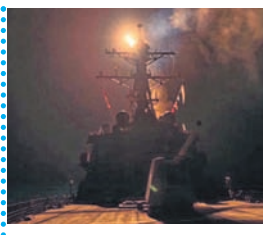




## Self-reflections

Actor Ananya Panday shares things she doesn't like about herself as a girlfriend

LEISURE | P2



## Massive strikes

US, UK militaries launch dozens of air strikes across Yemen overnight in retaliation against Iran-backed Houthi forces

INTERNATIONAL | P10



## Factory output shrinks

India's industrial production growth decelerates to an 8-month low of 2.4 per cent in November

BUSINESS | P11



## Eves eye glory

The Indian women's hockey team will look to seal their berth for Paris Olympics in the qualifiers starting Saturday

SPORTS | P12

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## SHORT TAKES

### Sensex, Nifty touch fresh lifetime highs

**Mumbai:** Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty surged to their fresh all-time highs Friday, driven by a sharp rally in IT stocks. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 847.27 points to reach a new record of 72,568.45 during the day-end trade. The Nifty climbed 247.30 points to reach its fresh record peak of 21,894.50. Among the Sensex firms, Infosys jumped nearly 8 per cent after the company's December quarter earnings came in line with market expectations. **P11**

### INDIA bloc meet for seat-sharing today

**New Delhi:** Top leaders of parties of the Opposition INDIA bloc will hold discussions January 13 on strengthening the alliance, chalking out a strategy on seat-sharing and deciding whether to have a convener of the grouping, sources said Friday. TMC leader Mamata Banerjee will not be part of the virtual meeting Saturday morning as she is preoccupied with prior engagements, they said.

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Can't say about you, but for me he's the best PM ever

### MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	72568.45 ↑ 847.27
NIFTY	21894.50 ↑ 247.30
DOLLAR	82.99 ↓ ₹0.08
EURO	90.97 ↓ ₹0.26
GOLD	₹62,660 ↑ ₹872
SILVER	₹7,997 ↑ ₹1643

### WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	27.6°C	26.6°C
Min Temp	18.0°C	16.5°C
Humidity	59%	73%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

FOG/MIST IN THE MORNING



**AUSPICIOUS BEGINNING:** Puri Gajapati Dibyasingha Deb along with priests during the 'Acharya Barana' rituals for the Srimandir Parikrama Prakalpa, Friday. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will inaugurate the historic project January 17 (Report on P4)

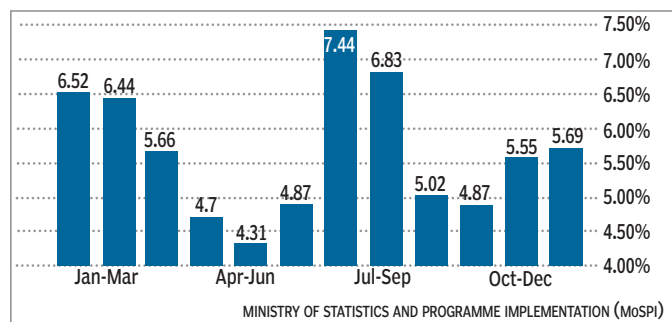
# INFLATION PRICKS

INCREASE IN PRICES OF VEGETABLES, PULSES, AND SPICES PUSH RETAIL INFLATION TO 4-MONTH HIGH OF 5.69%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 12:** Retail inflation rose at the fastest pace in four months in December 2023 at 5.69 per cent, on account of an increase in prices of vegetables, pulses, and spices, according to government data released Friday. The annual inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) was at 5.55 per cent in November and 5.72 per cent in the year-ago month. As per the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the rate of price rise in the food basket, which constitutes nearly half of the CPI, increased to 9.53 per cent in December 2023, as against 8.7 per cent in the preceding month, and 4.19 per cent in December 2022.

In August 2023, inflation had touched a high of 6.83 per cent. The latest data showed that inflation in the vegetable segment was at 27.64 per cent on an annual basis, followed by 'pulses and products' at 20.73 per cent, and spices at 19.69 per cent. However,



prices of 'oil and fats' declined by 14.96 per cent. The retail inflation was higher in rural areas at 5.93 per cent in December, while it was 5.46 per cent in urban India. However, the inflation in the food basket was lower in rural areas compared to urban centres. Commenting on the data, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA, said the sequential uptick in the headline CPI inflation in December 2023 was entirely led by the food and beverages segment, with all the other sub-groups either reporting an easing or similar year-on-year prints compared to the previous month. "Within the food segment, vegetables were expectedly the main culprit, even as seven of the 12 sub-segments witnessed a moderation in their year-on-year inflation print in the month," she said. The RBI has been tasked by the government to ensure retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side. According to the NSO data, the lowest inflation was witnessed in Delhi at 2.95 per cent, and the highest in Odisha at 8.73 per cent.

# Docs to prescribe in legible handwriting

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 12:** Acting on the direction of the Orissa High Court, the state government has instructed doctors in the state to write post-mortem reports, prescriptions and medico legal reports in block letters or legible handwriting or typed form only so that their handwriting doesn't create any confusion. In accordance with an instruction from the Orissa High Court in this regard, Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena has issued an order. "All registered medical practitioners/medical officers of government/peripheral health care facilities, medical colleges, private clinics and private medical colleges are to write prescriptions in proper legible handwriting or in typed form as per guidelines of National Medical Commission," the order issued Thursday said. Similarly, the medico-legal reports and post-mortem reports are to be written either in capital

letters or in a typed form or in good legible handwriting to ensure appreciation of evidence in the judicial system, it said.

While disposing a petition, the High Court, in its order January 4, said, "In many cases, the casual approach of most of the doctors while writing the post-mortem report is affecting the comprehension of medico-legal documents badly and the judicial system finds it very difficult to read those letters and come to a definite conclusion."

Moreover, the tendency of writing such zig-zag handwriting, which cannot be read by any common man or by judicial officers, has become a fashion among the doctors of the state, the court observed.

The HC directed the Chief Secretary to issue a circular to all the medical centres, private clinics and medical colleges and hospitals directing them to write in proper handwriting or in a type of form when they are prescribing medicine or writing some medico-legal reports.

## USING 'CONCH' SYMBOL IN GOVT ADVERTISEMENTS

### DELHI HC QUASHES PLEA AGAINST BJD

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Jan 12:** The Delhi High Court Friday refused to entertain a petition filed by the Odisha Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) general secretary Jatin Mohanty against the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and the Odisha government for using the 'conch' symbol in advertisements of various state government schemes.

A two-judge bench of acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora asked the petitioner to approach the Orissa High Court and granted him liberty to withdraw the plea.

"Go there (Orissa High Court). Raise it over there. Everything happened in Orissa. Advertisements were done in Orissa. This court is overburdened. We cannot do it in this manner. Go there. They will decide. Not us," the bench said.

The petitioner then withdrew the petition. The petitioner had contended in the Delhi High Court that the Odisha government has been using the 'conch' symbol of the ruling BJD while advertising various state government welfare schemes on hoardings in different cities and towns, on Odisha State Road Transport Corporation (OSRTC) buses and in various print and electronic media. The



petitioner's counsel argued that the government has been using public money to promote its party.

"That is the story in each state. It is not unique to one state," the bench replied.

The petitioner had pleaded before the Delhi High Court to issue directions to the Election Commission of India to take appropriate legal action against the BJD for allegedly violating the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) order, 1968 and model code of conduct for the Guidance of Political Parties and Candidates. The petitioner also sought directions to Election Commission of India for recovery of alleged misused public money in the name of advertisement by the state government.

The petitioner had also requested the Delhi High Court to pass orders restraining the Odisha government from using the BJD's election symbol while advertising the state government's welfare schemes.

# India successfully tests AKASH missile

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Balasure, Jan 12:** India Friday conducted a successful flight test of the new generation AKASH missile from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur off the coast of Odisha, officials said.

The flight test was conducted by DRDO against a high-speed unmanned aerial target at very low altitude. During the flight test, the target was successfully intercepted by the weapon system and destroyed, they said.

"It has validated the functioning of the complete weapon system consisting of the missile with indigenously developed Radio Frequency Seeker, Launcher, Multi-Function Radar and Command, Control &



Communication system," the officials said.

The system performance was also validated through the data captured by a number of radars, telemetry and electro-optical tracking system deployed by ITR, Chandipur.

The flight test was witnessed by senior officials from DRDO, Indian Air Force, Bharat Dynamics Limited and Bharat Electronics Limited.

# IAF plane wreckage found over 7 yrs after crash

THE AN-32 AIRCRAFT WITH 29 PERSONNEL ON BOARD HAD GONE MISSING OVER THE BAY OF BENGAL JULY 22, 2016 DURING A MISSION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 12:** The wreckage of a transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) has been located at the depth of around 3.4 km in the Bay of Bengal, nearly seven-and-a-half years after the plane with 29 personnel on board went missing.

The Defence Ministry said a scrutiny of the images captured by an autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) deployed by the National Institute of Ocean Technology recently found to be conforming that the wreckage located 310 km off the Chennai coast is of an An-32 aircraft.

"The search images were scrutinised and found to be conforming with an An-32 aircraft. This discovery at the probable crash site, with no other recorded

history of any other missing aircraft report in the same area, points to the debris as possibly belonging to the crashed IAF An-32," the ministry said in a statement.

The An-32 aircraft with registration number K-2743 of the IAF had gone missing over the Bay of Bengal July 22, 2016 during a mission. Twenty-nine personnel were on board the aircraft. Large-scale search-and-rescue operations involving aircraft and ships could not locate any missing personnel or the wreckage of the plane since it went missing.

The National Institute of Ocean Technology, which functions under the aegis of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, had recently deployed an AUV with deep-sea exploration capability at the last known location of the

## OrissaPOST

### IAF plane with 29 on board missing

**Chennai, New Delhi, July 22:** The wreckage of a transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) has been located at the depth of around 3.4 km in the Bay of Bengal, nearly seven-and-a-half years after the plane with 29 personnel on board went missing. The Defence Ministry said a scrutiny of the images captured by an autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) deployed by the National Institute of Ocean Technology recently found to be conforming that the wreckage located 310 km off the Chennai coast is of an An-32 aircraft. The search images were scrutinised and found to be conforming with an An-32 aircraft. This discovery at the probable crash site, with no other recorded history of any other missing aircraft report in the same area, points to the debris as possibly belonging to the crashed IAF An-32, the ministry said in a statement. The An-32 aircraft with registration number K-2743 of the IAF had gone missing over the Bay of Bengal July 22, 2016 during a mission. Twenty-nine personnel were on board the aircraft. Large-scale search-and-rescue operations involving aircraft and ships could not locate any missing personnel or the wreckage of the plane since it went missing. The National Institute of Ocean Technology, which functions under the aegis of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, had recently deployed an AUV with deep-sea exploration capability at the last known location of the

missing An-32 aircraft.

"This search was conducted at a depth of 3,400 metres using multiple payloads, including a multi-beam SONAR (Sound Navigation and Ranging), synthetic aperture SONAR and high-resolution photography," the Defence Ministry said.

"Analysis of search images had indicated the presence of debris of a crashed aircraft on the sea bed approximately 140 nautical miles (310 km) from the Chennai coast," it said.

It was during a testing expedition undertaken by Research Vessel Sagar Nidhi December 9-10 last year, about 310 km off the Chennai coast, the instruments on the AUV picked up some strong SONAR reflections from the seabed at a depth of 3,400 m. The strong signals intrigued

the scientists who then decided to dive deeper for a closer look.

"Then we dived a little deeper and took some photographs, which were shared with the Indian Air Force through the Ministry of Earth Sciences," G A Ramadass, Director, NIOT told PTI.

Another scientist said initially the debris was thought to be of a shipwreck, but on closer examination the researchers were able to identify the tricolour roundel found on IAF aircraft.

The NIOT had joined the search operations in July 2016 along with other agencies and used surface ships and remotely operated vehicles for the purpose.

"At that time we did not find anything," Ramadass said.





## RAPPER G-EAZY ANNOUNCES HIS MAIDEN INDIA TOUR

American music sensation and rapper G-Eazy is heading to India for the first time. "Namaste India! I'm beyond excited to bring my music to the incredible fans in a place that I've heard so many amazing stories about," posted an elated G-Eazy on his social media handle.

## DUA LIPA DATING BRITISH ACTOR CALLUM TURNER

Singer Dua Lipa is dating British actor Callum Turner. The singer and the actor were spotted dancing at an afterparty in LA for the premiere of his show *Masters of The Air* Wednesday night, sparking speculation they are dating. Now a source has now confirmed the news.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

Sometimes, pressure is a good thing, as it brings out the best in you. You will outshine your colleagues in whatever you choose to do. But your expectations may far exceed the outcome. Ganesh asks that you have patience. Results take time.

#### TAURUS

Today might be a day of untying and getting out of the tangles, says Ganesh. You may take the blame for the actions of another. Things may get frustrating around the afternoon and your confidence levels may stoop. Work on your strength and work out your weaknesses, advises Ganesh.

#### GEMINI

You had better start sharing your feelings with your family today, says Ganesh. Also, it's time to tell your family about your current financial status. It will help you feel better. Your energy levels will soar and you will approach everything with renewed vigour. Your spouse will bring good luck to you.

#### CANCER

You may discuss certain serious issues with your beloved today, predicts Ganesh. Your time till afternoon will be spent in discussions and deliberations about the issue. However, this issue may not be enough in letting you off the hook on the work front.

#### LEO

After a long time, it seems as if the stars are aligning to bring something special for you. Call it your field day, but today, everything will go your way, says Ganesh. Expect to get appreciated for your hard work in office. As for the home front, you will get all the support you need from your family members for refurbishing your home.

#### VIRGO

Surf's up as you enjoy an unexpected achievement! But your joy ride today may well be spent in vexing about the problems you have. Expect to gain new money for a new venture. Your business will rise atop the highest wave today, foretells Ganesh.

#### LIBRA

Working for the government is always a key responsibility, says Ganesh. But today of all days proves to be fabulous and phenomenal for all those in government service. Your actions will translate into accomplishment and you may rest assured that you shall be duly recognized and rewarded for your meritorious service.

#### SCORPIO

Your business associates will emerge as intangible assets for you today, says Ganesh. You will probably start off an innovative joint venture without any doubt or indecision. Hard work and enthusiasm are always a good combination for achieving success.

#### SAGITTARIUS

It is not your nature to warm the bench, but you will wake up feeling lazy and laid-back today, says Ganesh. This may be due to the fatigue of some recent endeavours. For a change, you will try and delegate your work and responsibility to those around you. Make sure that they do so wisely as they may not live up to your standards, warns Ganesh.

#### CAPRICORN

Plans for expanding business may require you to take risks, leaving you in a dilemma on more than one occasion. In such desperate circumstances, following your instincts can lead you to success, advises Ganesh.

#### AQUARIUS

Amid all the boring work buzz, you will manage to sustain your sense of humour. And, why not? After all, you are an expert at inducing a laugh riot! You are in a gregarious mood and that explains it. This also makes you a welcome guest at any party you may wish to grace.

#### PISCES

A day wherein you will be handling responsibilities on both the home front and at the workplace awaits you, says Ganesh. Expect to be involved in home refurbishing projects, where expenses are likely to soar.

**Mumbai:** Ananya Panday, who last appeared in the film *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* alongside Adarsh Gourav and Siddhant Chaturvedi, spoke about her likes and dislikes as a girlfriend. The actress, who recently confirmed her relationship with Aditya Roy Kapur, opened up in a recent interview about her self-reflections in the realm of relationships.



## Ananya's take on being possessive

While speaking with an entertainment portal, the *Liger* actress said that two things she doesn't like about herself as a girlfriend are that she is very possessive and that sometimes she does things that are not her favourite things to do but are her partner's favourite things to do.

But that's cute. And she thinks these two things can also be taken as good points because she is very protective of the person she is with. She is always there for that person.

A few days ago, Karan Johar confirmed Ananya's relationship with Aditya on *Koffee With Karan 8*.

On the work front, Ananya is set to star in the TV series *Call Me Bae*, co-starring Varun Dhawan and Vir Das. It revolves around a billionaire fashionista who, following a scandalous controversy, is disowned by her ultra-rich family and navigates life independently.

## ADAH SHARES HER UNIQUE RESOLUTION

**Mumbai:** Actress Adah Sharma gave a shocking answer when asked what her resolution is for 2024.

Adah says, "2023 gave me so much more than I ever thought I deserved to ask for. So in 2024, instead of asking what the New Year can give me, I should give back to the New Year."

"I'm working closely with various animal organisations for stray animals and abused elephants. People give me so much love, so I must give back."

Adah is now gearing up for *Sunflower* season 2, where her role is touted to be 'creepy and unique'. Asked about her role in the series, she said, "I did drama in *Kerala Story* and action in *Commando*.

So I thought it would be nice to do comedy, and this is a role to die for! I can't reveal too much, but she's very unique and creepy."

The upcoming season will revolve around Adah's character:

Without revealing much, she said, "This season revolves around my character, who moves into Sunflower society and turns everyone's lives upside down."

She will also be seen in *Bastar*, made by the same makers of *The Kerala Story*.



## Riteish Ajay's 'next target' in *Raid II*

**Mumbai:** Riteish Deshmukh, known for his versatile acting skills, is all set to play the antagonist in Ajay Devgn and Vaani Kapoor's *Raid II*. In the film, Riteish will face off against Ajay Devgn on the silver screen for the first time.

According to a source, the film is a franchise that sees a pure battle royale between the hero and the villain. While Ajay Devgn plays the part of IRS officer AMay Patnaik, his next target in *Raid II* is

Riteish Deshmukh.

The report further stated that it is a performance-driven part, and both actors will indulge in heavy-duty dialogue in *Raid II*.

Interestingly, the film will stay true to the world of *Raid*, but this time, the drama and thrill will be twice as intense as the first part as it takes inspiration from real-life incidents. Therefore, Rajkumar Gupta has taken liberties to make it cinematic for the audience.

Meanwhile, the film kicked off shooting in Mumbai last week and will be extensively filmed in Mumbai, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

*Raid II* is produced by Bhushan Kumar, Kumar Mangat Pathak, Abhishek Pathak, and Krishan Kumar.

## Sonam ready to make foray into OTT landscape

**Mumbai:** Actress Sonam Kapoor, who was last seen in *Blind*, is ready to explore streaming platforms if she is approached with a tentpole film or series.

Sonam said, "For me, being a part of good content and good cinema is all that matters. The platform where it's released is immaterial because the world has changed. I'm excited to lead a project on streaming that bowls people over. I thoroughly love the diversity of content out there."

She shared, "I have always wanted

to make my foray into streaming, provided I'm headlining a tentpole film or a series on a global streaming platform. I have been a binge watcher of the outstanding content that streaming platforms have been creating for years now."

The *Players* actress added, "I believe streaming platforms have pushed the content envelope of our country and have made it more creatively disruptive and dynamic. The bar that streaming content has set globally as well as in India is incredible. Streaming allows you to experiment a lot as an artist. It is a very exciting medium for me. So, I'm all game to make my debut on streaming."

Sonam concluded, "I know my debut on streaming has been a long time coming, and I hope people will really love what I'm going to offer."

### FUN post

#### PEANUTS



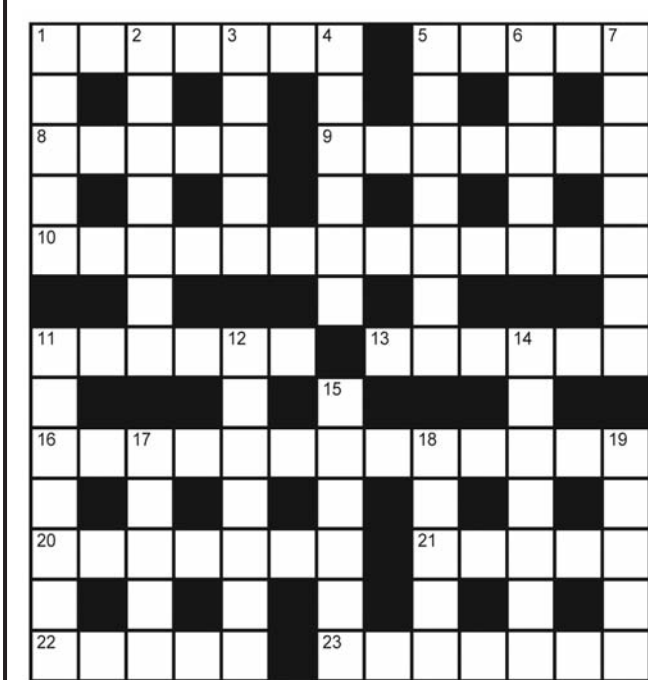
#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### BREVITY



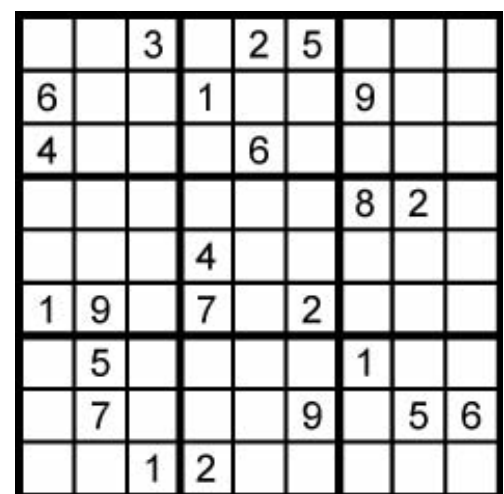
#### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Pampered, like a child
  - 5 Mill output
  - 8 Sharp as a tack
  - 9 A cocktail at times
  - 10 Theatre sections (8,5)
  - 11 Dense
  - 13 Squalid
  - 16 Performing ostentatiously
  - 20 Innocence
  - 21 Gallic goodbye
  - 22 Hair care tools
  - 23 Blueprints
- Down**
- 1 Burn with hot water
  - 2 Sumptuous
  - 3 English university city
  - 4 Fiends
  - 5 Sicilian seaport
  - 6 Place for a barbecue
  - 7 Brought up to date
  - 11 Like some produce
  - 12 Gloom
  - 14 Chauffeur's forte
  - 15 Hung around
  - 17 Widely accepted saying
  - 18 Approaches
  - 19 Sticks

#### 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

## BOOK LOVERS' DELIGHT

Cuttack Mayor Subhash Singh and CMC Commissioner Nikhil Pavan Kalyan inaugurated Dhableswar Gada smart library on the National Youth Day in Cuttack, Friday



# 5T Chairman visits Kalahandi, Sambalpur

Work has been taken up for various projects worth ₹895 crore in Kalahandi and Sambalpur following Pandian's visit to the twin districts in May and July 2023 when he took people's feedback



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 12:** 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian Friday visited the Kalahandi and Sambalpur districts where he reviewed progress of various developmental projects and interacted with students during Nua-O programmes.

In Kalahandi, he interacted with college students during the Nua-O programme organised at the Manikeswari University Ground. He encouraged the students to use the platform to showcase their talents and in the process achieve overall personality development in addition to academic excellence. Citing examples of prominent personalities from the district, he inspired the students to work hard with self-confidence to achieve success in life.

Pandian also reviewed progress in construction of the 650-bed teaching hospital, 100-bed new hospital building at DHH and Cancer Care Centre at Saheed Rendo Majhi Medical College and Hospital, Bhawanipatna being

built at a cost of ₹275 crore. He instructed the officials concerned to complete all remaining works at the earliest while adhering to the 5T principles.

Later, he reviewed progress of development works at major temples- Maa Lankeshwari Temple, Belkhandi Temple, Manikeswari Temple and Jagannath Temple in Rampur, Maa Bhandagarani Temple in Dharmagarh, Budharaja Temple in Ampani being built at a cost of ₹8.75 crore.

In Sambalpur, the 5T Chairman reviewed progress of projects like improvement and restoration of Sason main canal, development of Maa Ghanteswari Temple at Chiplima, historical Leaning Temple of Huma and tourism infrastructure development at Veer Surendra Sai Smrutipitha, Khinda being taken up at a cost of ₹86 crore.

Work has been taken up for various projects worth ₹895 crore in Kalahandi and Sambalpur following Pandian's visit to the districts in May and July 2023 when he took people's feedback.

## MAHANADI WATER DISPUTES

### Cross-examination of witnesses continues

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Jan 12:** The Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal Friday continued the cross-examination of the witness produced by Odisha on the aspect of socio-economic development in Mahanadi basin of the state.

Odisha produced Manoj Panda, former director of Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi, in the tribunal as its first witness on the aspect of socio-economic development in Mahanadi basin. He was questioned by senior counsel AK Ganguly, representing the state of Chhattisgarh, for the second day about the study he has conducted regarding socio-economic development in Mahanadi basin. He will further be cross-examined during the next hearings - February 2 and 3.

During the hearing, Odisha drew the tribunal's attention to discrepancies in the transcription of the November 28 cross-examination, prepared by the state of Chhattisgarh. Odisha submitted that the questions have been rephrased at several points in the transcription. The tribunal, then, heard the audio recording of the entire cross-examination and directed for correction in the transcription. The tribunal has also given approval for real time recording of the witness-examination.

Significantly, Madhya Pradesh has also submitted the list of witnesses following the directions of the tribunal. However, the state of Jharkhand hasn't filed the list of witnesses yet.



QUICK SNAP: Women pose for selfie in front of a stall during Krushi Odisha-2024 at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar, Friday

OP PHOTO

# Opportunities galore for women in agri: CM

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 12:** Mothers have become partners in all areas of development and time has come for them to go further in the field of agriculture, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said. Inaugurating Krushi Odisha 2024 Friday on the theme 'Celebrating Women in Agriculture' in collaboration with the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare department and FICCI, Patnaik said the progress of mothers benefits not only one family but the entire society.

Women empowerment is an important programme of the state government, he said adding through Mission Shakti, mothers have become partners in all areas of development.

"The time has come for them to go further in the field of agri-

## KRUSHI ODISHA 2024



culture," he said. Many programs like Mission Shakti, Millet Mission, and Coffee Mission are providing opportunities for them in the agriculture sector, the Chief Minister said.

He described the contribution of women to the agriculture sector as remarkable and said the women should be encouraged to use the opportunities in the agriculture sector to move forward.

State Agriculture and Farmers

Empowerment Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain said Odisha has transformed from starvation to a food surplus state in the last 22 years.

In 1999-2000, only ₹700 crore was allocated for agriculture in the Budget but now the state government, he said, is preparing a special Agriculture Budget with an allocation of ₹24,000 crore.

During this period, the contribution of the budgetary allocation to agriculture sector in the total Budget has increased from 4 per cent to 10 per cent.

Swain claimed that Odisha's growth has consistently been higher than the national rate due to higher spending. The share of women in agriculture is also more, he claimed.

Department's Principal Secretary Arabinda Padhee said, "Through real empowerment

and involvement of our women farmers, we aim to transform the farming sector in Odisha."

Women and Child Development Minister Basanti Hembram said the women have been able to involve themselves in various sectors, ranging from paddy procurement to fish farming through self-help groups (SHGs). Odisha, she said, has been an inspiration to other states in the field of agriculture.

On the occasion, 27 farmers, including 10 women farmers, were awarded and honoured for their outstanding contribution to agriculture sector.

Around 5,000 farm women, 2,000 women SHGs, and agri-entrepreneurs from different corners of the state are participating in the event that would see felicitation of successful women farmers and SHGs of the state.

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## School student found hanging in classroom

PNN & AGENCIES

**Baripada, Jan 12:** The body of a teenage boy, who used to stay in a hostel, was found hanging in one of the classrooms of his school in Mayurbhanj district Friday, police said.

The incident took place at Saraswati High School in Anlangunja village under Bangiriposhi police limits. The deceased was identified as Biswabhusan Nanda (15), son of Taranisen Nanda of Raihari Hijili village under Bisoi police limits and a student of Class IX at the government high school, said Rojalin Behera, Officer In-Charge of Bangiriposhi police station.

After dinner with other inmates of the hostel Thursday night, the student went to bed. The next morning his body was found hanging inside a classroom.

The body was sent for autopsy this morning. A case is registered and an investigation is underway, police said.

# CM launches 2nd Int'l Craft Summit in Jajpur

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 12:** Noting that Odisha's identity lies in its art and craft, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the second International Craft Summit in Jajpur town on a virtual platform Friday.

Patnaik said Odisha's civilizational journey is intricately woven with the threads of artistic expression.

He added that the skills and craftsmanship of Odisha's talented artisans have left an indelible mark, visible in every nook and cranny of the state. Patnaik said this summit will take the state's reputation to an international level.

He said the government is making sincere efforts to develop the state as a global hotspot for tourists, provide livelihoods and employment opportunities, and make the state attractive for investors.

While welcoming national and international delegates, the CM said the principles of their governance are best explained in the 5T (transformational) Model.

It has reinforced the state's commitment to 'leave no one behind' in the pursuit of equitable and inclusive development, Patnaik said.

Patnaik also underlined that Odisha has some of the best craftsmanship in the country, with the highest number of artisans honoured with national awards, including the Padma awards.

Regarding the Jagannath culture, the Chief Minister said

The skills and craftsmanship of our talented artisans have left an indelible mark, visible in every nook and cranny of our state

NAVEEN PATNAIK | CM



the spiritual Odisha is deeply embedded in the worship of Lord Jagannath.

The Jagannath culture is a narrative of values in respecting all religions and cultures. Apart from being a significant symbol of transformation, this will also be a manifestation of our great artistic heritage, he said.

Highlighting the culture of Jajpur, he said the district's cultural heritage is reflected in its vibrant art forms. The artists of the district have always been ahead of their time in the design and tradition of paintings, architecture, sculpture, and handicrafts, he added.

He said Jajpur is widely con-

sidered to be the ancient capital of Odisha. Along with its existing assets of religious and Buddhist tourism, it is also now growing as a top industrial hub of the country. It has huge potential to be a major tourist hub, he added.

State Rural Development, Skill Development and Technical Education Minister Pritiranjan Gharai said Jajpur is known for its indigenous skills. He said Jajpur is steadily growing as the Tussar Corridor of India.

Handloom, Textile and Handicrafts Minister Rita Sahu said the state government is providing all support, including training facilities, to artisans.

Apart from MLAs of Jajpur, the head of the National Monument Authority (NMA) Professor Kishor Basa, eminent Bollywood actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui, and delegates from various countries attended the programme.

## Rituals kick off for Parikrama opening

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Puri, Jan 12:** Rituals for the grand opening of the Srimandir Parikrama Prakalpa began here Friday with Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb inviting priests for the 'Maha Yajna' which will begin January 15.

At his palace 'Sri Nahar,' Deb invited the priests in the traditional way with betel nuts. This will be followed by rituals 'Ankura Ropana' and 'Ankura Pujana' Saturday and 'Yajna Adhibas' Sunday. January 15, an 'Akhand Deepa' (ever-burning lamp) will be placed at the site, where the three-day yajna will be performed by priests.

The puja rituals will culminate January 17 when CM Naveen Patnaik will walk through the corridor in the afternoon, declaring it open for devotees. A podium is being built at Utterparswa Mutt from where the CM will address the devotees. Performances by cultural troupes and blowing of conch shells will also take place on the occasion.



**FESTIVE SHOPPING:** A couple checks sarees at a local haat in Bangiriposhi of Mayurbhanj district as Makar festival, one of the major festivals of tribals, draws near

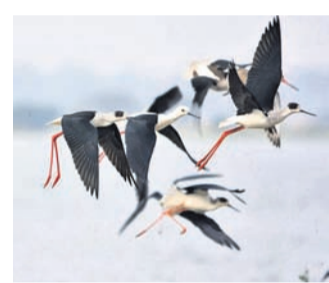
# 3.42L migratory birds spotted during census in Hirakud

WINGED GUESTS FROM 113 SPECIES, INCLUDING 20 NEW ONES, WERE SPOTTED IN THE RAMSAR WETLAND SITE THIS WINTER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sambalpur, Jan 12:** Over 3.42 lakh migratory birds visited Hirakud reservoir in Sambalpur district this winter compared to 3.16 lakh avian guests that turned up last year, officials said.

After conducting a bird census covering an area of 500 sq km, a senior forest official said 3,42,345 birds from 113 species, including



20 new ones, were spotted in the reservoir this winter.

The three most abundant bird species were the tufted duck (52,516), lesser whistling duck (49,259), and red-crested pochard (33,436), said Anshu Pragnyan Das, DFO of the Hirakud Wildlife Division.

The 20 newly sighted species include the glossy ibis, black bittern, green sandpiper, common

snipe, red-rumped swallow, white wagtail, and Siberian stonechat.

The annual waterfowl census for 2024 in the Hirakud reservoir area was conducted by the Hirakud Wildlife Division January 8, involving a total of 78 participants, including 33 birding experts, who surveyed Sambalpur, Bargarh, and Jharsuguda districts.

Each year, thousands of migratory birds from the Caspian Sea, Baikal Lake, Aral Sea, Mongolia, central and south-east Asia, and the Himalayas make Hirakud reservoir their home from November to March.

Last winter, over 3.16 lakh birds from 108 species were observed in the reservoir, while in 2022, more than 2.08 lakh birds from 104 species were sighted.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Pinky Sinha, D/o- Shree Krishna Prasad, resident of C/103, Hemkund Tower, Rudrapur, Bhubaneswar P.O./P.S.- Baliana, Dist.- Khorda, PIN-752101, Odisha declare by this affidavit No. 68AA637762 that now onwards I shall be known as PINKI SINHA for all future purposes.

## LOST

I, Sri Naresh Behera, aged 38 years, S/o Gajendra Behera, At- Dhulipada, P.O.-Tihidi, P.S.-Tihidi, Dist.-Bhadrak. That, the property under Mouza- Saya, Khata No.1025/1079, Plot No. 3317/7458 Ac.0.060 decs stands recorded in my name. That, at the time of purchase of the above property, I have obtained Original link RSD No.10301100961 dtd.23.06.2011 from my vendor Ajay Behera, S/o Gajendra Behera. Lost date: 05.09.2023 In this regard I lodged FIR Copy lost Service Request No.24490050240010, Date of FIR is on 10.01.2024, if any person or concern having any claim and objection over the aforesaid property may contact : Balasore Advocate : Subodhakanta Panigrahi, Mob.9861110353, Sri Naresh Behera, Mob.8971045266 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

## Congress constitutes state poll committee for Odisha

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 12:** The Congress Friday constituted its state election committee for the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in Odisha.

The All India Congress Committee (AICC), in a release signed by KC Venugopal, said the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Sarat Pattanayak would head the state election committee, which will have 18 other members.

Besides, chiefs of all frontal organisations of the party would

be ex-officio members of the committee. Congress Legislature Party leader Narasingha Mishra, former OPCC president Niranjan Patnaik, Saptagiri Shankar Ulaka, Bhakta Charan Das, Bijaya Patnaik and other senior leaders are among the members of the committee.

"Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has approved the proposal for the constitution of the Pradesh Election Committee of Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee with immediate effect," AICC general secretary KC Venugopal said.

# Man deserts wife, newborn boy in hospital

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jajpur, Jan 12:** A woman and her newborn son were allegedly abandoned by her husband and in-laws soon after the childbirth at a government hospital in Jajpur district.

The woman claimed that her husband used to say that he had married someone else also. The man is absconding.

According to officials, Dali Mallick of Ali block in Kendrapara district was admitted to Jajpur district headquarters hospital here by her husband, identified as Chandan Mallick, January 1.

She gave birth to a baby boy two days later.

However, Chandan and his family members allegedly fled leaving Dali and the newborn baby in the hospital due to an earlier family feud.

As Dali was in the hospital bed, she did not know that her family members had run away.

She started searching for her husband and in-laws in the hospital Wednesday and when she failed to find them, she called her husband over the phone, but he did not respond.

"We saw the woman crying at the hospital with her newborn baby. We came to know that

**Child Welfare Committee (CWC) officials said that action will be taken against the man for abandoning his wife and newborn baby**

her husband and in-laws had abandoned her at the hospital. We could only give her some food and console her," said Sarada Das, an attendant in the hospital.

On receiving the information, police reached the hospital and both the mother and the

newborn baby were handed over to the District Child Protection Unit.

"After admitting me to the hospital, my husband and in-laws fled. He often said that he had married another woman and would not accept me," said Dali.

Police said Dali who hails from Jajpur district had tied the knot with Chandan Mallick, who is a resident of neighbouring Kendrapara district in 2021.

The Child Welfare Committee (CWC) officials said that action will be taken against Chandan for neglecting his wife and newborn baby.

# Branded a 'witch', ostracised woman reunited with daughter after 12 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 12:** A woman in Mayurbhanj district, who had to leave her three-year-old daughter at her in-laws' place after being branded a witch, has reunited with her child after a gap of around 12 years.

She found her daughter at a Child Care Institute (CCI) in Baripada after an employee discovered the girl's parentage from among 500 entries almost by chance, an official said Thursday.

The inmates of the CCI celebrated the reunion by clapping and dancing as the mother-daughter duo was shedding tears of joy.

The woman, now 37, currently stays in an ashram in Pudukhery. She contacted the District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) after getting the phone number on the internet.

"She came to Baripada in

search of her daughter. It was really difficult to locate one particular girl among 500 inmates (in 11 CCIs in the district). The girl was only three years old when admitted to the CCI and she could not recall the name of her mother. She used to address her just as Maa," Mayurbhanj DCPO Mamatamaye Biswal told PTI.

As the DCPO's office could not find her daughter initially, she got frustrated and left for Pudukhery.

"Fortunately, one of our staff identified the girl's parentage almost by chance. I called up the mother when she was almost 100 km from Baripada. She returned and saw her daughter after so many years," Biswal said.

It was an emotional scene when the two met last week, said the official.

"They both were smiling as tears rolled down their cheeks.



Everybody present there was crying," Biswal narrated.

The girl later told Biswal, "I have got everything in the world after finding my mother. I do not know what a father is in the life of a person. Thank God that my mother is alive and returned to me."

After the untimely death of her husband and being branded as a witch, the tribal woman boarded a train and somehow reached an ashram in

Pudukhery.

The daughter who remained in the family was neglected and the villagers shifted her to one of the CCIs run by Odisha government's Women and Child Development department in Mayubhanj district.

"Though she tried to find out her daughter during these 12 years, the woman could not get her. She also could not visit her dead husband's village fearing further torture. Finally, she came to us and got back her child," Biswal said.

For now, the girl will continue to stay at the CCI, the DCPO said.

"She has her Class X board examination next year. Her mother is allowed to come and meet the girl. She may take her daughter along with her after completion of her 10th standard examination," Biswal said.

## ₹24 lakh cash seized from traffic inspector

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 12:** A team of Vigilance sleuths has recovered approximately ₹24.24 lakh cash among other valuables, from the possession of an OMVD traffic inspector.

Vigilance sources said Friday, based on reliable information, that traffic inspector Jitendra Kumar Behera of Talcher was intercepted January 11 late night by a team of Odisha Vigilance at Trinath Bazar, Balianta, Bhubaneswar, while travelling in his vehicle.

Behera was travelling from Talcher to Astarang, and cash

worth ₹11,15,470 (suspected ill-gotten cash) was found in his possession. As Behera could not account for it satisfactorily, the amount was recovered from him and seized by the Vigilance sleuths.

Following the interception, a house search was carried out at his rented house at Talcher and his house at Astaranga from a disproportionate asset angle, which is continuing.

During searches so far, cash of ₹3,08,750 and 336 gm gold were recovered from a rented house at Talcher, and ₹10 lakh from a house at Astaranga have been unearthed.

## 2 poachers held from Similipal Tiger Reserve

**Baripada:** A team of Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF) Friday arrested two poachers from the southern division of the Similipal Tiger Reserve. The arrested poachers were identified as Antaryami Naik, 37, a native of Patharakhani village under Kaptipada police limits, and Dillip Naik, 35, of Khadikashol village under Udala police limits in Mayurbhanj district. Two country-made guns, 86 iron balls, 500 gram of explosive powder, matchbox, and other hunting equipment were seized from their possession. Two separate cases have been registered against the accused who were forwarded to court Friday, deputy director of the southern division of the Similipal Tiger Conservation Project, Samrat Gowda, informed Friday.

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# DEITIES DON 25 ATTIRES



Even as the Pilgrim City is all set to welcome dignitaries from the country and abroad who would attend the public dedication of the historic Srimandir Parikrama Prakalpa January 17, efforts have been made to amplify the grandeur of the event with special emphasis on dissemination of information about Jagannath Culture among devotees arriving at the Pilgrim City.

The administration is leaving no stone unturned in creating an ambience so that every guest here soaks in the devotion of Lord Jagannath. Significantly, elaborate arrangements have been made for in-

ago. The Besha preparations carried out on Gangamata Mutt premises have been completed and the idols with 25 adornments are already in display.



stallation of the idols of the holy Trinity at 'Pramod Udayan' on the premises of Jagannath Ballav Mutt. The idols would be decorated with 25 Beshas (adornments) being prepared by eminent artist Basanta Rana (Ila), who, after obtaining permission from the temple administration, had started the work two-and-half months

The Beshas which have been prepared by Rana along with 20 of his assistants, include: Abakasha (Padapa Uttari), Jamalagi, Nabanka, Sadhaa, Radhadamodara, Laxminarayana (Thiakia), Bankachuda, Tribikrama (Dalikia), Godalagi, Padmamukha, Gajaudharana, Chachedi, Badasinghara, Gajanana (Hati

## THREE SHOWSTEALERS

**SUNA BESHA:** The deities adorn Suna Besha or Rajadhiraja Besha (Golden Attire) four times on Ratna Singhasana and once on the chariots. The occasions when the Suna Besha ritual is performed include: Dussehra, Pousha Purnima, Dola Purnima, Kartik Purnima and Ashadha Sukla Ekadashi. During the ritual, the idols of the deities are decked up with an array of gold ornaments.

**NAGARJUNA BESHA:** In years when the 'Panchaka', the last five days of the Kartik month, is observed for six days, the 'Nagarjuna Besha' is observed on the sixth day. The 'Nagarjuna Besha' of the Trinity was last held in 1994 and lakhs of devotees thronged Puri to catch a glimpse of the deities in golden warrior attires, wielding a range of weapons including plough, wheel and mace.

**BADASINGHARA BESHA:** In this ritual, deities are decorated mainly with different types of flowers that earned it the sobriquet 'Puspa Besha'. The deities look attractive in this attire which is donned after Chandanalagi ritual. The idols which are covered with Geetagobinda Khandua are bejewelled with Gabha, Chandrika, Alaka, Tilak, Jhumpa, Nakuasi, Dayana, Adharamala, Karapallaba and Hrudaya Padaka.

Besha), Rajadhiraja (Suna Besha), Banabhoji, Kaliyadalana, Pralambasura Badha, Krushna-Balarama, Bamana, Laxmi-Nrusingha (Adakia), Nagarjuna, Shradha, Raghunatha (Ramabhiseka) and Chandanalagi.

deities' idols with 25 adornments. The idols of Lord Jagannath and Lord Balabhadra of 3-ft height each and that of Subhadra, of 2.5 ft, have been placed on a 4-ft high throne.

A large shed has been erected on Jagannath Ballav Mutt premises for the display of the

## PARIKRAMA SCHEDULE

- January 13:**  
Ankura Pujana (11:00am to 8:00pm)
- January 14:**  
Ankura Pujana, Yajna Adhibasa, Mandala Sthapana, Dhwaja Sthapana and Torana Sthapanadi (10:00am to 8:00pm)
- January 15:**  
Akhanda Deepa Sthapana, Panchakarma, Barana of Brahmanas by Acharya and Mandala Pujana (7:30am to 1:00pm)  
Veda-parayana at four outer gates of Srimandir and Nama-sankirtan on inner Pradikshina Path (7:30am to 6:00pm)  
Vaishnavagni Sanskara, Havan, Aarti, Pushpanjali, Pradikshina (3:00pm to 6:00pm)
- January 16:**  
Surya Puja, Dharitri Puja, Gow Puja, Shalaprabesha, Panchakarma, Mandala Puja, Havan, Aarti, Puspanjali and Pradakshina (07:30am to 6:00pm)  
Veda-parayana at four outer gates of Srimandir, and Nama-sankirtan on inner Pradakshina Path (07:30am to 6:00pm)
- January 17:**  
Surya Puja, Dharitri Puja, Gow Puja, Panchakarma, Vastu Shodhana, Adhibasa and Havan (7:30am to 1:00pm)  
Veda-parayana at four outer gates of Srimandir and Nama-sankirtan on inner Pradakshina Path (7:30am to 6:00pm)  
Prakalpa Lokarpana- Unveiling of plaque by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik (1:15pm to 1:30pm)  
Yajna Poornahuti, Aarti and Pushpanjali by Gajapati Dibyasingha Deb (1:30pm to 2:00pm)  
Nama-sankirtan procession on inner Pradkshina Path (2:00pm to 2:30pm)  
Felicitation ceremony (2:30pm to 3:00pm)

# SPICK & SPAN MANTRA

While the Srimandir Parikrama Prakalpa has resulted in the amplification of the splendour of Srimandir, care has been taken to ensure the seamless disposal of the temple garbage that will add to the convenience of millions of visitors abutting the Meghanada wall on the swanky pedestrian path before darshan of the holy Trinity, or having Mahaprasad at Ananda Bazar.

In keeping with the instructions of 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian to ensure enduring beautification of the Parikrama Marg without compromising on quality, many permanent state-of-the-art features have been added to the historic project.

Among those are two garbage chutes that have been installed to rid the peripheries of the Meghanada wall of garbage problems. Set up at the north and south gates of the shrine, these garbage chutes will prevent any waste



ley) was used to remove soiled banana leaf plates - used for consumption of Mahaprasad at Ananda Bazar - daily puja articles and empty earthen containers dumped near the Meghanada wall at the north and south gates. The stench emanating from mounting garbage filled the air much to the inconvenience of the devotees passing by the wall. It was not only an eyesore, but it also caused air pollution. It was precisely for this reasons that the garbage chutes were set up to preserve the beauty of the corridor while ensuring that the visitors do not carry back any negative impression of their tour to the Holy City.

The nine-metre-high cylindrical garbage chutes of 3-ft diameters each have been installed near the north and south gates on the Parikrama Marg.

Quality Manager, Bhawanipatna Medical College, Prafulla Kumar Sahu, who has been engaged in the installation work, said such garbage chutes are normally used in skyscrapers to carry garbage down. "The chutes used in the Parikrama project are strong and durable," he said.

Sahu said normally garbage is loaded in the chute using a machine. However, in case of Srimandir, the process has been made manual. The garbage will be uploaded in

the chutes by workers in the temple. The garbage will drop on trolleys kept at the outlet of the chutes down and the collected waste would be pulled by tractors for final disposal. Care has been taken to ensure that the Parikrama Marg remains completely free of any garbage spillage.

According to information, the chutes will be fitted with recycling machines in future which will process the garbage and mould them into bundles. This will make the segregation process easy. The chutes will also have access door, brushing device and free cut-off door.

Nevertheless, the installation of the chutes is a revolutionary initiative for seamless garbage disposal for the first time.

Earlier, devotees would go back with both pleasant and bitter memories of Puri after enduring lot of hardships to have a darshan at Srimandir. However, things have changed with the blessings of the Lord. The surroundings of Srimandir have been widened with many attractive features. This is certainly a welcome step

**GURUCHARAN DAS | ASST SECRETARY, FREE TO SPEAK, PURI**

Kings would build temples and ponds in the yore. However, now the government is initiating steps to preserve temples and historic monuments in the state by taking up various developmental works. The development of ponds and infra in the Pilgrim town through the historic Parikrama project will help spread the glory of Lord Jagannath and result in huge inflow of devotees, boosting Puri's economy

**GHANSHYAM MARDARAJ | SOCIAL WORKER, PURI**

from spilling onto the Parikrama Marg through seamless disposal system that will not only ensure hygiene but also make the surroundings free from stench.

Earlier, a Kaibalya Jana (a motorised trol-

## ARPANA RATHS TRAVEL MILES





FOCUS MYANMAR

# JUNTA LOSING POWER



The ultimate defeat of Myanmar's junta shows that autocracies can be brittle and that the path toward democracy can be regained with blood and sacrifice. But completing this transition will require meaningful support from regional powers and the broader international community

PDF units lack experience in government and coalition building. For its part, the NUG is inchoate and has yet to produce a convincing leadership.

Kicking out Min Aung Hlaing and his military cronies is only half the battle. The other—and more important—half is moving from a successful rebellion to a workable power-sharing system requiring significant compromises by all sides. It will not be easy to recapture the spirit of Myanmar's decade-long experiment with democracy led by the reform-minded General Thein Sein and Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, now a tarnished icon.

But it would be a shame if, after winning the civil war, the opposition squandered the peace. Not only would this lead to dashed expectations, but it might also trigger renewed ethnic conflict and a potential breakup of Myanmar into autonomous statelets that could become hotbeds of drug trafficking and criminal activity—a problem for the local population as well as the wider region. Unfortunately, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, divided over how to respond, has been ineffectual.

ASEAN now has a second chance to get back on track by engaging the NUG, the EAOs, and even military elements beyond Min Aung Hlaing and his supporters. The ultimate defeat of Myanmar's junta shows that autocracies can be brittle and that the path toward democracy can be regained with blood and sacrifice. But completing this transition will require meaningful support from regional powers and the broader international community.

The writer, a professor at Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Political Science, is a senior fellow at its Institute of Security and International Studies.

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As autocratic leaders gain influence, if not power, in more countries than proponents of democracy care to count, Myanmar is a remarkable exception: its military junta appears untenable. In fact, Myanmar's people are putting their lives on the line to break the generals' grip on power and reclaim their future.

After nearly a half-century of military dictatorship, starting in 1962, a decade of political liberalization, economic reform, and development progress followed, lasting from 2011 until 2021. But Senior General Min Aung Hlaing seized power from Myanmar's re-elected civilian government on February 1, 2021, triggering a civil war in which young people, ethnic-minority armies, civilian leaders, and a defiant population have been fighting the regime. More recently, resistance forces—waging what they now call a "revolution"—have scored a series of battlefield victories, turning the tide of the conflict.

But it is one thing to defeat Myanmar's military; it is quite another to reconstitute a viable pluralistic state with popular legitimacy in an ethnically fractious country. Moreover, Myanmar's deadly internal conflict could drag on for months as the military makes its last stand around major cities and towns, including the capital of Nay Pyi Taw, relying on air power, armor, and artillery to survive.

The junta appears more vulnerable than ever. The formerly 500,000-strong military currently stands at around 150,000 troops or fewer and is severely overstretched. Widely known as one of the world's most battle-hardened armed forces, having fought for decades against militias raised by autonomy-seeking ethnic minorities, the military picked the wrong target this time. To subdue national protests in the weeks following the coup, government soldiers turned

their guns on their own people, indiscriminately killing hundreds of ordinary Burmese. Popular anger swelled.

The resistance has been largely led by Burmese young people who came of age during a period of openness, improved living standards, and rising expectations. Organized into People's Defense Force (PDF) units nationwide, they initially took up homemade arms and other rudimentary weapons, but later aligned with and received arms and training from ethnic militias, formally known as the Ethnic Armed Organizations. Operating in coordination with the civilian-led National Unity Government (NUG), the EAOs and PDF squads have used guerrilla tactics as well as conventional warfare to attack regime forces. Just a year after the coup, the war had reached a stalemate.

But the determined resistance has increasingly gained the upper hand, as military brutality and outright barbarism provoked a nationwide revolt against the junta, with a vast majority of Myanmar's diverse population taking part. After being attacked on all fronts, the army has been running out of

recruits, reinforcements, and supplies, and faces plummeting morale.

The point of no return was reached just over two months ago, when the Brotherhood Alliance, comprising the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, and the Arakan Army, conducted Operation 1027. Their coordinated offensive in the northern state of Shan, which borders China, seized two dozen towns and hundreds of military outposts. Assisted by other EAOs and resistance columns from the states of Kayah, Chin, Rakhine, and Kachin, and from the Magway and Sagaing regions, this battlefield breakthrough underscored the military's weakness and boosted the confidence of resistance forces. It now seems like only a matter of time before the junta is toppled.

But while the revolution against Myanmar's military dictatorship will likely succeed, the resistance is far from unified. The EAOs are a motley collection of traditional adversaries united mainly by their opposition to central authority, while the young people fighting in the



Thitinan Pongsudhirak

**THE FORMERLY 500,000-STRONG MILITARY CURRENTLY STANDS AT AROUND 150,000 TROOPS OR FEWER AND IS SEVERELY OVERSTRETCHED**

Do not conquer the difficulties; there is more power in a smile than in a sigh

THE MOTHER



## Decoding Reshuffle

The question had arisen after the recent reshuffling of the Railway Board with the appointments of Seema Kumar, Naveen Gulati and Satish Kumar. While these were anticipated, the crucial role of Member Finance was shrouded in uncertainty. Now, the Railway Ministry has dispelled speculation by devising a unique arrangement to formalize the role of the newly appointed Director General (DG) of the National Academy of Indian Railways (NAIR) in Vadodara.

In a new order, Roopa Srinivasan is set to serve as the DG NAIR from the Railway Board in Delhi. Interestingly, Srinivasan will also continue to manage the responsibilities of the post of Member Finance on the Railway Board, a role she has taken on effective this month following the retirement of Anjali Goyal last month.

The order has far-reaching implications, note sources. The complete infrastructure of NAIR has now been placed under the control of the newly appointed Vice Chancellor of Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV) in Vadodara. This infrastructure was previously directly overseen by the DG, NAIR.

Observers have informed DKB that the Ministry's decision not only streamlines the administrative structure but also reflects the adaptability and foresight necessary to steer the railways into a new era. As the dust settles on the recent changes, the Railway Board's ability to navigate complexities as well as its commitment to efficiency and strategic leadership will be tested.

### New Rajasthan Chief Secretary's swift rise

The suspense is over with the appointment of former Union Health Secretary Sudhansh Pant as the new Chief Secretary of Rajasthan, succeeding Usha Sharma. This is Pant's third successive shift within a year, indicating the Centre's strategic placement of a seasoned bureaucrat. Those in the know say that the repatriation of Pant from the Centre to his home cadre state had already indicated that he would be the next Chief Secretary of the state.



BABUDOM BYTES  
Dilip Cherian

Such seemed to be the Centre's urgency to push for Pant that he has superseded six IAS officers to take on the role of Chief Secretary. Not surprisingly, the decision to bring him back to the state, despite other capable officers, has left many babus questioning the Centre's rationale, but quite clearly the Centre hopes that Pant's vast experience will be of immense use to the new chief minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, who is relatively unknown and an untested administrator. His strong credentials and administrative skills positioned him as the Centre's preferred choice for assisting the newbie chief minister to steer towards a pro-people administration, away from a resource and power-centric approach. His journey from being appointed OSD in the Ministry of Shipping in October 2022 to his recent stint as Union Health Secretary has been swift. As he assumes this pivotal role, the expectations are high for Pant to bring about positive changes in the state bureaucracy.

### Fair probe priority: SC halts DGP transfer

The Supreme Court's decision to stay the order of the Himachal Pradesh High Court regarding the transfer of Sanjay Kundu from the position of Director General of Police (DGP) marks a significant development in the ongoing case of alleged harassment against Palampur businessman Nishant Sharma. The Supreme Court has urged the High Court to expedite the disposal of the recall application within two weeks.

The High Court's initial directive to shift Kundu from his position was to prevent any potential influence on the investigation into the harassment allegations. However, the Supreme Court's intervention has temporarily halted this transfer, granting Kundu the liberty to approach the high court for a recall of its earlier order.

In response to the initial order, Kundu has already been removed as DGP, being reassigned as Principal Secretary in the Ayush Department. The High Court order also included the transfer of Kangra SP Shalini Agnihotri to other posts, to prevent any potential influence on the ongoing investigation.

The businessman, Nishant Sharma, who raised the concerns prompting the high court's intervention, had cited the need for protection from powerful individuals. As the legal proceedings unfold, the apex court's decision to stay the transfer order aims to ensure a fair and impartial probe. Meanwhile, the state government had already announced Satwant Atwal Trivedi, a 1996-batch IPS officer, as the officiating DGP, which decision now will have to wait until the Kundu case is resolved.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

## WISDOM CORNER

- A man must commit a crime at least once in his life-time. Only then will his virtue be recognized. **GIRISH KARNAD**
- Everything we are is at every moment alive in us. **ARTHUR MILLER**
- Love, friendship and respect do not unite people as much as a common hatred for something. **ANTON CHEKHOV**

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1808:** Salmon P. Chase, secretary of the Treasury (1861-64) in Abraham Lincoln's wartime cabinet and sixth chief justice of the United States Supreme Court (1864-73), was born.
- 1832:** Horatio Alger, one of the most popular American authors in the last 30 years of the 19th century and perhaps the most socially influential American writer of his generation, was born. He wrote young adult novels about impoverished boys and their rise from humble backgrounds to middle-class security and comfort through good works
- 1884:** Russian-born American singer Sophie Tucker, "the Last of the Red-Hot Mamas," was born. Known for her powerful delivery of comical and risqué songs, she was one of the most popular entertainers in the U.S. during the first half of the 20th century.
- 1968:** American singer and songwriter Johnny Cash recorded the album Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison in front of an audience of some 2,000 inmates at California's Folsom Prison.

## LOL

### A frog calls a psychic

Recently, the Psychic Hotline and Psychic Friends Network have launched hotlines for frogs. Here is the story of one frog and his discussing with his psychic. A frog telephones the Psychic Hotline and is told, "You are going to meet a

beautiful young girl who will want to know everything about you." The frog says, "This is great! Will I meet her at a party, or what?" "No," says the psychic. "Next semester in her biology class."



## SPECTRUM CONNECTIVITY

# National Rail Plan: Wider expansion crucial

Amid the decade when there is a cry the world over to lower emissions, it is but necessary that more attention to be given to railways. Its recent plans have evoked much interest. As there is a crisis in getting a confirmed ticket in the place and class of one's choice, there is an imperative need for wider expansion of the railway network in India.

It was heartening to hear that there has been a decision to run 3000 additional mail, express and passenger trains in the next four-five years to tackle the huge problem of wait-listed passengers who cannot undertake their journeys. Obviously, it is expected that the expansion would be in the routes where there is lot of congestion, mainly in the metros of Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata, Hyderabad and various tourist centres.

The second major development follows from the first, i.e. to increase the number of trains, there are plans to augment track capacity. Union Railway Minister, Ashwini Vaishnaw, outlined the transformative impact of seven multi-tracking projects valued at ₹32,500 crore, which received Cabinet approval. These would propel the Railways into a new

era of efficiency and capacity expansion, with combined length expected to add 2,339 km to the existing rail network.

The envisioned outcomes are not limited to mere expansion but extend to relieving congestion and enhancing operational efficiency across 35 districts, spanning states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. Apart from the infrastructure enhancements, these projects are anticipated to augment freight capacity significantly, accommodating approximately 200 million tonnes of additional freight traffic annually.

Though in tune with the National Rail Plan (NRP) for India, 2030, overall capacities are being augmented, both in passenger and freight traffic, there is need to think about affordability of all sections of the population.

Under the Rajdhani pricing system, the base fare jumps by 10% for every 10% seats booked, with a ceiling of 50% hike above the base fare. Unless the dynamic fare structure is changed, travel by faster train will remain high and beyond the capacity of a large section of people.

It can be admitted that a major milestone in the journey of the railways is the development of automatic electronic block signalling systems at railway stations. The automatic signalling system has been installed in 530 kms during 2022-23, as compared to 218 kms during 2021-22, registering an increase of over 143 per cent. This takes a lot of care in increasing line capacity and safety measures on tracks.

In building the much-needed infrastructure, huge financial requirements are necessary for which resource generation needs to be found. In this regard, upgradation of stations and giving space to the private sector has been a major initiative. With over 400 redeveloped railway stations, these spaces are now mostly congestion-free with non-conflicting entry and exit points. As per figures available, Andhra Pradesh has 72 stations for transformation, Bihar 86 and Gujarat 87 railway stations for upgradation among other states. Another source of generating revenue is upgrading the retiring rooms, with deluxe facilities, and increasing their number so that both people on official work as also tourists can use them.

Though there could be a rise

in passenger and freight fares, which has already happened, there is a need to look into amenities, which are much below standards. The unclean toilets of mail/express trains, especially in the sleeper coaches, not to speak of the unreserved ones, have to be improved with proper maintenance to ensure adequate supply of water during the full course of the journey.

A more disturbing development is the occurrence of frequent accidents, which even after a lot of progress in automatic signalling has not been curbed. Special efforts need to be made in ensuring that accidents do not happen, and the unmanned tracks cannot be allowed to continue.

Finally, modernisation and expansion of railways in the country is imperative and have the potential to boost economic growth and bring about social integration. The priority given to railways has been a right decision of the ruling dispensation and it is expected that the network, performance, speed, passenger facilities and safety measures would be taken care of in the coming years.

©INFRA



Dr. Oishee Mukherjee

**THE NEED FOR FASTER TRAINS CAN'T BE DOUBTED BUT FARE STRUCTURE MUST BE SUCH THAT IT'S AFFORDABLE, AT LEAST TO THE MIDDLE-INCOME SECTIONS**

## Boost to economy

Sir, The Union minister of communication and railways Ashwini Vaishnaw said that the first Made in India semiconductor chip will be brought out this year. Heavy surge in sales of electronic devices during the pandemic and the indefinite closure of giant chip companies during the lockdown had in fact given rise to crisis of scarcity of semiconductors in the global market. These chips are in fact the 'life' of millions of products in our daily life, ranging from automobiles to fridges and washing machines to computers and smartphones and so on. The insufficiency of these chips had slowed down the production of all these devices and machines. Though chip companies around the world have increased their production, it is not quite enough. The government's decision came at a time when automakers and tech companies were grappling with a semi-conductor shortage. The manufacturing of chips in our own country will make the nation self-reliant and sufficient in chip manufacturing. Several sectors that are now lagging behind because of the shortage of these chips will get an opportunity to thrive once again, thereby helping to boost our economy and enhance our GDP. Besides, these companies can also attract global buyers, as Indian products now have an image of their own in the global market.

M Pradyu, KANNUR

## A rare case of violence

Sir, It is spine-chilling that Suchana Seth, a successful CEO of an AI start-up company in Bangalore, has allegedly strangled her four-year-old son to death in a hotel room in Goa due to reasons of feud with her estranged husband. In cases of severe mental illness, instances of such violence are rare, but they can occur. But, in this case, the mother might have had certain predispositions or a particular temperament that made her impulsive. Even then, it is inconceivable that she can be so heartless and cruel to the extent of killing her own child. Such a crime in a mature society is beyond imagination, horrifying, and totally contradicts everything positive in the sense of maternal love and protection. By reportedly murdering her son for egotistical reasons, the name and fame that the accused mother earned in her profession over the years have gone with the wind.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

## 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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# Delhi shivers as minimum temp plunges to 3.9°C

**INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE**  
**New Delhi, Jan 12:** Delhi-NCR continues to reel under cold wave conditions with the minimum temperature hovering around 3.9 degrees Celsius on Friday, and the dense fog caused disruptions in travel.  
 The India Meteorological Department (IMD) reported zero visibility at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, attributing it to very dense fog conditions.  
 Due to dense fog, 23 trains bound for Delhi experienced delays and a few of them were late by six hours. The adverse weather conditions affected travel not only in Delhi but also in various states.  
 Residents of Delhi woke up



to a cold and foggy morning, with the minimum temperature hovering around 3.9 degrees Celsius, three notches below the season's average. The IMD forecasts a maxi-

**Due to dense fog, 23 trains bound for Delhi experienced delays and a few of them were late by six hours. The adverse weather conditions affected travel not only in Delhi but also in various states**

mum temperature of approximately 18 degrees Celsius for the day.  
 Additionally, the overall Air Quality Index (AQI) in Delhi was reported to be in the 'very poor' category.  
 At the Anand Vihar area,

PM2.5 levels remained in the 'very poor' category standing at 367 and PM10 reached 240 or 'poor'.  
 The Air Quality Index (AQI) between zero and 50 is considered 'good'; 51 and 100 'satisfactory'; 101 and 200 'moderate'; 201 and 300 'poor'; 301 and 400 'very poor'; and 401 and 500 'severe'.  
 The Dwarka Sector 8 also witnessed PM2.5 levels at 310, the 'very poor' category while the PM10 was at 139, falling under the 'moderate' category, again.  
 Looking ahead, the IMD anticipates a maximum temperature of 19-20 degrees Celsius and a minimum temperature ranging from 5 to 7 degrees Celsius throughout the upcoming week.

# HP govt hails SC's decision on Shimla Development Plan



**INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE**

**Shimla, Jan 12:** Welcoming the apex court's decision of setting aside the National Green Tribunal's orders on the Shimla Planning Area and other two subsequent orders restraining implementation of the Shimla Development Plan, an official Thursday said it was due to the concerted efforts of the state government that the case was effectively pleaded against the blanket ban on carrying out development activities and constructions in Shimla.  
 Principal Advisor, Media, to the Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister, Naresh Chauhan said the Shimla Development Plan was notified by the present government in March 2023 with a new blueprint for construction activities in Shimla Planning Areas wherein it was argued that the NGT has exceeded its jurisdiction and ambit.  
 The Supreme Court ordered transfer of a pending case in the Himachal Pradesh High Court that challenged the NGT's recent decision of quashing the controversial Shimla Development Plan, 2041 to be heard in the apex court.  
 "Today the judgment of the Supreme Court has given much needed relief to the people of Shimla to carry out development activities which were in limbo for the past many years," Chauhan said.  
 He credited the victory to efforts of Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu, who hired experienced lawyers for arguing the case. He also lauded the court's decision which

stated that the exercise of power for finalising the development plan rests with the state and the NGT can't issue direction and encroach upon the statutory functions of the state.  
 Meanwhile, former Urban Development and Town and Country Planning Minister Suresh Bhardwaj congratulated the people and hailed the Supreme Court for clearing Shimla Development Plan.  
 The BJP leader said the Shimla Development Plan was prepared by the previous government.  
 "We had designed this plan for Shimla. I am glad that the Supreme Court has cleared it and now the plan will help Shimla town's development in a better way.  
 "It will help in planned development, besides dealing with various issues," he added.  
 The building guidelines of the whole Shimla are divided mainly into core area and non-core area. The proposed building bye-laws for core area were suggested to be two floors, habitable attic and parking, whereas for non-core area, three floors, habitable attic and parking were suggested.  
 It was also emphasised the more relaxations in terms of building height, number of floors and land-use would be given along the main roads, including national and state highways.  
 After seeing the progress of the GIS-based Development Plan for Shimla Planning Area, the former minister suggested to go ahead with the development plan and notify it before January 25. After notification, the draft will be put forward for the public notification, he added.

# Over 1.40L overage vehicles scrapped in Delhi

**THE DELHI GOVERNMENT'S ELECTRIC VEHICLE POLICY AIMED AT RAISING THE SHARE OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES IN DELHI TO 25 PER CENT BY 2024 WAS NOTIFIED IN AUGUST 2020**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
**New Delhi, Jan 12:** Over 1.40 lakh overage vehicles were scrapped in the financial year 2022-23 as against 4,923 deregistered vehicles in the 2021-22 fiscal, according to the Statistical Handbook-2023.  
 The handbook containing data on socio-economic parameters of the national capital was released by the Delhi government's Economic and Statistics department.  
 The Delhi government's Electric Vehicle Policy aimed at raising the share of electric vehicles in Delhi to 25 per cent by 2024 was notified in August 2020.  
 Scrapping incentives are also provided under this policy. The policy lapsed last year but has been granted multiple extensions. It was recently granted an extension till March 31 since the Electric Vehicle Policy 2.0 is still in the works.  
 According to the document, 4,923 vehicles were scrapped in the 2021-22 financial year while 1,40,342 vehicles were scrapped



**Scrapping incentives are also provided under this policy. The policy lapsed last year but has been granted multiple extensions**  
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**According to the document, 4,923 vehicles were scrapped in the 2021-22 financial year while 1,40,342 vehicles were scrapped in 2022-23**

in 2022-23. As many as 54,95,838 (54.95 lakh) overage vehicles were deregistered in the 2022-23 fiscal while 48,77,646 (48.77 lakh) overage vehicles were deregistered in the 2021-22 fiscal.  
 The document said that 6,23,034 deregistered vehicles took the no objection certificate (NOC) from the Transport department to be shifted to other states in 2022-23 while 83,240 vehicles did the same in 2021-22. In 2018, the Supreme Court banned diesel and petrol vehicles older than 10 and 15 years, respectively, in Delhi. The apex court had said that the vehicles plying in violation of the order would be impounded.  
 The document said that there were only two electric buses in Delhi in 2021-22 but were not plying on the roads while the number surged to 300 in the next fiscal, with 202 being on the roads. The number of passengers travelling in the buses rose from 5702.20 lakh in 2021-22 to 9132.90 lakh in 2022-23.  
 In 2021-22, 95 buses were involved in accidents as against 118 in 2022-23. Out of 95 buses, 20 were involved in fatal accidents, while four were involved in major and 71 in minor accidents in 2021-22. In the next fiscal, 36 buses were involved in fatal accidents, while 10 were involved in fatal ones and 72 in minor ones.  
 The data showed that 55 cluster buses met with accidents in 2022-23 while 29 buses were involved in fatal ones, 15 in major ones and 11 in minor ones.

# UNA SAW 57 TB DEATHS IN 2023

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

**Una (HP), Jan 12:** Himachal Pradesh's Una recorded 819 tuberculosis (TB) cases in 2023 and 57 patients died, a senior official said Friday.  
 During a meeting of the TB eradication programme here, Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Mahinder Pal Gurjar asked officials to promote TB testing on a large scale so that patients can be identified and treated in time, a statement issued here said.  
 In 2023, 819 tuberculosis cases were registered in Una district and 57 patients died, he said.  
 He asked officials to organise awareness camps at various places in the district to identify TB patients.  
 He also directed health department officials to pay special attention to bringing down the death rate due to the disease in Una.  
 Gurjar said that out of 245 panchayats in the district, 88 have been identified as tuberculosis-free. He also called on the residents of Una to contribute to making Una tuberculosis-free.

# HP to engage guest teachers to enhance educational standards

**INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE**

**Shimla, Jan 12:** The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet, presided over by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, Friday gave in-principle approval to engage annual-period based guest teachers in the Departments of Elementary and Higher Education to enhance the educational standards.  
 The Cabinet also decided to fill 40 posts of Junior Engineers (Civil) and 25 posts of Junior Technicians (Work Inspectors) in the Public Works Department, 20 posts of Work Inspectors in the Jal Shakti Vibhag, seven posts of different categories in Revenue Training Institute in Jogindernagar and five posts in the Sainik Welfare Department.  
 It also approved to upgrade 50 bedded Civil Hospital in Sujapur in Hamirpur district to 100 bedded along with creation and filling 35 posts of different categories.  
 The Cabinet decided to increase the marriageable age of girls from 18 years to 21 years and carry out necessary amendments in the respective Acts and rules.  
 It also decided to give its nod to sign a memorandum of understanding for consultancy services with the National Dairy Development Board for establishment of automated 1.50 lakh litre per day (LLDP), expandable up to 3 LLPD, milk processing plant with value added products at Dhagwar in Kangra district.  
 It also gave approval to the draft of Mukhyamantri Vidhya Avam Ekal Nari Awas Yojna - 2023 to provide ₹1.50 lakh financial assistance for the construction of the house of widows and single women.



Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan takes the salute during his visit to NCC Republic Day Parade 2024 camp at Delhi Cantt. in New Delhi

# Delhi govt launches 'Sugamya Sahayak' scheme

*According to the Delhi government, the objectives of 'Sugamya Sahayak' scheme includes facilitating mobility and capability, delivering durable and standardised aids and appliances to help the PwBDs overcome physical environment barriers*



Anand said Thursday.  
 The minister said this scheme will enhance mobility and capability of the Persons with Benchmark Disabilities (PwBDs) and will create a society where all citizens can thrive.  
 "The Delhi government strives to create a society where mobility knows no bounds and every individual, regardless of abilities, can access opportunities to flourish," he added.  
 To avail the benefits under

this scheme, the applicants must have a disability of 40 per cent or more, as per the Disability Certificate/UDID Card issued by an authorised medical authority under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.  
 "The applicants must be the residents of the NCT of Delhi. The annual income limit of the family from all sources should not be more than Rs 8 lakh. The applicant should not be obtaining the same item or should not have obtained the same item from any other scheme of any other state government/ UT government or administration or Central government or any other source during the last three years," a statement from the Delhi government said.  
 For the children below 12 years of age, no limit would be applicable for appliances that are fabricated.



**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
**New Delhi, Jan 12:** The Delhi government launched the 'Sugamya Sahayak' scheme to empower the persons with benchmark disabilities by providing them aids and appliances, Social Welfare Minister Raaj Kumar

## GANDHI SHILP BAZAR

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**Note:** The Advt.No.DST/04/2022-Esst-III for filling up one post of Scientist 'G' in DST on deputation (ISTC) basis published in the employment news edition dated 04.02.2023, stands cancelled. Only fresh applications against this advertisement i.e. Advt.No.DST/05/2023-Esst. III will be considered for selection to the post.  
**Sd/- (Vinod Kumar Sharma)**  
**Under Secretary to the Govt. of India**  
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Indian Coast Guard (ICG) ships fire water cannons during a joint exercise between ICG and Japan Coast Guard in the Bay of Bengal



A Palestinian man waits to fill his cylinders with cooking gas amid shortage, as the conflict between Israel and Hamas continues in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip



A woman plucks marigold from a field in Nadia



Indian Air Force's 'Surya Kiran' aerobatic team performs during rehearsals at Marine Drive in Mumbai



Red Bull KTM Factory's Toby Price in action during stage 5 of the Dakar Rally in Saudi Arabia



Sikh devotees perform 'Gatka' martial art during a 'Nagar Kirtan' procession ahead of Makar Sankranti in Dehradun



Folk artistes perform during the first day of the 3-day camel festival in Bikaner



Monkeys and pigeons eat food given by devotees near Pashupatinath temple in Kathmandu, Nepal

REUTERS/ PTI PHOTOS



# national



Today, emotional issues are being misused politically by diverting attention from the real issues, which is a betrayal of the people of the country  
RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

## AAP RS CANDIDATES ELECTED UNOPPOSED

The AAP's Rajya Sabha nominees in Delhi -- Sanjay Singh, ND Gupta and Swati Maliwal -- have been elected unopposed, officials said Friday. No candidate from any other party filed nomination for the elections



### of the day quote

Unemployment is increasing. It was 5.5 per cent in 2014-15 and now it has gone up to 10.5 per cent. Youths are worried that they don't have a future. Shouldn't we have a scheme like Yuva Nidhi? We must. That's why our party, our government, started this programme  
SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

Be in it healthcare indicators or manpower for the pharmaceutical sector, Assam is in line with the vision of the Prime Minister and we are committed to making our contribution to the development of the country  
HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

The true face of 'the mother of democracy', where once elected representatives of the people from all parties, religions, backgrounds & parts of J&K legislated on matters of great importance, now actors & extras use it as a set for TV dramas  
OMAR ABDULLAH | NATIONAL CONFERENCE VICE PRESIDENT

## ED resumes raids in Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 12: The ED resumed its raids Friday and searched the residences of state Fire and Emergency Services Minister Sujit Bose, TMC MLA Tapas Roy and another TMC leader in connection with the alleged irregularities in civic body recruitments.

The ED raids of Friday are the first since the assault of ED officers during a raid at the residence of a TMC leader at Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas district just a week ago. The Enforcement Directorate officers initially faced resistance when attempting to enter Bose's residence and gained access after about 40 minutes, sources in the agency said.

"We are carrying a search warrant but even after showing it, we were initially not allowed to enter," an ED officer said. In a departure from the previous instances in the state, a substantial contingent of central police personnel cordoned off Bose's residence and prevented any gathering of party supporters near it. The central forces were equipped with additional protective gear, including helmets and automatic guns.

The sleuths of the central agency searched two residences of Bose in Lake Town area of North 24 Parganas district. Additionally, searches were conducted at Roy's B B Ganguly Street residence in central Kolkata and Subodh Chakraborty's residence at Birati, also in North 24 Parganas. Forces were dispatched to the residences of the three leaders by respective local police stations too. They cordoned off the



CRPF personnel stand guard during a raid by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on the residence of TMC MLA Tapas Roy in connection with its probe into the alleged irregularities in recruitments in civic bodies, in Kolkata, Friday

areas around the houses.

The heightened security response followed the violent attack on ED officers which left three of them injured during an attempt to raid the home of TMC leader Sheikh Shahjahan at Sandeshkhali in connection with the ration distribution scam. "We are conducting search operations at the residences of three TMC leaders in connection with the recruitments in civic bodies. We are also talking to the leaders," an ED spokesperson said.

The TMC has denounced the coordinated searches at the homes of the party leaders terming them as "vendetta politics and a desperate manoeuvre" by BJP before the Lok Sabha polls this year. The charge was dismissed as "baseless" by the West Bengal BJP.

Senior TMC leader Kunal Ghosh asserted, "This is an attempt to divert the public and

media's attention from various burning issues. The BJP appears to be sensing growing public discontent and is using every means at its disposal to change the narrative. This is a clear example of vendetta politics".

TMC leader and West Bengal Industry Minister Shashi Panja hit out at the Centre alleging that central investigation agencies are being used as a tool to "harass" leaders of opposition parties. "It is crystal clear that the Centre is using the central investigating agencies as a tool for this," she said.

Dismissing the charges, BJP leader Rahul Sinha said, "Whenever the ED or CBI conduct raids TMC leaders' cry foul and accuse them of being politically motivated. The reality is that the TMC is deeply mired in corruption with nearly every leader facing corruption allegations."

## PM starts special religious exercise

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 12: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday began a special 11-day religious exercise preceding the consecration ceremony at the Ram temple in Ayodhya January 22, as he spoke about experiencing feelings like never before in his life.

"I am emotional. I am overwhelmed with emotions. For the first time in life, I am experiencing such feelings," he said, noting that the dream which many generations carried in their hearts like a resolve will be witnessed by him as it is being realised.

The inner journey he is undergoing can only be felt and not expressed, Modi said in an audio message, adding that he is unable to articulate with words the depth, expanse and intensity of the feelings.

The Prime Minister said it is a sacred occasion for all Indians and Lord Ram's devotees and that everyone is waiting for the historic moment on January 22 when the idol of Ram will be consecrated at what is believed by followers as his birthplace. He said it is his good fortune that he will be a witness to this auspicious occasion.

Modi said God has chosen him as an instrument to represent all Indians during the 'Pran Pratishtha' exercise and that he is undertaking the 11-day special religious exercise keeping this in mind. "I seek blessing from people," he said on X. It is difficult to articulate one's sentiments at this time but he is making an attempt, he said. Modi said scriptures lay down strict and arduous guidelines for people to follow for the 'Pran Pratishtha'.

## INDIA'S LONGEST SEA BRIDGE OPENS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 12: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday inaugurated Atal Setu, the longest sea bridge in the country connecting Mumbai and its satellite township Navi Mumbai, and sounded the bugle for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, saying the fulfillment of this project was his guarantee.

The PM, who was on a day-long visit to Maharashtra, inaugurated the ₹17,840 crore Atal Bihari Vajpayee Sewri-Nhava Sheva Atal Setu, the longest bridge as well as the longest sea bridge in the country connecting south Mumbai with Nhava-Sheva in Navi Mumbai.

The six-lane trans-harbour bridge is 21.8 km long with a 16.5 km long sea-link.

The foundation stone of the bridge had been laid by Prime Minister Modi in December 2016. "When I came here on December

24, 2016 to lay the foundation stone of this sea bridge, which faced a lot of roadblocks, I had resolved that the country would undergo a change. Completion of the sea bridge despite the COVID-19 pandemic is very crucial and important," Modi said at a public meeting at Panvel in neighbouring Raigad district.

"People were fed up with how mega projects were stalled and they had given up hope wondering if big projects will ever be completed. But it was Modi's guarantee that the country will change," he said.

"Before 2014, mega scams used to be the topic of discussion. But 10 years down the line, mega projects getting completed is the talk," he said. "Dreams are coming true 10 years later. The sea bridge is a reflection of Viksit Bharat...It shows India's infrastructural prowess and march towards being a developed nation," he said.

### SHORT TAKES

#### Army vehicles attacked in J&K

Jammu: Suspected terrorists fired upon a convoy of vehicles carrying security personnel in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir Friday evening, prompting security forces to launch a search operation, officials said. No security personnel were injured in the attack, they said. "At around 1800h today, a Security Forces convoy of vehicles was fired upon by suspected terrorists from a jungle near Krishna Ghati, Poonch sector. No casualties to own troops. Joint search operations by Indian Army and JKP (Jammu and Kashmir Police) are in progress," the White Night Corps of the Army posted on X. The vehicles that came under attack were carrying security personnel back to the camp, the officials said.

#### New twist: Woman alleges gangrape

Haveri/Bangalore: The attack on an interfaith couple in Haveri district has taken a new twist with the woman alleging gangrape and also a political colour with opposition BJP slamming the Siddaramaiah government as a "sleeping sarkar." The incident "is not the question of moral policing", Home Minister G Parameshwara said. Further, the National Commission for Women (NCW) asked the Karnataka police chief to lodge an FIR invoking the relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) against the men who allegedly assaulted the couple. Seven men who allegedly barged into a hotel room and attacked the couple at Hangal in Haveri district were charged with gangrape after the 26-year-old victim complained that she was sexually assaulted by them, police said.

#### Congress releases 'Nyay anthem'

New Delhi: The Congress Friday said the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra is being organised by the party to raise voice against the "injustice" of the last 10 years, as it released a "Nyay anthem" with the tagline "Saho Mat, Daro Mat (do not suffer, do not be scared)". The "anthem" was shared on all the social media handles of the party with a video that features protesting women wrestlers, glimpses from Rahul Gandhi's Kanyakumari-to-Kashmir Bharat Jodo Yatra and the Congress leader's interactions with farmers and labourers.

## AI to pick best marching contingent at Army Day Parade

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 12: The best marching contingent in this year's Army Day Parade in Lucknow will be selected using artificial intelligence, a senior officer said Friday.

Briefing reporters at his office, Army Day Parade Commander Major General Salil Seth said, "Artificial Intelligence is being used for the first time to identify the best marching contingent. As you know all the marching contingents do drills and do drills correctly."

"There is a correct pattern of doing the drills -- raising your hands to a certain level, raising your legs to a certain level, doing your movement with the weapon within a certain timeframe. We are capturing the individual movement with a camera and then the computer software using the AI will give marks for each and every movement. This will also be supervised by humans. We have done two to three practices," he added.

The Surya Command said in a post on X on Thursday, "#ArmyDay2024. Witness the



synergy of tradition & innovation at the #ArmyDayParade2024, as cutting edge #AI joins the ranks, elevating precision & coordination of marching contingents to new levels. #IndianArmy... Relentlessly marching towards a new Era!"

Major Seth, who is the General Officer Commanding of Madhya UP Sub Area, Lucknow, said the Indian Army is celebrating its 76th Army Day at Lucknow January 15. "The event is being conducted out of the national capital for the second time as part of the Government of India's initiative to take major events away from the national capital region to different parts of the country. This will lead to greater visibility for these events and larger involvement of the local citizens," he added.

## 6 women judges axed by MP govt; SC takes note

THE COURT ISSUED NOTICE TO THE AXED JUDICIAL OFFICERS, ASKING THEM TO PLACE ON RECORD THEIR CONTENTIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 12: The Supreme Court Friday took cognisance of termination of the services of six women civil judges by the Madhya Pradesh government for their unsatisfactory performance and issued notice to the registrar general of the high court seeking a response.

The court also issued notice to the axed judicial officers, asking them to place on record their contentions.

A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and Sanjay Karol noted in the order that Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud had taken cognisance of the matter which was registered as writ petition.

the Madhya Pradesh High Court against their dismissal and their petition is pending there.

He said the three former judicial officers had filed a writ petition in the apex court last year but later withdrew it. Justice Karol said since the matter is pending with the high court, the first issue which needs to be decided is whether the apex court should entertain it.

Senior advocate PS Patwalia, appearing for one of the six officers who has filed an impleadment application said since the top court has taken cognisance of the matter, a notice needs to be issued to the registrar general of the high court.

Agrawal submitted when the writ petition before the apex court was withdrawn, the three aggrieved officers were not aware that the court had already taken cognisance of the matter.

He said notice should also be issued to them in order to understand their case and bring the material they have on record.

According to the office report of the case uploaded on the apex court website, the application by three former Civil Judges, class-II (Junior Division) from Madhya Pradesh State Judicial Service was addressed to the apex court.

They said the termination happened despite the fact that quantitative assessment of their work could not be done on account of Covid outbreak.

"It is further submitted that the officers along with three other female officers were appointed in Judicial Services in the state of Madhya Pradesh. They are alleged to be terminated from service primarily on account of disposal not being up to the standards set," the office report said.



Advocate Gaurav Agarwal, who has been appointed as amicus curiae to assist the court in the matter, said three of the six former judges who approached the top court last year after their services were terminated, have also moved

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. A-1190 DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, NAYAGARH e-Procurement Notice BID IDENTIFICATION NO-SEMIDN-09/2023-24 Letter No. 70 Dt. 09.01.2024

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, WATCO PROJECT DIVISION Email: gmprojectsbp@gmail.com, Tel.No.0663-2411911 e-Procurement Notice No. C-2353: Bid Identification No.27/Project/WATCO/SBP/2023-24, Dated.08.01.2024

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. C-2338 OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION, BHAWANIPATNA Paramanandpur, Railway Station Road, Bhawanipatna Dist.- Kalahandi, PIN-766002; e-mail: eepbhpt@gmail.com NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement Identification No. EEPH-BHPT-26 of 2023-24/Dt.04.01.2024 e-Procurement Notice

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. O-2218 e-Procurement Notice E-mail: rv\_balliguda@yahoo.com Bid Identification No. Online Tender/18/SERW Balliguda/2023-24 NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION, BALLIGUDA No. O-2217 rv\_balliguda@yahoo.com Government of Odisha e-Procurement Notice Bid Identification No. Online Tender/17/SERWD BLG/2023-24 Letter No. 283/RWDBLG Date: 12.01.2024



# international

## of the day quote

We want peace and stability through adherence to international resolutions  
**NAJIB MIKATI** | LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER

Russia could resort to the use of nuclear weapons if its launchers are attacked by Western missiles  
**DMITRY MEDVEDEV** | DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE RUSSIAN SECURITY COUNCIL

Many agreements have been reached on the border (with India) except for Kalapani, Limpiyadhura, Lipulek, and Susta  
**N P SAUD** | MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF NEPAL

## SHORT TAKES

### Taiwan prepares to elect President

Taipei: Taiwan is preparing to elect a president and legislature Saturday in what many see as a test of control with China, which claims the self-governing island republic as its own territory to be unified with force if necessary. The presidential race is tight, and both China and Taiwan's key ally, the US, are weighing in on political and economic issues they hope will sway voters. The election pits Vice President Lai Ching-te, representing the Democratic Progressive Party, against Hou Yu-ih of the main opposition Nationalist Party, and former mayor of the capital Taipei, Ko Wen-je of the Taiwan People's Party.

### Myanmar military agrees to ceasefire

Beijing: Myanmar's military has reached a ceasefire agreement with an alliance of ethnic minority guerrilla groups it has been battling in the country's northeast, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said Friday. Myanmar's military government confirmed the development. The agreement was brokered at talks mediated by China on Wednesday and Thursday in Kunming, a Chinese provincial capital about 400 kilometers (250 miles) from the border with Myanmar, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said. "China hopes the relevant parties in Myanmar can conscientiously implement the agreement, exercise maximum restraint toward each other and solve the issues through dialogue and consultations," she said at a daily briefing in Beijing.

# US intensifies oversight of Boeing

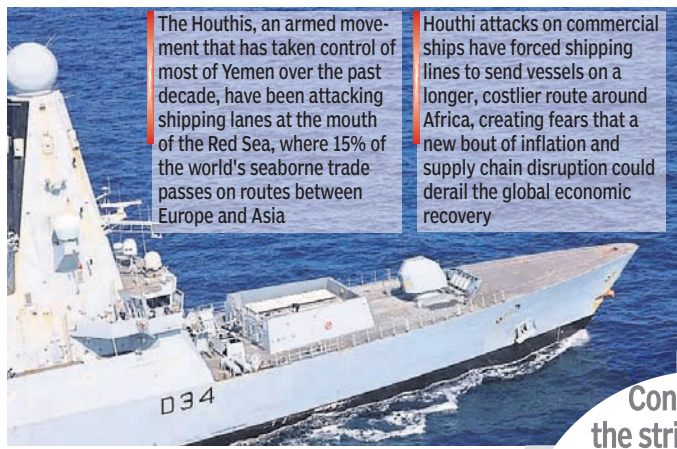
The agency's move comes just a day after it announced an investigation into whether Boeing failed to make sure a fuselage panel that blew off was safe and manufactured to meet the design that regulators approved

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Jan 12: The Federal Aviation Administration will begin auditing Boeing's aircraft production and increase oversight of the troubled manufacturer after a panel blew off a jetliner in midflight last week, the last in a string of mishaps for its marquee aircraft. The FAA said Friday that it would audit Boeing's 737 Max 9 jetliner production line, as well as the company's parts suppliers "to evaluate Boeing's compliance with its approved quality procedures." The FAA statement said it also would look into safety risks from the agency delegating inspection authority to company employees, and will consider moving those functions to an independent third party. "It is time to re-examine the delegation of authority and

# US, UK launch strikes against Houthis

US Air Forces Central Command said the strikes focused on the Houthi's command and control nodes, munition depots, launching systems, production facilities and air defense radar systems



An RAF Typhoon aircraft is pictured at RAF Akrotiri following its return after striking military targets in Yemen during the US-led coalition operation

Red Sea. And he said they only made the move after attempts at diplomatic negotiations and careful deliberation. The strikes marked the first US military response to what has been a persistent campaign of drone and missile attacks on commercial ships since the start of the Israel-Hamas war. And the coordinated military assault

comes just a week after the White House and a host of partner nations issued a final warning to the Houthis to cease the attacks or face potential military action. The officials described the strikes on condition of anonymity to

discuss military operations. Members of Congress were briefed earlier Thursday on the strike plans.

The warning appeared to have had at least some short-lived impact, as attacks stopped for several days.

On Tuesday, however, the Houthi rebels fired their largest-ever barrage of drones and missiles targeting shipping in the Red Sea, with US and British ships and American fighter jets responding by shooting down 18 drones, two cruise missiles and an anti-ship missile.

And on Thursday, the Houthis fired an anti-ship ballistic missile into the Gulf of Aden, which was seen by a commercial ship but did not hit the ship. In a separate statement, UK Prime Minister Rishi

Sunak said the Royal Air Force carried out targeted strikes against military facilities used by the Houthis. The Defense Ministry said four fighter jets based in Cyprus took part in the strikes.

Noting the militants have carried out a series of dangerous attacks on shipping, he added, "This cannot stand." He said the UK took "limited, necessary and proportionate action in self-defense, alongside the United States with non-operational support from the Netherlands, Canada and Bahrain against targets tied to these attacks, to degrade Houthi military capabilities and protect global shipping."

The governments of Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand and South Korea joined the US and UK in issuing a statement saying that while the aim is to de-escalate tensions and restore stability in the Red Sea, the allies won't hesitate to defend lives and protect commerce in the critical waterway.

The Houthis, an armed movement that has taken control of most of Yemen over the past decade, have been attacking shipping lanes at the mouth of the Red Sea, where 15% of the world's seaborne trade passes on routes between Europe and Asia

Houthi attacks on commercial ships have forced shipping lines to send vessels on a longer, costlier route around Africa, creating fears that a new bout of inflation and supply chain disruption could derail the global economic recovery

Condemning the strikes, Hamas said in a statement that the US and UK governments will bear responsibility for their attack's impacts on the security of the region

# Israel defends itself at the UN's top court

AGENCIES

The Hague (Netherlands), Jan 12: Accused of committing genocide against Palestinians, Israel insisted at the United Nations' highest court Friday that its war in Gaza was a legitimate defense of its people and said that it was Hamas militants who were guilty of genocide.

Israel described the allegations levelled by South Africa as hypocritical and said that one of the biggest cases ever to come before an international court reflected a world turned upside down. Israeli leaders defend their air and ground offensive in Gaza as a legitimate response to Hamas' October 7 attack, when militants stormed through Israeli communities, killed some 1,200 people and took around 250 hostages.

Israeli legal advisor Tal Becker told a packed auditorium at the ornate Palace of Peace in The Hague that the country is fighting a "war it did not start and did not want." "In these circum-

stances, there can hardly be a charge more false and more malevolent than the allegation against Israel of genocide," he added, noting that the horrible suffering of civilians in war was not enough to level that charge.

South African lawyers asked the court Thursday to order an immediate halt to Israeli military operations in the besieged coastal territory that is home to 2.3 million Palestinians. A decision on that request will probably take weeks, and the full case is likely to last years — and it's unclear if Israel would follow any court orders. On Friday, Israel focused on the brutality of the October 7 attacks, presenting chilling video and audio to a hushed audience to highlight what happened that day.

"They tortured children in front of parents and parents in front of children, burned people, including infants alive, and systematically raped and mutilated scores of women, men and children," Becker said.



Hearings focus on request for emergency measures

Hearings focus on request for emergency measures  
Case brought over Israel's devastating war in Gaza  
Israel says genocide accusations are baseless



People kneel as soldiers carry the coffin of Ukrainian serviceman and famous Ukrainian poet Maksym Kryvtsov, who was killed in a battle with the Russian troops, during the funeral ceremony in St. Michael Cathedral in Kyiv, Ukraine

# PANNUN CASE: Nikhil Gupta's request denied

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, Jan 12: A US judge has denied a request for defence materials by Indian national Nikhil Gupta, charged by federal prosecutors in a murder-for-hire plot to kill a Khalistani separatist on American soil.

United States District Judge Victor Marrero, in an order Thursday, denied a motion filed by Gupta's attorney seeking discovery material in the case. Gupta, 52, was charged by federal prosecutors here in an

dictment unsealed in November last year with working with an Indian government employee in the foiled plot to kill Khalistani separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, who holds dual US and Canadian citizenships, on American soil.

Gupta was arrested in Prague, the Czech Republic on June 30, 2023 and is being held there currently. The US government is seeking his extradition to America. In his order, Marrero said that the Court is persuaded by the government's argument

that Gupta has no right to discovery at this time.

He cited Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 16.1, which provides that no later than 14 days after the arraignment, "the attorney for the government and the defendant's attorney must confer and try to agree on a timetable and procedures for pretrial disclosure under Rule 16." Marrero said in his order that Gupta has failed to identify any authority suggesting that a defendant has a right to discovery before arraignment.

# Japan launches spy satellite to monitor North Korean missiles



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tokyo, Jan 12: Japan successfully launched a rocket carrying a government intelligence-gathering satellite Friday on a mission to watch movements at military sites in North Korea and to improve responses to natural disasters.

The H2A rocket, launched by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd., lifted off from the Tanegashima Space Center in southwestern Japan, carrying the optical satellite as part of Tokyo's reconnaissance effort to rapidly build up its military capability.

The government's Cabinet Satellite Intelligence Center and MHI declared the launch a success, saying that the Optical-8 satellite was successfully separated from the rocket and entered its planned orbit.

The optical satellite can capture detailed images, though its capability is limited in severe weather. Japan began the intelligence-gathering satellite program after a North Korean missile flew over Japan in 1998. Japan aims to set up a network of 10 satellites, including those carrying radars that can operate at night or in severe weather, to spot and provide early warning for possible missile launches.

Applauding the successful launch, Hiroki Yasuda, a senior official at the Cabinet Satellite Intelligence Center, told reporters that the Optical-8 is crucial to Japan's information-gathering capability. "With the security environment surrounding Japan becoming increasingly severe and uncertain and growing natural disaster risks, intelligence satellites are crucial for foreign affairs, defense and security as well as disaster response purposes," Yasuda said. "We need to steadily reinforce our intelligence capability," Yasuda added.

# Rishi Sunak makes surprise visit to Kyiv



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Jan 12: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak Friday travelled to the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv on a surprise visit after unveiling GBP 2.5 billion for 2024-25 in military aid to the country locked in conflict with Russia, an increase of GBP 200 million on the previous two years.

Sunak met President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to sign a historic UK-Ukraine Agreement on Security Cooperation, intended as the first step in developing what Downing Street described as an "unshakeable 100-year partnership" with Ukraine. The pact commits the UK to consult with Ukraine in the event it is ever attacked by Russia again, and to provide "swift and sustained" assistance for their defence. "I am here today with one message: the UK will also not falter. We will stand with Ukraine, in their darkest hours and in the better times to come," said Sunak in Kyiv.

"The UK is already one of Ukraine's closest partners, because we recognise their security is our security. Today we are going further increasing our military aid, delivering thousands of cutting-edge drones, and signing a historic new security agreement to provide Ukraine with the assurances it needs for the long term," he added.

## SNIPPETS

### Pak political parties demand timely polls

Islamabad: A week after Pakistan's Senate passed a resolution to postpone the February 8 general elections, a similar resolution was submitted to the upper house of the Parliament while two prominent parties unanimously filed a requisition for the Senate session for timely polls. Moving the resolution seeking a three-month delay, independent Senator Hidayat Ullah Friday called for postponing the February 8 general elections given the "security challenges" given the increase in the terrorist attacks in different parts of the country.

### Arctic blast to drop temperatures in US

Washington: A brutal Arctic blast in the US is expected to plunge temperatures to as low as 20 to 30 degrees below zero in the northern Plains Friday and Saturday night. As a result, more than 15 million people in the central US are under wind chill alerts where frostbite could occur in as little as 10 minutes on exposed skin, reports CNN. The cold will spread south and east across the country and eventually envelop Texas and other parts of the South by the weekend, lasting into the middle of next week. Afternoon high temperatures Friday will likely fail to reach zero degrees across much of Montana and North Dakota.

### 2 PIOs to contest Mayor of London election

London: The election for the Mayor of London is scheduled for May 2 and the battleground of candidates challenging the incumbent, Sadiq Khan, is gradually expanding with two Indian-origin entrepreneurs in the race as independent candidates. While businessman Tarun Gulati, 63, had launched his mayoral campaign during a visit to India at the end of last year, property entrepreneur Shyam Bhatia, 62, is the latest entrant to the contest making up nearly a dozen candidates. Gulati's electionist tagline is "trust and growth" and Bhatia has gone for "ambassador of hope".



One of two plugs on an Alaska Airlines jetliner blew off shortly after the plane took off from Portland, Oregon, a week ago, leaving a hole in the plane

The cabin lost pressure and the plane was forced to return to Portland to make an emergency landing. No serious injuries were reported

assess any associated safety risks," FAA Administrator Mike Whitaker said in the statement. "The grounding of the 737-9 and the multiple production-related issues identified in recent years require us to look at every option to reduce risk." The agency also will increase

monitoring of 737-Max incidents that happen while the plane is in use. Boeing said Thursday it would cooperate with the FAA investigation, which is focusing on plugs used to fill spots for extra doors when those exits are not required for safety reasons on Boeing 737 Max 9 jetliners.

The FAA investigation is focusing on plugs used to fill spots for extra doors when those exits are not required for safety reasons on Boeing 737 Max 9 jetliners. After the incident, the FAA grounded all Max 9s equipped with the plugs, forcing Alaska and United to cut flights. The aircraft remain grounded while the National Transportation Safety Board and the FAA continue their investigation.

After the plane lost pressure, the FAA was told of other problems on the 737-9. Alaska and United reported finding loose bolts on door plugs that they inspected in some of their other Max 9 jets.

NTSB investigators said this week they have not been able to find four bolts that are used to help secure the 63-pound door plug. They are not sure whether the bolts were there before the plane took off.



## of the day quote

Our share of renewable energy in the total energy has increased substantially. Now it's over 42% of India's total energy capacity and that is significant. We are committed to achieve 50% of the capacity by 2030 and we are on path to achieve that and we hope to do that much earlier than 2030

**BHUPINDER SINGH BHALLA** | SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

India aim to reduce the cost of green hydrogen production to \$1 per kg by 2030, down from the current rate of \$4.5 per kg

**AMITABH KANT** | CHIEF EXECUTIVE, NITI AAYOG

The import duty exemption was available to the industry for the last 30 years but was withdrawn two years back and this has made the availability of international leather difficult for the industry

**SANJAY LEEKHA** | CHAIRMAN, CLE

## RESULTS CORNER

### Wipro profit falls

**New Delhi:** IT company Wipro Friday posted an 11.74 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit to ₹2,694.2 crore in the third quarter ended December 31, 2023. The company posted a profit of ₹3,052.9 crore in the year-ago period. The consolidated revenue from operations of Wipro also fell 4.4 per cent to ₹22,205.1 crore during the December quarter as against ₹23,229 crore a year ago. The company's IT Services segment revenue dropped 4.5 per cent on a year-over-year basis to ₹22,150.8 crore during the reported quarter from ₹23,196 crore during the same period of 2022. Wipro said that it expects revenue from the IT Services business segment to be in the range of \$2,615 million (around ₹21,845 crore) to \$2,669 million (about ₹22,296 crore) in March 2024 quarter.

### HCL Tech shines

**New Delhi:** IT company HCL Tech reported a 6.2 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at ₹4,350 crore, highest ever on a quarterly basis, in the third quarter ended December 31. The company had posted a net profit of ₹4,096 crore in the same period a year ago. HCL Tech said in a regulatory filing. The consolidated revenue of HCL Tech grew 6.5 per cent to ₹28,446 crore during the reported quarter, from ₹26,700 crore in the December 2022 quarter. The services revenue of HCL Tech crossed ₹1 lakh crore on run rate basis during the quarter under review. The employee count at the company increased by 1.11 per cent to 2,24,756, with addition of 3,818 freshers, during the reported quarter from 2,22,270 in December 2022 quarter.

### HDFC Life net up

**New Delhi:** HDFC Life Friday reported a 16 per cent increase in net profit to ₹365 crore in the third quarter ended December. The private sector insurer's profit stood at ₹315 crore in the year-ago period, HDFC Life said in a regulatory filing. Total income increased to ₹26,694 crore in the latest December quarter from ₹19,693 crore in October-December 2022. However, the company's solvency ratio declined to 190 per cent from 209 per cent as December 31, 2022. The regulatory requirement is 150 per cent. For the nine months period ended December, the life insurer posted a profit of ₹1,157 crore as against ₹1,001 crore in the corresponding period a year ago.



As long as you (direct sellers) are right, we are with you. But if money circulation is involved, subscription is not explained, then the government will interfere. You cannot take the government for a ride

**ROHIT KUMAR SINGH** | CONSUMER AFFAIRS SECRETARY

## STOCKS SHINE

# D-St at new peak

SHARP IT STOCKS RALLY LIFTS MARKETS TO NEW LIFETIME HIGH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Jan 12:** Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty surged over 1 per cent to hit their fresh all-time highs Friday, driven by a stellar rally in IT stocks after TCS and Infosys reported better-than-expected financial results.

Besides, a strengthening rupee and hectic buying on tech, realty and oil counters amid a mixed trend in global markets further bolstered sentiment, traders said.

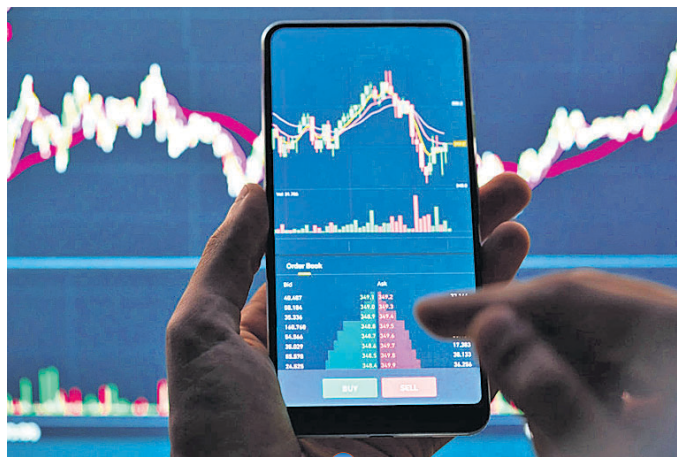
The 30-share BSE Sensex zoomed 847.27 points or 1.18 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 72,568.45. During the day, it jumped 999.78 points or 1.39 per cent to reach a new intra-day record of 72,720.96.

A total of 2,112 stocks advanced, while 1,742 declined and 88 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The Nifty climbed 247.35 points or 0.75 per cent to settle at a lifetime closing high of 21,894.55. During the day, it rallied 281.05 points or 1.29 per cent to reach its fresh intra-day record peak of 21,928.25.

On a weekly basis, the BSE benchmark jumped 542.3 points or 0.75 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 183.75 points or 0.84 per cent.

"Indian markets soared to new heights in a powerful rally, driven by IT heavyweights. Green shoots of recovery in the IT sector on the back of an improved outlook for BFSI in FY25 positively influenced market sentiments. The robust performance of PSU banking stocks is underscored by the inherent synergy between their loan portfolios and the prevailing business cycle. Noteworthy is the fact that this upward surge remained resilient amid mixed global cues on account of higher-than-expected US inflation and positive job data, which tempered expecta-



### STELLAR RALLY

SENSEX ZOOMS 1.18% TO SETTLE AT 72,568.45

NIFTY CLIMBS 1.14% TO CLOSE AT 21,894.55

ON WEEKLY BASIS, SENSEX JUMPED 0.75% WHILE NIFTY CLIMBED 0.84%

Nifty ended at record levels and extended the winning streak for the fourth consecutive session on January 12

**DEEPAK JASANI** | HEAD OF RETAIL RESEARCH, HDFC SECURITIES

### Mcop of BSE-listed firms at new height

Investors' wealth surged ₹6.88 lakh crore in four days of market rally, where the Sensex reached its lifetime high of 72,720.96 Friday, taking the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies to a record peak of ₹373.29 lakh crore. In four days, the BSE benchmark has jumped 1,213.23 points or 1.70 per cent. During this time, investors' wealth went up by ₹6,88,711.19 crore to a record ₹3,73,29,676.27 crore.

tions for an imminent rate cut by the US Fed," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Infosys jumped nearly 8 per cent after the company's December quarter earnings came in line with market expectations. "Infosys reported broadly in-line performance for the quarter. The revenue growth was above estimates; while EBIT margin was in line with expectation," according to a report by YES Securities.

A rally in Infosys also fueled optimism in other IT stocks. Tata Consultancy Services

climbed nearly 4 per cent after the largest software exporter reported an 8.2 per cent growth in net income for the December quarter at ₹11,735 crore, driven by a massive growth in the home market that offset to a large extent the impact of a 3 per cent de-growth in the US market.

The other prominent gainers were Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies, Wipro, State Bank of India and Larsen & Toubro, rising up to 4.73 per cent.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹865 crore Thursday, according to exchange data.

## SBI'S GREEN ₹ SCHEME

India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) Friday launched a green rupee term-deposit scheme with an aim to finance environment-friendly projects. The bank said the scheme is open to all individuals including non-resident Indians and offers investors the flexibility to choose from three distinct tenors: 1,111 days, 1,777 days, and 2,222 days



## Forex kitty drops sharply from near 22-month highs

REUTERS

**Mumbai, Jan 12:** India's foreign exchange reserves which had seen a seven-week winning streak, stood at \$617.30 billion as of January 5, easing from near 22-month highs, data from the central bank showed Friday.

The reserves witnessed the steepest decline in nearly five months, falling \$5.9 billion for the reported week, following a cumulative increase of \$32.9 billion in the preceding seven weeks.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) intervenes in the foreign exchange market to curb excess volatility in the rupee.

Changes in foreign currency assets include the impact of the RBI's intervention as well as the appreciation or depreciation of foreign assets held in the reserves.

## Indian Oil to open 300 ethanol fuel stations

REUTERS

**New Delhi, Jan 12:** Indian Oil Corp, the country's top refiner, will open 300 ethanol fuel stations, federal road transport minister Nitin Gadkari said Friday.

"My demand of opening of ethanol pumps is accepted by the petroleum minister," Gadkari said on the sidelines of a sugar conference in the western city of Pune. "Indian Oil has taken a decision to start 300 ethanol pumps in the country."

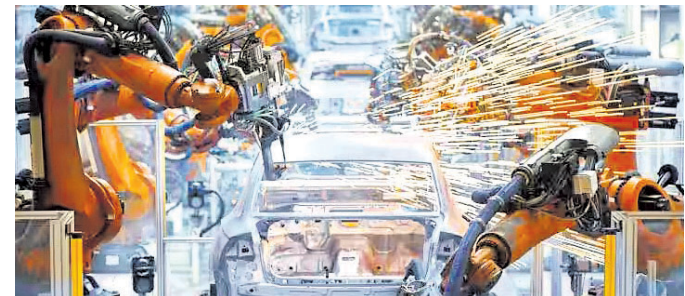
India, the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer, is keen to cut its carbon footprint to meet its 2070 net-zero carbon goal.

India's trade department has backed lowering taxes on hybrid vehicles to help the transition to cleaner energy sources, following demands by Japanese carmakers, Reuters has reported.

## 8-MONTH LOW

# Slow manufacturing drags Nov IIP growth

Industrial production growth decelerates to 2.4% in Nov



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 12:** India's industrial production growth decelerated to an 8-month low of 2.4 per cent in November, mainly due to poor showing by the manufacturing sector, according to the official data released on Friday.

The factory output growth measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) was 7.6 per cent in November 2022.

The previous low of IIP growth was recorded at 1.9 per cent growth in March 2023. The IIP growth at 2.4 per cent in November is the lowest so far in the current fiscal.

During April-November 2023-24, the IIP growth works out to be 6.4 per cent, up from 5.6 per cent in the corresponding period a year ago.

The IIP for October 2023 was revised to 11.6 per cent from provisional estimates of 11.7 released last month.

"India's Index of Industrial Production grows by 2.4 per cent in November 2023," an official statement said.

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

since March 2020.

As per the IIP data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the manufacturing sector's output growth decelerated to 1.2 per cent in November 2023 against 6.7 per cent a year ago.

The power generation growth also slowed to 5.8 per cent in November 2023 compared to 12.7 per cent growth in the year-ago period.

Mining output growth came down to 6.8 per cent in the month under review from 9.7 per cent growth a year ago.

As per use-based classification, the capital goods segment contracted 1.1 per cent in November this year compared to a growth of 20.7 per cent in the year-ago month.

Consumer durables output during the month declined by 5.4 per cent against 5 per cent growth a year ago.

Consumer non-durable goods output contracted by 3.6 per cent compared to a 10 per cent expansion a year earlier.

Infrastructure/construction goods reported a marginal growth of 1.5 per cent against a 14.3 per cent expansion.

The data also showed that the output of primary goods logged 8.4 per cent growth in the month compared to 4.8 per cent in the year-ago period.

## TOUGH TIMES

### BlackRock cuts Byju's valuation by 95% to \$1bn

**Mumbai:** BlackRock has yet again cut the value of its holding in Byju's, slashing the implied valuation of the Indian education tech startup to \$1 billion from \$22 billion mark set in early 2022, TechCrunch reported Friday, citing disclosures made by the asset manager. BlackRock, which owns less than 1% of Byju's, declined to comment. Tech investor Prosus NV valued Byju's at under \$3 billion in November last year after BlackRock cut its valuation to about \$8.4 billion in May, the report said. Amid a string of setbacks, Byju's received a notice from Enforcement Directorate (ED) in late November and is expected to pay a fine for alleged violations of foreign exchange laws.



### S&P downgrades Vedanta to 'selective default'



**New Delhi:** S&P Global Ratings has downgraded debt-laden Vedanta Resources Ltd to 'selective default' after the mining conglomerate concluded a deal with creditors to extend the maturities of its three dollar bonds. "We view Vedanta Resources' just concluded liability management exercise, which involved three of its US dollar-denominated bonds, as a distressed transaction," the rating agency said in a statement. The junk-rated Vedanta had last week stated that its bondholders have approved extension of the maturities of \$3.2 billion of bonds maturing in 2024 and 2025.

# SUVs boost PV sales to record heights

SUV DEMAND PUSH PASSENGER VEHICLE WHOLESALAS PAST 40 LAKH MILESTONE IN 2023

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 12:** Passenger vehicle wholesales in India breached the 40 lakh mark in a year for the first time in 2023, riding on the back of robust demand for utility vehicles, industry body SIAM said Friday.

As per the latest data issued by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), the overall passenger vehicle despatches from companies to dealers stood at 41,01,600 units, up 8 per cent from 37,92,444 units in the 2022 calendar year.

Utility vehicle sales rose to 23,53,605 units last year, a jump of 22.4 per cent from 19,22,805 units in 2022.

Similarly, van despatches increased to 1,46,122 units in 2023 as against 1,32,468 units in 2022.

Passenger car wholesales, however, witnessed a dip of 8 per cent to 16,01,873 units over 17,37,171 units in 2022.

In the October-December quar-

ter this year, the passenger vehicle wholesales stood at 10,12,285 units, up 8 per cent from 9,34,955 units in the year-ago period.

Last year, two-wheeler despatches rose to 1,70,75,160 units as compared to 1,56,47,973 units in 2022, an in-



crease of 9 per cent. Commercial vehicle despatches grew to 9,78,385 units last year as against 9,33,396 units in 2022. Similarly, total three-wheeler wholesales jumped to 6,80,550 units from 4,18,510 units in 2022 calendar year.

Sales across segments rose to 2,28,36,604 units last year over 2,07,92,824 units in 2022, a rise of 10 per cent.

Commenting on the industry

The auto industry is optimistic that the growth momentum would continue in the year 2024 as well

**VINOD AGGARWAL** | PRESIDENT, SIAM

performance, SIAM President Vinod Aggarwal said that 2023 has turned out to be reasonably satisfactory for the automobile sector. Passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles and two-wheelers have posted single-digit growth, while three-wheelers have made a very good recovery, he noted.

Aggarwal noted that utility vehicle sales were now ac-

counting for 62 per cent of the overall sales in the passenger vehicle segment.

Commenting on the October-December quarter sales, SIAM Director General Rajesh Menon said the passenger vehicle and three-wheelers segments posted their highest third-quarter sales ever. "Passenger vehicles even crossed the 4 million mark for the first time in a calendar year," he added.

For December, domestic passenger vehicle wholesales grew by 4 per cent to 2,86,390 units last month. Despatches of passenger vehicles (PVs) from manufacturers to dealers were 2,75,352 units in December 2022.

Two-wheeler domestic wholesales stood at 12,11,966 units last month as against 10,45,052 units in December 2022, a growth of 16 per cent.

Similarly, three-wheeler wholesales were higher at 50,537 units last month as compared to 38,693 units in December 2022.

# Edible oil imports down 16% in Dec

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 12:** India's edible oil imports declined 16 per cent annually in December to 13.07 lakh tonne due to lower shipments of crude and refined palm oils, according to industry data released Friday.

Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) data showed imports of edible oils fell to 13,07,686 tonne in December last year from 15,55,780 tonne in the year-ago period.

In the edible oil category, crude palm oil imports decreased to 6,20,020 tonne from 8,43,849 tonne, while (Refined Bleached Deodorised) RBD Palmolein's inward shipments slipped marginally to 2,51,667 tonne from 2,56,398 tonne.

However, imports of crude sunflower oil increased to 2,60,850 tonne from 1,94,009 tonne during



the period under review.

Non-edible oil inward shipments fell to 4,000 tonne in December last year from 10,349 tonne in the same month of the previous year.

SEA said imports of vegetable oils (edible oils and non-edible oils) in December 2023 fell 16 per cent to 1,311,686 tonne from 15,66,129 tonne in December 2022. The oil marketing year runs

from November to October.

During November-December period of last year, the total import of vegetable oils declined 21 per cent to 24,72,276 tonne as compared to 31,11,669 tonne in the corresponding period of the preceding year.

Imports of edible oils declined to 24,55,778 tonne from 30,84,540 tonne, while imports of non-edible oils dipped to 16,498 tonne

from 27,129 tonne.

During November-December 2023, SEA data showed that the share of refined oils (RBD Palmolein) has increased to 17 per cent from 15 per cent while crude oils' share declined to 83 per cent from 85 per cent as compared to the same period of 2022.

In the first two months of 2023-24 oil marketing year, palm oil imports decreased to 17,63,677 tonne from 22,50,924 tonne.

Soft oil imports declined to 6,92,101 tonne from 8,33,616 tonne.

Indonesia and Malaysia are the major suppliers of RBD Palmolein and Crude Palm Oil (CPO) to India.

During November-December, Indonesia was a major supplier of CPO (716,558 tonne) and RBD Palmolein (385,394 tonne).

Imports of CPO from Malaysia stood at 446,335 tonne while RBD Palmolein at 37,342 tonne.

# India may clock 6.9-7.2% GDP growth in FY24, says Deloitte

REUTERS

**New Delhi, Jan 12:** India is expected to clock a GDP growth in the range of 6.9-7.2 per cent in the current financial year on the back of improving economic fundamentals, Deloitte India said in an update to its quarterly outlook.

As per the first advance estimates of national income released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the Indian economy is estimated to grow by 7.3 per cent in the 2023-24 fiscal, against 7.2 per cent a year ago, mainly due to a good show by mining & quarrying, manufacturing and certain segments of services sectors.

Deloitte India's recent economic outlook report said there is an underlying momentum that is building up in the Indian economy, as seen in the improving economic fundamentals.

India's current account deficit (CAD) was at 1.9 per cent of GDP in 2022-23 and is expected to be



further lower in 2023-24, it said.

At present inflation stands at 5 per cent which is albeit high as per the reserve Bank of India's target range, but much lower than what it used to be a decade back, it added.

"Improving economic fundamentals have buoyed our outlook and we expect India to grow between 6.9 per cent and 7.2 per cent over FY2023-24 in our baseline scenario, followed by 6.4 per cent and 6.7 per cent over the next year. And, while the global economic scenario remains modest and will impact the Indian economy, the country will be able to navigate uncertainties better than the rest of the world," said Rumki Majumdar, Economist, Deloitte India.



SHORT TAKES

Nagal in main draw of Australian Open

Melbourne: India's Sumit Nagal entered the singles main draw of the Australian Open here Friday defeating Slovakia's Alex Molcan 6-4, 6-4 in a match of the Qualifiers which lasted for over two hours. Nagal won the match after his opponent double faulted at 30-40 in the 10th game of the second set. He will now face Kazakhstan's World No. 31 Alexander Bublik in the first round. This is Nagal's second main draw appearance at the Australian Open, the first having come in 2021. In 2019 and 2020, Nagal had also made it to the US Open main draw. In fact, he took a set off Roger Federer in a first round match in 2019.

Jurel surprise pick in Indian Test team

New Delhi: The selectors stuck to the tried and tested names Friday while announcing the Indian team for the first two Tests against England with wicketkeeper-batsman Dhruv Jurel being the lone new face. Rohit Sharma will lead the 16-man side while Jasprit Bumrah will be his deputy. Senior pacer Mohammed Shami was not named in the squad as he is still recovering from injury. The 22-year-old Jurel was a part of the India A squad that played two matches against their South African counterparts in December last year.

Bapinder, Dipali emerge champs

Bhubaneswar: G Bapinder of AG West Bengal and Dipali Gupta of AG Bihar won the individual men's and women's singles titles at the IA & AD East Zone badminton championships which was recently hosted at the Railway Indoor Stadium here. In the men's final Bapinder defeated Vidya Sagar Salam of AG Manipur while in the women's summit clash Dipali defeated P Nishita Varma respectively. In the men's team event AG, Odisha were runners-up with AG West Bengal emerging champions. In the closing ceremony Manoj Sharma, general manager of East Coast Railway was present as chief guest along with other dignitaries.

Season's 1st final for Rohan, Ebden

Adelaide: Indian tennis star Rohan Bopanna and his Australian partner Matthew Ebden advanced to the final of the Adelaide International tennis tournament in their first outing of the season here Friday. Seeded second in the ATP tournament, Bopanna-Ebden duo beat the pair of Gonzalo Escobar (Ecuador) and Aleksandr Nedovyesov (Ukraine) 6-4, 6-4 in the semifinal match that lasted one hour 12 minutes.

MIXED FORTUNES FOR INDIA AS ASHWINI, TANISHA LOSE

Satwik-Chirag in semis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kuala Lumpur, Jan 12: Star Indian shuttlers Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty reached their second successive semifinals after humbling China's Ren Xiang Yu and He Ji Ting in straight games at the Malaysia Open Super 1000 badminton tournament here Friday. The World No. 2 Indian pair looked in control during the rallies and were also proactive at the net to eke out a dominating 21-11, 21-8 win over World No. 32 Yu and Ting in just 35 minutes.

Ashwini Ponnappa and Tanisha Crasto however, suffered a 15-21, 13-21 loss to Japan's Rin Iwanaga and Kie Nakanishi in the women's doubles quarterfinals. Ponnappa and Crasto had created a flutter Thursday by beating twice World Champions Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara. However, they couldn't sustain the same level against the combination of Iwanaga and Nakanishi and went down in just 39 minutes.

This was the Indian pair's second loss to the World No. 15 Japanese duo, having suffered a narrow defeat in the finals of the Syed Modi International Super 300 in Lucknow last month.



Satwiksairaj Rankireddy (with headband) and Chirag Shetty

Satwik and Chirag, who had a sensational season in 2023 with six titles, produced a near-perfect game as they were lightning in the exchanges. They inserted pace in the rallies and also mixed things well to make it a one-sided affair.

The Chinese pair, who had played a close straight game match against the Indians at China Masters last year, looked clueless as Satwik and Chirag dished out a masterclass to com-

pletely dominate the opening game. The Indians were 7-0 up in a flash, leaving Yu and Ting to do the catching up act. Satwik and Chirag were 11-2 at the break and quickly closed out the first game.

The Indians continued the momentum after the change of ends, leading 11-4 at the interval. A return from Chirag gave the Indians 12 match points and they converted it in the second chance.

SA U-19 captain removed for pro-Israel comments

AGENCIES

Johannesburg, Jan 12: Cricket South Africa (CSA) said Friday that it has relieved David Teeger of the captaincy of the under-19 squad for his pro-Israel comments. The decision to remove Teeger from captaincy has come just a week before the U-19 World Cup starts. However, he has been retained in the South Africa squad. Teeger, in his comments made in December last year had lent support to Israel in their ongoing war against Hamas in Palestine.

CSA said the decision was taken as it sensed there could be the risk of 'conflict or even violence, including between rival groups of protestors'.

"David hasn't been removed from the squad but will no longer lead the team. CSA took the decision in the best interests of all the players, the SA U-19 team and David himself," CSA said in a statement.

"As is the case with all such events, CSA has been receiving regular security and risk up-



dates regarding the World Cup. We have been advised that protests related to the war in Gaza can be anticipated at the venues for the tournament," the statement added.

"We have also been advised that they are likely to focus on the position of the SA under-19 captain, David Teeger, and that there is a risk that they could result in conflict or even violence, including between rival groups of protestors. The decision has been taken to safeguard the interests and safety of all those involved in the World Cup and also David. In these circumstances, CSA has decided that David should be relieved of the captaincy for the tournament," CSA added.

Narrow win for Odisha FC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 12: Defending champions Odisha FC (OFC) began their campaign in the Kalinga Super Cup football tournament 2024 with a narrow 1-0 win over Bengaluru FC (BFC) here Friday. The hosts dominated the game in the second half after Bengaluru were reduced to 10 men with Ryan Williams being given marching orders at the stroke of half time. The all-important goal for OFC was scored by Ahmed Jahouh in the 21st minute who hit the target from a free-kick.

Bengaluru FC were without a few of their regulars including skipper Sunil Chhetri who is on national duty. However, that did not prevent them from matching Odisha FC move for move, at least in the first half. It was a thrilling encounter with both sides playing attacking football. Both teams had a number of opportunities to score, but poor marksmanship in front of the goal let them down.

Odisha FC started off with flair, but it was the visitors who

Senapati, Dhupar rescue Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 12: Subhranshu Senapati's (87 batting, 208b 6x4, 1x6) unbeaten knock helped Odisha get past the 200-run mark against Madhya Pradesh in their Elite Group D Ranji Trophy encounter Friday at Indore. After being put in, Odisha had been reduced to 38 for the loss of four wickets, before Subhranshu gave the innings some form of respectability.

Subhranshu was well-supported by Rajesh Dhupar (51, 141b, 6x4, 1x6), who also got a fine half century. The two put on 118 runs for the fifth wicket. After the dismissal of Dhupar, it was the turn of Prayash Singh (27) to support Subhranshu. The two together put on 52 runs for the sixth wicket to take Odisha past the 200-run mark. However, on this pitch, Odisha will have to score at least 350 runs in the first innings to put the hosts under some sort of pressure.

Debutant Aryan Pandey (2/30) and former India player Venkatesh Iyer (2/25) were the pick of the MP bowlers. However, in most cases it was the Odisha batters who threw their wickets away playing irresponsible shots.

INDIA EVES EYE PARIS OLY SPOT

Qualifying campaign opener against USA today

AGENCIES

Ranchi, Jan 12: Putting behind the disappointment of finishing third at the Asian Games, the Indian women's team will look to cash in on home advantage and secure a ticket to Paris as they face the USA in their FIH Olympic Qualifiers opener here Saturday. Hosts India, Germany, the Czech Republic, Italy, Japan, US, Chile and New Zealand are the eight teams vying for the top three slots here to book their Paris Olympics berths.

World No. 5 Germany are the highest ranked team in the tournament, while India are a rung below at sixth. New Zealand are No. 9 in the rankings chart, followed by Japan (11th), Chile (14th), USA (15th), Italy (19th) and the Czech Republic (25th). In modern day hockey, rankings however, don't hold much significance.

"We did not qualify for the Olympics from the Asian Games and we know it was a missed opportunity. But we don't dwell on the past," India's chief coach Janneke Schopman said at the pre-tournament press conference here. "We are hoping to do

Rupinder happy with training stint

RANCHI: Hockey India had asked former star drag-flicker Rupinderpal Singh to help the eyes out to improve their penalty corner conversion rates. He had a five-day stint with the women's side here ahead of the FIH Olympic Qualifiers. Rupinder said that the key to achieve success in penalty corners is to beat the first 'rusher'. "Gurjit (Kaur) and Deepika are very good drag-flickers. However, the most important thing for a drag-flicker is to beat the first rusher. This is what we have worked during my tenure with the players," Rupinder stated here Friday.

well in this tournament. We need to be better (than before) and if we play to our best, we can qualify for the Olympics (from here)," she added.

The build-up to the tournament has been far from rosy for the Indians with veteran striker Vandana Katariya being ruled out of the event with injury. She has been replaced by young Baljeet Kaur.

Shooting: Indians dominate show

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jakarta, Jan 12: Indian shooters Akhil Sheoran and Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar claimed gold and silver respectively in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions event of the Asian Olympic Qualifiers here Friday, continuing the country's dominant show in the continental event. The medals won Friday took India's tally to 10 gold, eight silver and six bronze in the event.

Sheoran shot 460.2 to emerge victorious in the eight-men final, while Tokyo Olympian Tomar finished second on the podium with a score of 459.0.

The duo of Sheoran and Tomar combined with Swapnil Kusale to also win the team gold medal in the same event ahead of Chinese and South Korean teams. The Indians aggregated 1,758 points, a huge 14 points more than the second-placed team.

In the individual qualification, Tomar was placed third with a total score of 588, while Sheoran finished sixth with 586.

Prestige NEW YEAR BONANZA BRING HOME INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS THIS NEW YEAR FROM PRESTIGE \*Offer Valid from 23rd Dec 2023 to 28th Jan 2024. India's First Spillage Control Flip-on Tri-PLY Pressure Cooker. All In One Mixer Grinder with 14 Functionalities. Revolutionary Easy Clean Design. Presenting India's First Chimney with Safe Sense Technology. Omega Deluxe Granite Cookware Set, India's First 5-layered Durable Non-stick.