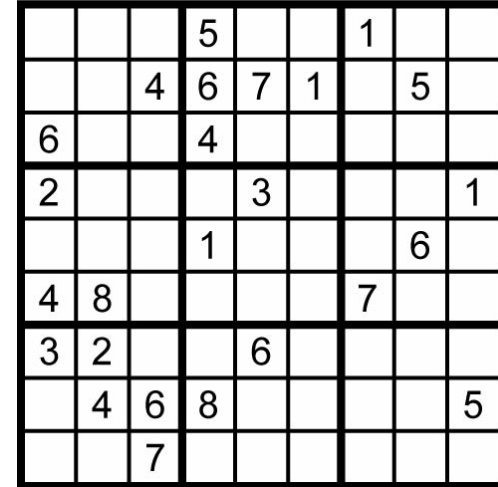
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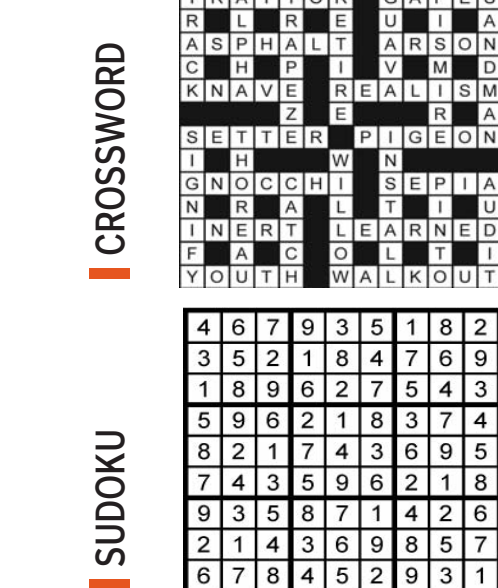
- Across**
- 1 Mantle
 - 3 Polite
 - 9 Writes down
 - 10 Opener, briefly
 - 11 Light purple
 - 12 Portable computer
 - 14 Type of paper or footprint
 - 16 Tough going
 - 19 Science fiction author Isaac
 - 21 Commodities
 - 24 Perch
 - 25 Salt shaker?
 - 26 Armed forces
 - 27 Kind of pool
 - Down**
 - 1 Battle
 - 2 Flower feature
 - 4 Consequence
 - 5 Concise
 - 6 Effect
 - 7 Lampblack
 - 8 Building material
 - 13 Aromatic West Indian tree
 - 15 Perfume ingredient (4,3)
 - 17 Well-seasoned stew of meat and vegetables
 - 18 Hindu incarnation
 - 20 Sacred song
 - 22 Use a soapbox
 - 23 Baby buggy

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

RICH TRIBUTES

Dignitaries pay tribute to freedom fighter Biswanath Pandit on his 105th birth anniversary at Chandnichowk in Cuttack, Wednesday



CM gave global identity to Sundargarh: Pandian

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has given a global identity to Sundargarh as it is his strong determination that led to the construction of world's largest fully seated hockey stadium - Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium - in the tribal-dominated district in a record 15-month time, 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian said, Wednesday.

Addressing the public in Sundargarh Sadar and Balisankara block during his visit to the district for reviewing several development projects of the state government there, Pandian said in 2019, when Odisha was chosen by FIH (International Hockey Federation) to host the hockey world cup 2023, the CM insisted on organising the mega event at Sundargarh's Rourkela. "FIH expressed concern over



CM's decision to organise the event at Rourkela as the Steel City then lacked hockey stadium, hotels and airport. The CM, however, said

we're committed and we'll get it done. Despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, we managed building Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium - world's largest fully seated hockey stadium - in a record 15-month time. Apart from the stadium, a 225-room accommodation and an airport were also built in a record time," Pandian said.

Pandian added, "The CM said that it was a tribute to Sundargarh for its contribution towards hockey in India."

The 5T Chairman reviewed major development projects, including mega lift irrigation projects at Semina, Riughat, Khairidih and Satara and mega piped water supply schemes.

He also attended meetings in Sundargarh Sadar and Balisankara block and received grievances on various issues and assured early resolution to the issues.

Cybercriminal gang busted in City; 8 arrested

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: An interstate gang that stole mobile phones and then transferred money from the victims' accounts using SIM cards in them was busted in Odisha with the police arresting its eight members Wednesday, officials said.

The 'Pahadi Gang', which operated professionally, used to "employ" thieves for stealing mobile phones in public

places by creating artificial crowds and paid them a monthly salary of Rs 10,000 to 15,000, they said.

These thieves would hand over the stolen mobile phones to the leader of the gang who would transfer money online from the victims' accounts using the SIM cards.

Bhubaneswar DCP Prateek Singh said the gang came onto their radar after a person registered a case at Capital police station, alleging he

was defrauded of Rs 14 lakh. "Since then, we have been tracking the movements of the gang members. Arresting them was a challenging task as the gang members operated individually and very frequently changed their locations," he said.

Nine cases were detected only in Bhubaneswar; Singh said, adding that 22 mobile phones, 25 SIM cards, 20 memory chips and Rs 1.3 lakh in cash were seized.

Govt issues rules for school buses

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Keeping in view non-compliance of guidelines issued by the Supreme Court by several school buses, the state Transport department Wednesday issued a fresh set of regulations.

As per the department, the Supreme Court has issued these rules but these are being largely flouted across the country.

According to the guidelines, the term 'School Bus' must be prominently written on rear and front of the van/private bus. If it is a hired bus/van, 'On School Duty' should be prominently displayed. The vehicle must have a first-aid box and fire extinguisher. Windows must be fitted with horizontal grills. The driver should not exceed a speed of 50 kmph.

Moreover, the name of the school and its telephone number must be written on the bus. The doors of the bus should be fitted with reliable locks. The driver should have a valid licence and at least five years of heavy vehicle driving experience.

There should be at least one conductor in a school bus. There should be space under the seat to keep bags. The vehicle should have an escort from the school. All vehicles should possess valid annual fitness certificates. The driver and conductor should wear proper uniforms.

7 state products get GI tag

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: In a New Year gift for Odisha, the Geographical Indication Registry (GIR) in Chennai has accorded GI tag to seven more items of the state, taking the total count of such tagged items to 25.

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) department Wednesday said that Gajapati Date Palm Jaggery (Khajuri Guda), Dhenkanal Magji, Mayurbhanj Kai Chutney, Nayagarh Kanteimundi brinjal, Dongria Kondh Embroidered Shawl of Rayagada, Koraput Kalajeera Rice and Painting of Lanjia Saura have got the GI tag.

Kendrapada Rasabali had got GI tagged in October last year.

Chennai-based GIR - the national body for GI registrations - has recently advertised applications for the seven unique products of the state. "All these products are categorised under food, handicrafts and agriculture categories and the GI applications were filed between 2020 and 2021, sources said.

Kalajeera Rice is grown in Koraput district's Tolla, Patraput, Pujariput, Baliguda and Mohuli areas. According to ancient text, Kalajeera Rice improves memory and controls diabetes as well.

Dongria Kondh Embroidered Shawl are mostly crafted by women of particularly vulnerable tribal



Gajapati Date Palm Jaggery, Dhenkanal Magji, Mayurbhanj Kai Chutney, Nayagarh Kanteimundi brinjal, Dongria Kondh Embroidered Shawl of Rayagada, Koraput Kalajeera Rice and Painting of Lanjia Saura have got the GI tag

group (PVTG) who live in Niyamgiri Hills of Rayagada and Kalahandi districts in Odisha for their own use and to present to guests as a mark

of respect and affection.

'Idital' painting art belongs to 'Lanjia Saura' (or 'Lanjia Savara/Sabara') tribe, one of the PVTGs of Rayagada district. These paintings were originally in forms of exterior murals (wall painting) of the tribal homes.

In Mayurbhanj, red weaver ants are consumed in the form of chutney known as 'Kai Chutney'. It is known to serve medicinal purposes apart from being a delicacy.

Kanteimundi brinjal, grown in Kantilo area of Nayagarh, are loaded with seeds and have prickly thorns. This brinjal variety is said to have originated in Badabanapur and Ratnapur areas of Nayagarh. Grown in a sandy soil, it is known to have a unique taste among brinjal genotypes.

Odisha Khajuri Guda (jaggery) of Gajapati district is a natural sweetener obtained from sweet juice (neera) of date palm trees. The jaggery prepared in trapezoidal form called 'Patali gur' traditionally, is purely organic. Dark brown in colour, it has a unique taste.

Magji, a sweet made of buffalo milk cheese, is unique to Gondia block of Dhenkanal and is being made for over 100 years now.

Kendrapara Rasabali owes its origin to the 262-year-old Sree Baladevjeev temple in the coastal district. The presiding deity of the shrine is offered Rasabali as 'bhog', it was learnt.

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TRANSLOCATION PLAN

70 deer shifted from Cuttack park to Chandaka sanctuary

PNN & AGENCIES

Cuttack, Jan 3: In deference to an order issued by the Orissa High Court, about 70 deer from Tulsipur Deer Park in Cuttack have already been relocated to Chandaka Wildlife Sanctuary on Bhubaneswar outskirts, even as the facility is heading for a closure.

According to a top official of Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC), nearly 70 out of the 290-odd deer in the park have already been shifted to the new enclosure at Ambilo in Chandaka Wildlife Sanctuary in the last three days. The official also added that the deer are being shifted safely to the destination.

The Deer Park authorities said it has become imperative to shift the deer to the large enclosure at Ambilo due to congestion issues owing to rapid increase in the deer population. The new enclosure is spread over 3.5 ha of forest land within Chandaka Wildlife Sanctuary and will have ample space to ac-

commodate the entire population of the deer park.

The relocation of the deer comes in the wake of an order issued by the High Court four years ago directing the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) to set up another park for the herbivores.

The Deer Park in Cuttack was established on 2.5 acres of land on Mahanadi River banks way back in 1981. The park which was established with only five deer now has a population of 296.

Meanwhile, many in Cuttack have expressed their unhappiness over the closure of the Deer Park.

As per Central Zoo Authority (CZA norms), a maximum of 15 deer can be accommodated within 2.5 acre of land. The civic body's move came following Central Zoo Authority (CZA)'s warning with regard to providing adequate space and proper environment for the deer population.

The CZA had withdrawn its recognition for Cuttack Deer Park citing lack of adequate space for the animals in 2021.

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DANGER IN WAITING

Tourists take rickety boats to Hukitola as admin sits pretty



POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahakalapara, Jan 3: With winter setting in, tourists have been thronging the historically important Hukitola island for picnics and to enjoy the picturesque location in the lap of nature.

This island falls under the jurisdiction of Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary which is famous for the nesting of the rare Olive Ridley turtles.

However, visitors are forced to take perilous rides in rickety country boats operating sans registration to reach the island in the absence of government boats. These private boats lack essential equipment like life jackets in case there is any mishap.

The administration does not seem to have learnt a lesson from the tragedy in which 10 tourists, including eight children, drowned after the boat they were travelling in overturned in Nipania Khola river while returning from Hukitola island, January 2, 2019.

The boat was overloaded with 50 picnickers from Kujang area in nearby Jagatsinghpur district. The ban on using fishing

boats and unsafe vessels for ferrying tourists to Hukitola island is flouted with impunity.

It is alleged that the district administration and the Forest department are aware of the unsafe boat rides and the lurking danger but have done little to safeguard the lives of the tourists.

A week back, some picnickers of Ramnagar area were returning home in a private fishing boat which got stuck mid-sea after the boat's engine developed technical snag. They finally got a new lease of life after a joint team of Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary personnel and Jambu police personnel rescued and brought them to the shore along with the defunct boat.

Reports said that the famed Hukitola island is situated under Mahakalapara block in Kendrapara District located close to Jambu island in the Bay of Bengal. The historic building here has a plinth area of over 7,000 sq ft and was constructed on the island during the British rule in 1866-67 during the infamous 'Naanka' famine.

This large building was used to store rice imported from Burma and other places through sea route and it bears testimony to the advancement made in architecture in the 19th century.

The monument, a majestic building, has an underground rainwater harvesting system and is a symbol of the state's glorious past in maritime trade. The place attracts students, scholars, and history and nature lovers throughout the year and particularly during the winter season owing to its scenic location and historical significance.

The port and the palace started losing importance in 1924 when the Britishers established a port at false point. This island witnesses maximum footfall mostly during Christmas to New Year day. The vast expanse of mangrove forests here, dolphin sightings in the blue waters of the sea and the sight of red and horse-shoe crabs on the sandy beach fascinate the nature lovers and picnickers.

However, one has to take a boat from Jambu jetty and travel for 10 km to reach Hukitola. Similarly, one can also travel by a boat via Ramnagar, Kharinasi and Paradip river mouth to reach Hukitola. The tourists and picnickers while travelling by boats get to enjoy the scenic beauty of mangrove forests, spotted deer, colourful migratory birds and the dreaded crocodiles basking on the river islets.

However, the tourists are forced to endanger their lives by travelling in registration-less private boats to get to the island.

Social activists Lakshmikanta Swain, Biranchi Narayan Das and Nath Kumar Bhola have demanded the state government to intervene and provide registered boats with all life saving equipment to ferry the tourists to Hukitola.

Gahirmatha forest ranger Pradosh Kumar Moharana assured that the safety check of the tourist boats will be intensified in coming days.



ALL SET: A giant arch has been put up as the entrance to the three-day district-level Lok Mahotsav scheduled to start Thursday, as some workers wrap up the preparations at Birsa Maidan in Sambalpur, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

BJP for CBI probe into VHP leader's murder

THE DEMAND CAME A DAY AFTER THE ORISSA HC ISSUED A NOTICE TO THE STATE GOVERNMENT TO FILE A COUNTER AFFIDAVIT ON A PETITION SEEKING A CBI PROBE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Opposition BJP Wednesday asked the state government to make the judicial commission reports on the murder of VHP leader Swami Lakshmananda Saraswati public and hand over the case to the CBI for a detailed probe.

The demand was made by senior BJP lawmaker and Leader of

Opposition Jayanarayan Mishra at a press conference here.

The opposition party's demand came a day after the Orissa High Court issued a notice to the state government to file a counter affidavit by March 5 on a petition seeking a CBI probe into the killing of Saraswati and four of his disciples in 2008.

Welcoming the high court notice, Mishra said, "Three judicial commissions have probed the Saraswati murder case. However, the state government did not make these reports public for some unknown reasons, might be to shield the culprits."

Saraswati, who was strongly opposed to religious conversions, was gunned down along with four disciples August 23, 2008 at his Jalespata ashram in Kandhamal district. They were celebrating Janmashtami when the armed men opened fired at them, Mishra said.



The leader of Opposition also lashed out at the state government for not 'providing' security to Saraswati even after he faced a murder attempt December 25, 2007.

Mishra alleged that personnel providing security to Saraswati were on leave on the night when he was targeted. He said almost 15 years after Saraswati's killing, the state government is yet to make the interim report submitted by Justice (retd) Sarat Mohapatra and the

final report by Justice (retd) AS Naidu public.

He alleged that there was a major conspiracy behind not making public the reports of the inquiry commissions. The main culprits and conspirators of the case are still roaming freely. The government must expose them through a CBI probe, Mishra said.

Senior BJD leader and former minister Padmanav Behera said the state government as per the HC direction will certainly put its views on the investigation done by the Crime Branch of police.

The allegation that the commission reports have been suppressed is baseless, Behera claimed. The murder of the seer had led to large-scale communal violence in Kandhamal and some other parts of the state, claiming around 40 lives, besides destruction of hundreds of houses.

GIRL KILLS SELF AFTER LOVER THREATENS TO MAKE PHOTOS VIRAL

PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara, Jan 3: A 22-year-old girl has allegedly committed suicide after her boyfriend threatened to make their obscene photos and videos viral on social media.

The girl committed suicide as she feared that her family members will be embarrassed if the videos and obscene photos become viral on social media.

According to Chandol police outpost in-charge Soumya Ranjan Panigrahi, the victim girl had developed a romantic relationship with one Rudra Das of Khardasahi village under Chandol police outpost.

The youth had captured intimate photos and videos of the girl and later blackmailed her. The girl committed suicide by hanging herself on the New Year day, Panigrahi said. The police later seized the body of the girl and sent it for autopsy to district headquarter hospital, Kendrapara.

The family members of the deceased girl lodged an FIR at Sadar police station. The Sadar police registered a case and conducted an inquiry.

Blast rocks steel plant in Keonjhar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Barbil, Jan 3: Workers at the KJS Ahluwalia Steel Plant had a close shave as a truck was partially damaged following an explosion at the induction furnace of the steel plant at Barapada under Rugudi police limits in Keonjhar district, Wednesday.

Except for the truck carriage which was damaged after molten iron fell on it, no casualty, however, was reported in the mishap. The iron ore laden truck was parked near the blast furnace when the accident occurred.

Rugudi police have reached the spot and launched an investigation, sources said adding that the reason behind the blast is yet to be ascertained. Rugudi PS IIC Taranisin Bag said that no casualty has been reported during the mishap as per the plant authorities.

The mishap occurred when a container loaded with molten iron was being brought down when the induction furnace developed a puncture. The container exploded with a deafening



sound and the molten iron fell on the carriage of the truck which was parked nearby.

The truck driver escaped death by a whisker as he ran outside leaving the truck behind after hearing the deafening sound of the blast. Plant authorities started an inquiry to find the possible cause behind the explosion.

Informed by the company officials, the fire service personnel rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

When contacted, the plant's Human Resources personnel Charu Chandra Nayak said the blast occurred due to a puncture in the blast furnace. However, no casualty has been reported during the blast while the truck carriage has been partially damaged.

Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra vehicle in Bhadrak vandalised

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhadrak, Jan 3: A Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra vehicle, meant to showcase the success of the Modi government's schemes, was vandalised by unknown individuals in Bhadrak district Wednesday, officials said.

The incident took place in Dhamnagar around 11am when BJP supporters led by party MLA Suryabanshi Suraj were conducting a public programme, they added.

Suraj alleged that workers from the ruling BJD party were responsible for the attack and staged a dharna in front of Dhamnagar police station, demanding action against them. He alleged that BJD members also created chaos during a medical checkup for women.

In response to the allegations, local BJD leader Ashok Nayak said, "The BJD never indulges in violence and believes in progress."

After receiving information, the police arrived at the scene and arrested two men, said Fanindra Bhusan Nayak, IIC of Dhamnagar PS.

Dad, son killed in road mishap; locals protest

PNN & AGENCIES

Sonepur, Jan 3: A man and his son were mowed down by a speeding truck in Subarnapur district, officials said Wednesday, adding that the area witnessed a protest and tension prevailed after the incident.

The accident happened late Tuesday evening when a 46-year-old high school teacher and his minor son were hit by the truck.



The deceased were identified as Rajkumar Mahakud and his 17-year-old son Ompreet, residents of Baladi village under Tarabha police station area in the district.

Deceased Rajkumar was returning home with his son after

the latter's tuition classes ended Tuesday evening when a speeding Hyva truck entering into Subarnapur town ran over the father and son duo at Block Square.

"The Hyva driver fled from the spot leaving the vehicle near the Police Reserve Line at around one kilometre distance fearing public anger," said a local police official.

Alleging negligence by traffic cops present at the accident spot, the locals staged a road blockade and vandalised the vehicle of Sonepur Sub-Divisional Police Officer Pratap Tripathy. "As the scooter was dragged along the road for nearly one kilometre, it caught fire which subsequently engulfed the hyva," said SDPO Tripathy.

The police also reportedly resorted to mild lathi charge to disperse the protesters.

Locals removed the road blockade after they were pacified by Bolangir MP Sangeeta Kumari Singh Deo and senior officials of Subarnapur district administration.

Advertisement for East Coast Railway tender notice. Includes details about electrical works, tender closing date, and contact information for the divisional electrical engineer.

Is BJP planning something big for 2024?

RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

Rourkela, Jan 3: Is there a big political plan afoot for Odisha by the BJP and its parent organisation RSS? The answer to this question seems to be in positive keeping in mind the unfolding of the situation here.

Suddenly, Rourkela, which is generally not in the map of any political party for any activity, has found itself in the middle of it.

The Steel City has hosted RSS supremo Mohan Bhagawat for the last two days and will continue to do so for the next two days. Speculation is rife in the media circle that most of the top functionaries of the organisation are here to participate in a five-day 'Chintan Shivir'.

When such camps are generally held at Nagpur, why Rourkela this time, is the question every one has in mind. And adding to that, this



is his second visit within a year. As usual there is no media briefing in this regard. The RSS meet ends January 5.

Adding to that, now the BJP state unit is going to hold its 'Chintan Baithak' for the 2024 general elections. The meeting will start January 4 evening and will continue till next day evening. Top saffron leaders like Sunil Bansal, Ashwini Vaishnaw, Dharmendra

Pradhan, Bishweswar Tudu, Aparajita Sarangi and not to forget, state president Manmohan Samal will be present in the meet. The meeting will also host most of the MPs and some MLAs.

With everybody being tight-lipped about the meet, a source confirmed the duration of the 'Chintan Baithak' and the names of the leaders coming here. The meeting was originally

With everybody being tight-lipped about the meet, a source confirmed the duration of the party's 'Chintan Baithak' and the names of the leaders attending the meeting

scheduled to be held in the picturesque location of Khandadhar. However, in the last minute, it has been shifted to Rourkela and will be held at Hotel Mayfair. The source added that the party is taking the state elections very seriously.

A party functionary requesting anonymity commented, "Two very important developments taking place at one venue just cannot be coincidence." Meanwhile, mobile phones of most of the leaders were found switched off.

Advertisement for Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited. Includes details about the company, registered office address, branch address, and information regarding demand notices and security interest.



A devotee poses for a selfie with Yakshagana artistes during the 'Ayyappa Swamy Utsav' procession in Chikmagalur, Karnataka



Tourists visit the Taj Mahal on a cold winter day in Agra, Uttar Pradesh



Vice Admiral Sanjay Jasjit Singh inspects a guard of honour during a ceremonial parade before officially taking over as the FOC-in-C Western Naval Command from Vice Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi at INS Shikra, Colaba, in Mumbai, Maharashtra



A performer dressed as a Stormtrooper break-dances during the London's New Year's Day Parade event in London, Britain



Smoke billows during a fire at a flyover on national highway at Khana in Ludhiana district, Punjab. An oil tanker caught fire after an accident on the national highway in Khanna, about 50 km from Ludhiana, police said



Thousands of people attend a protest rally in Mogadishu, Somalia after being angry with an agreement signed between Ethiopia and the breakaway region of Somaliland to give landlocked Ethiopia access to its shoreline



Artistes perform 'Kulvi Naati' dance during the Manali Winter Carnival 2024

REUTERS/PTI PHOTOS

WICKETS FALL LIKE 23 PINS

Siraj's achieve career-best figures in Tests before India lose six wickets for zero run to take 98-run lead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cape Town, Jan 3: Mohammed Siraj got 6/15 in a breathtakingly menacing morning spell but to his horror found India losing six wickets in a space of eleven balls in the final session before regaining the advantage against South Africa on a riveting day one of the second Test here.

After Siraj's career-best figures decimated South Africa for their lowest post-apartheid score of 55, India were 153/4 before losing six wickets without addition of single run in a space of 11 deliveries to end with a 98-run lead. There were six Indian batters, who failed to open their accounts and one who remained not out also didn't trouble the scorer, making it a statistician's nightmare.

Lungi Ngidi (3/30) and Kagiso Rabada (3/38) got five of those six wickets keeping the lead below 100 and gaining the necessary psychological advantage.

South Africa were more cautious despite being aggressive as they scored 62/3 in their second innings at stumps to bring down the deficit to 36 runs. Aiden



Markram (36 batting) looked solid in the middle. The maximum number of wickets lost on Day 1 of a Test is 27 and that happened in an England-Australia Test back in 1888.

Dean Elgar, in his last Test match, would like to forget that he got out twice in a day's play while Mukesh Kumar (2/0 and 2/25) was rewarded for consistently pitching the ball in right

areas, getting enough away movement against southpaws. Any chance of the match going into the third day looks remote.

On a Newlands track that offered steep bounce and would certainly come under the ICC match referee Chris Broad's radar, the red Kookaburra ball took off like jumbo jet from the length making it impossible for batters to survive. Between shoulder blades to lower abdomen, batters got hit everywhere as the bounce became variable towards the end of the day.

Rohit Sharma (39) lived dangerously but played attacking cricket. Ditto for Virat Kohli (46) and Shubman Gill (36), who also showed right intent. The rest of the batters hardly troubled the scorers.

Before Siraj's special effort, the only Indian in country's 92 year

Test history to take five wickets before lunch was left-arm spinner Maninder Singh, who achieved the feat against Pakistan in Bangalore back in 1986-87.

On a humid Wednesday morning, South African batters found what a great leveller the game of cricket is with Siraj ripping the heart out of the Proteas batting with a masterclass of pace, swing and seam movement. The Proteas innings ended in just 23.2 overs.

David Bedingham (12) and Kyle Verreynne (15) were the only two batters to hit the double digits as the South African supporters in stands were stunned into silence. Jasprit Bumrah (2/25) also kept the pressure from the other end.

BRIEF SCORES

South Africa 55 (Kyle Verreynne 15; Mohammed Siraj 6/15, Mukesh Kumar 0/2, Jasprit Bumrah 2/25) & 62/3 (Aiden Markram 36 batting; Mukesh Kumar 2/25); India 153 (Virat Kohli 46, Rohit Sharma 39, Shubman Gill 36; Lungi Ngidi 3/30, Kagiso Rabada 3/38, Nandre Burger 3/42). Match to continue.

Dipa hogs limelight, Pranati shines at Gymnastics Nat'l's



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Olympian Dipa Karmakar hogged the limelight on day 2 of the Senior Artistic Gymnastics National Championship as she topped the all-around performance with a total of 49.55 points. Railways emerged champions in the women's team category with 182.60 points.

Maharashtra finished in second position with 169.95, while West Bengal finished third with 166.80 points in the women's category on the second day at the Gymnastics Centre in Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar. The hosts Odisha finished fourth with 164.65 points.

Dipa, who is representing Tripura, cumulated a total of 49.55. She recorded 13.40 on Vault, 10.65

on Uneven Bars, 13.10 on Balance Beam and 12.40 on Floor Exercise.

Expressing her delight at topping the all-around category, Dipa stated, "I'm competing in Senior Nationals after eight years, I feel great about it. It's really great to see the Gymnastics centre here. I would also like to thank the Odisha Government for building this centre and creating that sports culture for the athletes."

Railways' Pranati Das (47.00) and Swastika Ganguly (45.30) finished second and third positions respectively in the all-around. Pranati recorded 12.80 on Vault, 10.60 on Uneven Bars, 11.50 on Balance Beam and 12.10 on Floor Exercise, while her teammate Swastika bagged 12.80 on Vault, 9.15 on Uneven Bars, 11.70 on Balance Beam and 11.65 on Floor Exercise.

Surya in line for ICC award

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Jan 3: India star Suryakumar Yadav was Wednesday named as one of the four nominees for the ICC Men's T20 Cricketer of the Year 2023.

The 33-year-old Indian, who won the accolade in 2022, dominated 2023 in the shortest format with 733 runs from 17 innings at an average of 48.86 and strike rate of 155.95.

Young India opening batter Yashasvi Jaiswal was also named as one of the four nominees for the ICC Men's Emerging Cricketer of the Year 2023.

The 22-year-old Jaiswal scored 283 Test runs at 70.75 average and made 430 T20I runs at 33.07 and strike rate of 159.25 during the year. He is pitted against Rachin Ravindra (New Zealand), Gerald Coetzee (South Africa) and Dilshan Madushanka (Sri Lanka).

The other three nominees are Sikandar Raza of Zimbabwe (11 innings, 515 runs at 51.50, strike rate 150.14; 17 wickets at 14.88, economy 6.57), Alpesh Ramjani of Uganda (55 wickets at 8.98, economy 4.77) and Mark Chapman of New Zealand (17 innings, 556 runs at 50.54, strike rate 145.54).

Protest against Bajrang, Sakshi, Vinesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: The ongoing crisis in Indian wrestling took a new twist Wednesday when hundreds of junior wrestlers assembled at Jantar Mantar for a symbolic three-hour protest against the loss of one crucial year of their careers, a situation for which they blamed top grapplers Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik and Vinesh Phogat.

Loaded in buses, close to 300 junior wrestlers arrived from different parts of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi, catching the police unawares.

The protesters were carrying banners that read: 'UWW (United World Wrestling) save our wrestling from these 3 wrestlers'. Another banner read: 'Kar Diya Desh Ki Kushti Ko Barbaad: Sakshi Bajrang, Vinesh Phogat'.

Soon after the election of new office-bearers, the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) announced the hosting of the U-15 and U-20 Nationals in Gonda, UP but the ministry suspended the body, leading to the cancellation of the proposed tournament.

Several wrestlers, who

could have competed in the junior categories for one last time, lost the opportunity. "It was a symbolic protest. We are giving 10 days' time to the government to revoke the suspension of the new WFI and allow it to hold age group nationals."

"If they don't do it, we will start returning our Arjuna and other awards to the government just like Bajrang and Vinesh have done," said Greco-Roman wrestler Sunil Rana, who is an Arjuna awardee and a bronze medallist from the 2023 Asian Games.

JUGGERNAUTS SEE OFF WARRIORS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 3: Defending champions Odisha Juggernauts notched up a convincing 32-21 victory over Rajasthan Warriors, in Ultimate Kho Kho Season 2 here, Wednesday. The victory was built on the back of a stellar defensive performance by the Juggernauts that saw them score 10 dream run points.

In turn-1, Vishal, Gowtham MK and Dilip Khandavi stayed on the mat for six minutes and 22 seconds, scoring seven dream run points. With all three players of Juggernauts' second batch remaining unconquered, they took a 7-6 lead into turn-2. It was the first

time in UKK history that a defending team had taken the lead in a turn. Warriors set about limiting the damage in turn-2, with their first batch of Vijay Hajare, Sushant Hajare and Vrushabh Wagh notching up three dream run points.

In turn-3, after losing the first batch early, Juggernauts' second batch frustrated Warriors which left Warriors with a slender 21-18 lead. Juggernauts attackers had no problems overturning that in turn-4.

Earlier, Telugu Yodhas stamped their dominance over an off-colour Mumbai Khiladis, notching up a 40-22 victory. This was the biggest margin of victory this season.

#NUA-O
YUBA ODISHA
NABIN ODISHA

Nua-O Fest, Boudh

Place: District Stadium, Boudh | Time : 10 AM onwards

04 January, 2024

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ନବୀନ ଓଡ଼ିଶା

Shri Naveen Patnaik
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha