

## FAKE CRYPTO RING BUSTED

Bolangir police round up 7 for defrauding 2,000 investors to the tune of ₹15 crore

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** Bolangir police claimed to have busted a major fake cryptocurrency syndicate operating out of the western Odisha district that moped up around Rs 15 crore from 2,000 unsuspecting investors, with the arrest of its seven operatives including the mastermind, Saturday.

Bolangir SP Khilari Rishikesh Dnyandeo identified the accused as Prasant Meher — the mastermind — Dushmant Meher, Hemant Meher, Amiya Pradhan, Kumar Pradhan, Kishore Deep — all from Bolangir, and Subrat Ojha of Jajpur.

The police have seized Rs 8,34,300 cash, four luxury cars including one Mercedes — five motorcycles, seven laptops and 25 mobile phones from their possession. Bank deposits worth over Rs 55 lakh have also been frozen, the SP said adding that an office at Sudapada and a shop near the Patnagarh veterinary hospital have been sealed.

Preliminary investigation re-



vealed that the syndicate had plans to raise Rs 100 crore in cryptocurrencies using the money of investors who they trapped through a network of 600 agents with promises of huge returns and foreign jaunts, SP said.

The mastermind and his associates allegedly formed a blockchain firm, Magmatide Sustainable Solution Pvt Ltd, and launched a token in the name of 'DYKAN' with the help of a Gujarat-based firm using the latter's web-based app to start cryptocurrency business. They later registered the crypto on a bitcoin exchange.

Prasant, who was the admin

of the app, would entice the investors by manipulating the crypto value figures. The agents were given a target, while the company used digital platforms, including YouTube, to enhance customer base.

They collected approximately Rs 12-15 crore from 2,000 investors, the SP said, adding that the mastermind has studied up to Plus II.

### No mechanism yet to control cryptocurrencies

**NEW DELHI:** The Centre Saturday told the Supreme Court it is yet to take a decision on a mechanism to regulate cryptocurrencies and effectively investigate related offences. A bench of justices Surya Kant and KV Viswanathan was told by Additional Solicitor General Vikramjit Banerjee, appearing for the Centre, that the issues related to the digital currency are continuously evolving and the government is deliberating on the mechanism to regulate the cryptocurrencies. He sought time to file an affidavit by the next date of hearing in the case (March 21) giving updated position on the mechanism.

## ₹10K-cr needed for EVMs every 15 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 20:** The Election Commission would require an estimated ₹10,000 crore every 15 years to procure new Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) if simultaneous polls are held for Lok Sabha and assemblies, according to the poll body.

In a communication to the government, the Commission noted that the shelf life of EVMs was 15 years and one set of machines could be used to conduct three cycles of elections in their life span if simultaneous polls were held. A total of 11.80 lakh polling stations would be required to be set up across India for Lok Sabha polls this year. During simultaneous polls, two sets of EVMs would be needed per polling station.

The EC said certain percentage of Control Units (CUs), Ballot Units (BUs) and Voter-Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) machines are required as reserves to replace defective units at different stages. At least one BU, one CU and one VVPAT machine make up for one EVM. The minimum EVMs and VVPATs required for simultaneous polls would be: 46,75,100 BUs, 33,63,300 CUs and 36,62,600 VVPATs.

In early 2023, the tentative cost of EVM stood at ₹ 7,900 per BU, ₹9,800 per CU and ₹16,000 per unit of VVPAT.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Stone laying, construction, and completion will happen with time. Let me inaugurate the project first

## Bronze Age wall found at Prophet's battlefield

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 20:** A significant archaeological breakthrough has occurred in present-day Saudi Arabia, where the remains of an ancient defensive wall network dating back an estimated 4,000 years have been unearthed at the Khaybar Oasis. The area it enclosed contained at least one settlement and was likely used as agricultural land. Much later, in 628 CE, the Khaybar Oasis was the site of an important military victory for Prophet Mohammed, making it a key location in Islamic history.



Until recently, the 14.5 km long Bronze Age structure thought to date from between 2250 and 1950 BCE, remained undetected as the oasis had not been surveyed in detail. But now, experts believe the land was surrounded by the structure, with walls ranging in

thickness from 1.7 to 2.4 metres.

It is believed that the oasis was a complex of "many places that were fortified with monumental architecture", a report in The National, a UAE state-owned English daily, said quoting a new study published in the February edition of the Journal of Archaeological Science.

"We can really show that there was a kind of walled oasis complex in north-west Arabia during the Bronze Age. This makes the thing very exciting," said one of the authors of the study, Guillaume Charloux of the French National Centre for Scientific Research.

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NH -16 between Bhubaneswar and Cuttack



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For asthma, cough, cold, etc. For BP and sugar For arthritis, joint pain and Vata diseases For liver diseases and digestive system

# leisure



## FAME MADE ME MORE SELF-AWARE: FRANKIE

British singer Frankie Bridge thinks she's been more self-conscious because of her fame and success. The 35-year-old beauty struggled with her body image during her younger years, after she shot to stardom as part of *The Saturdays*.

## KIM KARDASHIAN DEFENDS USING TANNING BEDS

Reality star Kim Kardashian has taken to social media to defend using tanning beds. The 43-year-old came under fire after she revealed about it. A tanning bed uses ultraviolet radiation to darken the skin. Kim explained that she uses the bed to combat psoriasis, which causes skin to become scaly and inflamed.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Now at last you have realised that you have been preoccupied with work at the cost of your family life. Making up to them now is going to take a lot more effort. Ganesha says be ready to open your purse strings for either eating out, going out for a movie or shopping at the best places.

**TAURUS**  
This day has been earmarked for beautification, a makeover, says Ganesha. You are likely to remain preoccupied with ways to enhance your looks and appearance. A new, stylish hair do, face packs and massages, trendy outfits and accessories could be in store. You will, subconsciously, be doing all that you can do, to get noticed by others.

**GEMINI**  
You will feel lonely and unwanted today. You will feel the need for someone who can calm your troubled mind. Meditation and yoga will help you calm yourself. It is a good day to receive love from that someone special, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
You will succeed in a new venture and will brim with radiance and energy. Ganesha says this is the best time for get-together and kindle contact with friends and relatives.

**LEO**  
You will look to give your house a new appearance by decorating it or undertaking some renovation projects. You will make the best out of waste and produce some truly marvellous pieces of art for improving the ambience of your nest. You will be able to save up on some money. Laudable, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
You will excel remarkably in whatever work you prefer to engage yourself in today. Ganesha says your aspiration to start a business endeavour in a foreign country will bear fruit. To considerably enhance your self-image, it is necessary to make required improvements in your personal appearance.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says that on the work front you may be in the midst of meetings or negotiations, which will work out favorably for you. This will help ease your tension and you will feel mentally free. Today you will feel more vibrant and active too and hence will be able to get more done.

**SCORPIO**  
According to Ganesha, your new business venture is likely to keep you on toes today. You may even neglect your personal life to meet expectations at work. A feeling of disappointment may surround you as things do not go according to planning and your efforts may go in vain. No pains, no gains reminds Ganesha.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
You are in a dilemma today. You may find yourself standing at crossroads, and your decision power does not seem to help you much, says Ganesha. You are likely to become controversy's favourite child; this may add fuel to the fire. Be wise, and take guidance of experienced people.

**CAPRICORN**  
God helps those who help themselves, likewise, your sincere efforts will be paid off well, today. If you're dealing with shares and stocks, it may be your day, today. Your life partner will proved to be lucky for your success, so give him/her the credit he/she deserves, suggests Ganesha.

**AQUARIUS**  
You always see the larger picture, and desire to channelise all your energies towards making things better. Such positive approach makes you an excellent team player, and enables you to bring novel ideas and effective solutions to the table, says Ganesha. You will be the life of every party you will go to today.

**PISCES**  
This day promises to be filled with much romance, laughter, and fine dining, says Ganesha. You will seem irresistible to the opposite sex. You might also find yourself falling for someone. A breathe of fresh air could waft into old relationships, or new ones could be formed. However, this is likely to be a drawn out process. You could find yourself dining out with friends, later on in the evening.

## SEVEN-DAY INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL BHUBANESWAR 2024 FROM JANUARY 22

### Event to hold retrospective on Mani Kaul's classics

► Tamil film director Karthik Subbaraj of *Jigarthanda Double X* fame will be one of the key attractions at the festival

Sebastian, and others, claim the organisers.

From the north-east, the works of Haobam Paban Kumar, Bobby Sharma Baruah, and Rajni Basumatary, who have made movies in Manipuri, Bodo, and Tiwa, will be showcased. The movies of debut filmmakers from Nainital, Darbhanga, and Baroda will also be screened.

**Bhubaneswar:** The seven-day Indian Film Festival Bhubaneswar 2024, to be organised by the Film Society of Bhubaneswar, will kick off here at Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Odissi Research Centre, Monday.

Most of the movies by young filmmakers from across the country to be screened at the event have already earned critical acclaim at global film festivals such as MAMI, IFFK, Dharamsala, Busan, Rotterdam, San

Notable among them are *Opium*, *Bahadur*, *Mithya*, *Follower*, *It's All in Your Head*, *Kayo* *Colour*, and



Water Station, which have been appreciated at several international film festivals. The films at the festival explore

issues of migration, gender, uneven development, geopolitics, environmental degradation, and political and ethical questions.

The event will also hold a retrospective on Mani Kaul's works spanning three decades. There will be post-screening discussions with the makers. Among them, Karthik Subbaraj, Subas Das, Haobam Paban Kumar, Harshad Nalawade, Aman Sachdeva, Rajni Basumatary, Don Palathara, and Bobby Sharma Baruah have given their consent to attend the festival.

There are also sessions planned to explore the artistic practice and working methods of the directors. Besides, a group of short films has been selected to showcase new emerging voices from across the country.

## Nora raises alarm

**Mumbai:** Several celebrities including Rashmika Mandanna, Kajol, Katrina Kaif, and Alia Bhatt, have become victims of deepfake videos, raising alarms about the misuse of technology and the lack of adequate legal safeguards.

The most recent addition to this unfortunate list is Nora Fatehi. Taking to her Instagram stories Saturday, Nora reposted an advertisement from the handle of a clothing brand which featured a lady bearing a striking resemblance to Nora, endorsing an end-of-season sale.

This incident comes after the Delhi Police's claim to have arrested the individual responsible for creating a deepfake video featuring Rashmika Mandanna. The accused, identified as 24-year-old Eemani Naveen from Andhra Pradesh's Guntur, was apprehended after the video went viral on social media last November. Deepfake technology, which in-

volves the use of artificial intelligence to create realistic-looking videos or images of individuals saying or doing things they never did, has become a growing concern globally. The entertainment industry, in particular, has been a prime target for such malicious activities.

As Nora joins the chorus of celebrities voicing their concerns about the dangers of deep-

### DEEPAKE VIDEO

fake videos, it remains to be seen how the industry and regulatory bodies will respond to address this growing threat to privacy and security in the digital age.



## TAAPSEE: WITH POWER COMES RESPONSIBILITY

**Mumbai:** One of 2023's biggest blockbusters, Ranbir Kapoor's *Animal* has reportedly grossed

a star and actor gives you that soft power. And with power comes responsibility. So it is my opinion, and I am not one of those, who will tell XYZ actors that they should not do these films. They have their own choice; we are in a free country and we have a freedom of choice. I wouldn't do it (*Animal*) is what I am saying." Earlier, Taapsee, who has worked in films like *Thappad*, had also spoken against *Kabir Singh*, directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga. One of the biggest grossers of 2019, the Shahid Kapoor-starrer received flak for its misogynistic gaze and normalising violence in a romantic relationship.

The *Pink* actress said, "Keeping the reality (of society) in mind, I need to exercise my power because Bollywood or being

more than ₹912 crore worldwide. While it did set the cash registers ringing, *Animal* was slammed by a section of critics and audience for making heroes out of misogynistic, violent men. Now, in an interview with with Raj Shamani on his YouTube channel, Taapsee Pannu has weighed in on the film's success and why she would never have done such a movie.



### Malia Obama makes red carpet debut at Sundance Film Festival

Malia Obama, the elder child of former US President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama, made her red carpet debut at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, Thursday night, for the premiere of her debut short film *The Heart*.

The 25-year-old looked cozy and casual in a light blue striped button-down, long gray wool coat, fuzzy gray scarf, and platform leather over-the-knee boots in a deep maroon.

Malia developed *The Heart* with mentor Donald Glover's production company, Gilga. She and the Atlanta creator and star also worked together on the 2023 Prime Video miniseries *Swarm*, a dark satire starring Dominic Fishback, Chloe Bailey, Damson Idris, Billie Eilish, Rory Culkin, and Paris Jackson.

Glover said in a 2022 interview with *Vanity Fair* that the former first daughter is "very down to earth, and cool," so working with her is always a positive experience.

Malia also cowrote *Swarm*'s fifth episode, *Girl, Bye*, with seasoned pro and series co-creator Janine Nabers.

### PEANUTS



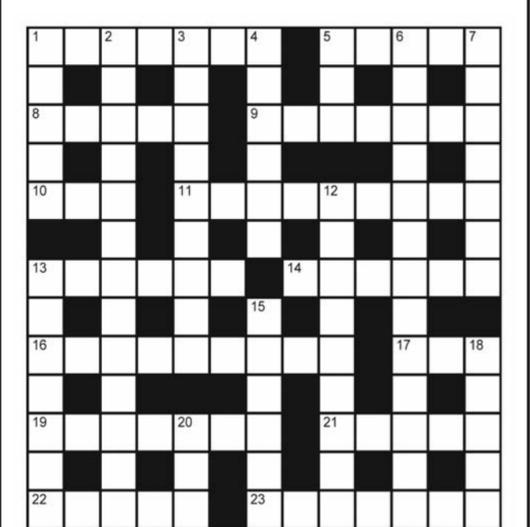
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



### FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Spreads out
  - 5 Largish combo
  - 8 Cousin of a bitter
  - 9 Lily-livered
  - 10 Woodwind instrument
  - 11 Type of day (3-6)
  - 13 Smelled bad
  - 14 Cash in, as a coupon
  - 16 Portuguese man-of-war
  - 17 Caustic chemical
  - 19 Musical performance
  - 21 Fender mishaps
  - 22 Type of preview
  - 23 Short end of the stick (3,4)
  - Down**
  - 1 Decorative pitchers
  - 2 Best of the best (3,10)
  - 3 Ill fame
  - 4 Break away
  - 5 Japanese sash
  - 6 Jump right in (4,3,6)
  - 7 Bad temper display
  - 12 War paint item
  - 13 Eliminates
  - 15 Season
  - 18 Artist's stand
  - 20 Caribou kin

### 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.

1					6	5		
							2	
							9	
6			7			8		
4	6	5						
	5		9	3			1	
	3	5	8					
					1		7	3
8	4					1		

### SOLUTIONS

**CROSSWORD**

S	P	R	Y	P	L	A	N	K	T	O	N
H	A	D	S	E	I	T	I	E			
O	R	I	G	I	N	S	G	A	T	E	S
E	T	S	S	H	A	T					
T	R	A	P	S	H	O	O	T	I	N	G
R	E	N	C	I	T						
E	N	C	O	R	E	S	L	I	C	E	R
E	O	T	A	O	U						
B	R	E	A	S	T	S	T	R	O	K	E
F	O	T	H	H	W	B					
E	N	N	O	T	E	R	N	A	L		
T	E	O	N	S	E	U					
A	S	T	O	N	I	S	H	B	R	A	E

**SUDOKU**

7	3	6	8	1	4	5	2	9
9	4	8	7	2	5	3	6	1
5	2	1	6	3	9	8	4	7
3	1	7	5	6	2	9	8	4
6	5	9	4	8	1	2	7	3
2	8	4	9	7	3	6	1	5
1	9	5	2	4	8	7	3	6
4	7	2	3	9	6	1	5	8
8	6	3	1	5	7	4	9	2

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

## HONOURING A LEGEND

People from various walks of life pay tributes to Chandan Hajuri, popularly known as 'Chakhi Khuntia', on his 96th birth anniversary at PKDA Square in Puri, Saturday. Chakhi Khuntia was a priest and a poet who participated in Indian Rebellion of 1857



# CM lays stone for 19 instream structures



**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday laid foundation stones for 19 instream storage structures in 13 districts worth Rs 4,600 crore.

Laying the stones in Bargarh, Bolangir, Boudh, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Kalahandi, Keonjhar, Khurda, Puri, Sambalpur, Subarnapur and Sundargarh districts through videoconferencing, Naveen said the instream storage structures will be a boon for farmers, especially those in pisciculture, besides maintaining the groundwater level and providing drinking water.

Highlighting that instream storage structures will also go a long way in controlling floods, Patnaik said, "Plan for construction of such structures began with allocation of Rs 11,700 crore in 2020. Programmes have so far been prepared for 72 such projects in three phases."

Proposals for such projects were received from people during the visit of 5T Chairman to different districts. "All these projects are being implemented with the suggestions and opinions of the people," the CM said.

Building instream storage structures is a significant program under the 5T initiative. "Emphasis is being laid on application of technology and timely completion of the projects. No people will be displaced by this project," Patnaik said.

Highlighting the measures

taken for the welfare of farmers, Naveen said the project is aimed at development of farmers and the protection of environment.

"Our programmes like KALIA yojana, interest-free loan facility for farmers and payment of crop insurance premium have boosted the confidence of farmers. If farmers prosper, the state will prosper. We are working for their betterment," the CM said.

Water Resources Minister Tukuni Sahu, who was in Bolangir, said that the CM is determined for the betterment of the farmers.

Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak, who was at Kendrapara's Mahakalapada, said the CM has always given importance to the development of Kendrapara.

"Not only this, many other big-ticket projects are being implemented in the district," Nayak said, thanking the CM and 5T Chairman for the ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India's project.

5T Chairman Kartik Pandian expressed his gratitude to the people for their continuous support to the welfare projects.

Stating that the CM has made a lot of efforts during his visit to Japan for the ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India project at Kendrapara, Pandian said Naveen would soon perform the groundbreaking for the plant.

Development Commissioner and Additional Chief Secretary Anu Garg delivered the welcome address.



**COURTESY CALL:** Puri Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb meets Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at Naveen Niwas in Bhubaneswar, Saturday, after the inauguration of Srimandir Parikrama Prakalpa. 5T Chairman Kartik Pandian is also seen

# IIIT-Bhub conclave sheds light on sustainable tech

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** The IIIT-Bhubaneswar here Saturday hosted a 'Research Conclave' to mark a successful decade of achieving the status of a 'Unitary University'. The conclave shed light on renewable energy, and the problems and solutions possible in the field of sustainable technologies.

The event on 'Emerging Technology for Sustainable Tomorrow' witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, faculty members, senior researchers and industry experts. The inaugural ceremony was presided over by IIIT-Bhubaneswar Director Ashish Ghosh, who welcomed and felicitated Electronics & IT, Sports & Youth Services Minister



Tusharkanti Behera, the chief guest at the event. Guests of honor Director of IIT Bhubaneswar Shreepad Karmalkar and technology practice leader at IBM Debesh Das were also welcomed. IIIT-Bhubaneswar Registrar Debashish Jena felicitated Kailash Das, private secretary to

the minister. Behera delivered his address stressing absolute significance of renewable energy and sustainable futures. Two plenary talks were delivered by Karmalkar who shed light on the importance of a research mindset while Debesh Das discussed nuanced ideas on the

problems and solutions possible in the field of sustainable technologies. This was followed by a panel discussion comprising eminent researchers and industry experts such as SOA University Vice-Chancellor Pradipta Kumar Nanda, senior principal scientist at IIMT Debi Prasad Dash, assistant professor

at IIT Kharagpur Debdoot Sheet, IT expert Goutam Behera and Incture Technology expert Jyotirmaya Rath.

The interactive session was succeeded by poster presentations that brought together diverse research insights and innovative solutions through academia-industry collaboration. The valedictory session saw a prize distribution round that was aimed at encouraging the best minds working in the field.

A cultural event was also organised by the young students. Lipika Das and Bharati Mishra of the IIIT anchored the event coordinated by Arun Sahoo, Deepak Rout and Sarthak Padhi. Dean Academics, Rakesh Chandra Balbantaray and Dean Student Affairs Pradyut Biswal delivered vote of thanks.

# Ex-MP Anadi Sahu passes away at 84

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** Former Lok Sabha MP Anadi Sahu died at his residence in Cuttack Saturday. He was 84.

He was suffering from old age-related ailments, said family sources.

Sahu was elected to Lok Sabha twice from Cuttack constituency (1996) as a Congress candidate and Berhampur constituency (1999) on a BJP ticket.

Sahu had resigned from the IPS and contested Cuttack Lok Sabha seat in 1996 general elections as a Congress candidate against former Chief Minister Biju Patnaik. However, he lost the poll by 57,807 votes and later won it in a by-election.

BJP's state unit president Manmohan Samal and Leader of Opposition Jayanarayan Mishra condoled Sahu's death.



**TESTING TIMES:** Huge rush outside Unit 3 Capital High School in Bhubaneswar, Saturday, owing to the conduct of entrance test for admissions to Navodaya Vidyalayas

# 1 held for razing house in Nimapada

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nimapada, Jan 20:** Three days after a group of anti-socials damaged the house and properties of a teacher using an excavator, Nimapada police Saturday claimed to have arrested the main accused and launched a manhunt to nab others.

According to sources, Pinky Mohanty, wife of teacher Arun Mohanty, had lodged a police complaint alleging that around 20 miscreants unleashed an organised attack on their residence January 17 night by using an excavator. While a major portion of the house was damaged, the car was also not spared. Based on the complaint, police registered a case (26/2024) under Sections 147, 148, 448, 294, 427, 506 and 149 of IPC, and Section 25 & 26 of Arms Act, 1959, before starting an investigation. The police arrested the main accused Nakula Lenka and sent him to court which rejected his bail application and sent him to jail.



The police also seized the excavator (OD 33AA4051) used in the crime.

Nimapada IIC Bamadeb Swain said that the other accused would be nabbed soon.

Notably, the victim, a native of Guhalpur under Konark police station, has been residing near Siddheswar Kalyan Mandap here for quite some days. Nakula, who has a farmhouse in the area, has been alleging that the teacher had encroached upon the government road that leads to his farmhouse. Earlier, both the families had frequent quarrels that had reached the police station.

The issue took a serious turn when Nakula along with his associates used an excavator to damage the house of Mohanty.

# Climate change may cut labour productivity in India to 40%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 20:** Labour productivity could decline to 40 per cent in countries like India and Pakistan by the end of the century due to climate change, threatening global food production, according to a study.

The research, published in the journal Global Change Biology, predicts that other regions in Southeast and South Asia, West and Central Africa, and northern South America are expected to see physical work capacity reduced to 70 per cent.

"Assessments consistently conclude that climate change will reduce crop yields making food security challenges worse," said study lead Gerald Nelson, a pro-

fessor at the University of Illinois, US.

"But it's not only crops and livestock that are affected. The agricultural workers who plant, till, and harvest much of the food we need, will also suffer due to heat exposure, reducing their ability to undertake work in the field," Nelson said.

The study involved using computational models to predict the physical work capacity (PWC)—defined as "an individual's work capacity relative to an environment without any heat stress"—under different predicted climate change scenarios.

The models, developed by Loughborough University, UK, are based on data from more than 700 heat stress trials—which



involved observing people working in a wide range of temperatures and humidities, and differing weather conditions, including sunshine and wind.

The maximum work capacity achievable by individuals in a cool climate was used as the benchmark for the study—representing 100 per cent phys-

ical work capacity, the researchers said.

Reductions in capacity mean people are limited in what they can physically do, even if they are motivated to work. This may translate as farmers needing extra workers to do the same job, or if these are not available, then reducing their crop sizes, they said.

The study shows that agricultural workers are already feeling the heat, with half the

world's cropland farmers estimated to be working below 86 per cent capacity in 'recent past' (1991–2010) climate conditions.

The researchers also considered potential adaptations to mitigate the impact of climate change on agricultural workers.

Switching to nighttime or shade work to reduce direct solar radiation, was shown to lead to a 5–10 per cent improvement in worker productivity, they said.

A second option is to increase the global use of mechanical machinery and equipment, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, where agricultural practices largely involve hard physical labor, according to the researchers.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	71423.65 ↓ 259.58
NIFTY	21571.80 ↓ 50.60
DOLLAR	83.08 ↓ ₹0.08
EURO	90.47 ↓ ₹0.12
GOLD	₹61,988 ↓ ₹16
SILVER	₹71,510 ↑ ₹50

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX 27.7°C	26.0°C
	MIN 18.0°C	17.0°C
Humidity	83%	82%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
	Forecast Fog in the morning	

# 361 schools inaugurated in 5 districts

As many as 105 high schools in Mayurbhanj district, 100 in Bolangir, 63 in Sambalpur, 60 in Rayagada and 33 in Nuapada were dedicated under 5T initiative

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday inaugurated 361 transformed schools in 5 districts on the third day of the 4th phase of school transformation programme under 5T initiative of the state government. Chairman 5T and Nabin Odisha Kartik Pandian was also present on this occasion.

As many as 105 high schools in Mayurbhanj district, 100 in Bolangir, 63 in Sambalpur, 60 in Rayagada and 33 in Nuapada were inaugurated after transformation under the government initiative.

The Chief Minister had inaugurated 389 schools in 5 districts on the first day of the 4th phase, 327 schools in 6 districts on second day.

Total 1,794 schools across the



state will be covered in this phase of the transformation programme. It is to be noted that 6,883 schools have been transformed in the state in three phases earlier.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said the government has taken up transformation of schools, colleges, tourist places, temples, mutts and hospitals as part of the government's efforts to build a strong Odisha. "Schools play an important

role in deciding the future of any race. Education shows the way to the society to development and progress. Hence, the government attaches importance to school transformation," he said.

In the fourth phase of Transformation, the Chief Minister has already inaugurated more than 700 hundred High Schools belonging to ten districts. After the completion of the fourth phase, a total of

8,677 schools will get transformed in the state.

Notably, 3,981 schools in the state have undergone significant renovations over the past two phases. The Chief Minister congratulated the students on their achievement and informed them through video conference about the benefits of using 5T, stating that the current era is the age of technology. Every element of life is influenced by technology.

Children should thus make an effort to learn about new technology in order to stay ahead of others in all sectors in the present day.

In a similar vein, he asserted that everyone is aware of the significance of time when giving pupils advice on the subject. Children may, therefore, effectively use their time to maintain an advantage over others in all areas.

# Foundation laid for 'Shramik Pratiksha Kendra' at Badagada

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP



**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** To provide shelter and basic amenities to workers of the City, Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD), Public Enterprises, Science, and Technology Minister Ashok Chandra Panda laid foundation stone for a 'Shramik Pratiksha Kendra' at Badagada here Saturday.

Being executed by the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA), the facility will serve as a dedicated space for workers. Designed to be built on a plot of 4,000 square feet, with potential to be expanded to 1.5 acres, the centre will provide amenities that can address needs of as many as 300 workers. The facilities at the center will include waiting areas, toilets, a neighbourhood park and an open gym.

BMC Mayor Sulochana Das, Bhubaneswar Central MLA

Ananta Narayan Jena, Odisha Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board chairperson Shreemayee Mishra, BDA vice-chairman Balwant Singh, local corporator Amaresh Jena, participated in the inauguration event along with officials of the Labour department.

"This centre will enable workers to board public transport to reach their destination. The centre will provide shelter to workers who are forced to wait

at Badagada without any basic amenities. This will also address the traffic woes in the area. The centre will serve as a recreational facility during morning and evening hours for walkers," said a BDA official.

During the event, Panda invited workers present at the spot to participate in the foundation-laying ceremony. "We are hopeful that the centre will solve some of the problems we face," said Narayani Majhi, a construction worker.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I Shri Kedar Nath Malik, S/o. Dhruba Charan Mallick, resident of plot No.-335, Jharpada, near Divine Public School, Bhubaneswar, Dist.-Khurda, Odisha-751006 declare by this affidavit No-68AA911223 date-02 Jan. 2024, that from now onwards I shall be known as Kedar Nath Mallick for all future purposes.

I, Balakrishna Mohapatra, S/o- Late Biswanath Mohapatra, resident of Temple road, P.O.-Sakhigopal, P.S.-Satyabadi, Dist.-Puri-752014, Odisha declare by this affidavit No.-43, dt.16.01.2024 that now onwards I shall be known as BALAKRUSHNA MOHAPATRA for all future purposes.

I, Thota Devi, W/o Dugana Duryadhan, At/P.O.-Jayantipur, Dist.-Ganjam, PIN-761004 declare by this affidavit No.-249 dtd 19.01.2024 that now onwards I shall be known as DUGANA DEVI for all future purposes.

I Shri Dhruba Charan Malik, S/o. Late Arjun Mallick, Resident of Pegarpada, P.O.-Pegarpada, P.S.-Rajkanika, Dist.-Kendrapara, Odisha-754227 declare by this affidavit No.-68AA636270 date-16 Jan. 2024, that from now onwards I shall be known as Dhruba Charan Mallick for all future purposes.

I Shaikh Nasiruddin, S/o Sek Islauddin, At-Rajpur, P.O.-Jaleswar, P.S.-Balasore, Odisha, PIN-756032, declare by this affidavit No-117/20.1.24. Dated 20.1.2024 onwards I shall be known as Sek Nasiruddin for all purpose.

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## 'Ayush Diksha centre to be built with ₹30cr budget'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal Saturday said the country is moving towards an integrated approach where the Ayush system of medicine will be used along with the modern ones.

The minister also laid the foundation stone for 'Ayush Diksha', a first-of-its-kind centre for the development of human resources for ayush professionals in future.

The centre will be developed on the campus of Central Ayurveda Research Institute, Bhubaneswar. Sonowal also asserted that the Ayush movement has 'gained a lot of prominence' in the last 10 years.

"We are moving towards an integrated medicine approach where an empowered Ayush system of medicine will also be used along with the modern medicine system," the minister said.

The integrated medicinal approach will prove as a "boon for the people of the country" as they can move towards healing their ailments as well as enriching their quality of life by empowering their physical and mental well-being, the minister said.

Sonowal, the minister of Ayush and Ports, Shipping and Waterways, said the 'Ayush Diksha' centre here will enable Ayush professionals to develop their skills and upscale their dexterity in providing world-class patient care services to the people of the country.

The 'Ayush Diksha' centre will be built with a budget of ₹30 crore.

It will be equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, including two auditoriums, 40 modern rooms with all amenities, suites for VIPs, dedicated space for a natural library and discussion rooms among other amenities.



**MATTER OF BUSINESS:** Dignitaries, including BMC Mayor Sulochana Das, join an event organised by 'Nikhil Utkal Khudra Byabasayee Mahasangha' to celebrate National Vendors Day in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

## UU holds state-level NSS review meet

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** The review meeting of the state-level National Service Scheme (NSS) was held here Saturday at the Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati Auditorium of Utkal University.

University vice chancellor Sabita Acharya, NSS regional director Ajit Kushwaha, state NSS officer-cum-Higher Education deputy secretary Ramesh Chandra Behera participated in the meeting along with NSS officers, district programme officers and office assistants from 22 colleges and universities of the state.

Speaking at the event, Acharya said that NSS plays an important



role in inculcating a sense of service in students. "The NSS wing of Utkal University is very active and has done commendable work," she said.

In his address, Behera said that NSS wings at all universi-

ties and colleges of the state are doing admirable work and in the coming days, they will work with more service mindedness and the funds provided to NSS would be utilised to empower students.

Using the fund, colleges can carry out programmes like tree plantation, blood donation, cleanliness campaign, special camps, environment protection and anti-drug campaign. "In addition to district programmes, officers and office assistants have been provided training to solve the problems utilising the fund," said Behera.

Speaking to programme officers, regional director Kushwaha said that currently there are more than 1,24,000 volunteers at 1,241 NSS units in educational institutions under the Higher Education department of the state. "By making them more effective, Odisha can achieve excellence at the national level," he said.

## IIM Sambalpur to host 9th world mgmt conference

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Sambalpur, Jan 20:** IIM Sambalpur is all set to host the four-day 9th pan-IIM World Management Conference (WMC) from January 21 to January 24. The theme of the conference is 'Entrepreneurial Innovation and Digital Governance for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth'. Participants from all 21 IIMs, IITs, NITs and other premier management institutes across India and around the globe will take part in the conference. Around 1,000 research papers will be presented during the conference.

The conference will be inaugurated by the Union Minister

for Education, Skill Development, and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan. Delloitte South Asia CEO Romal Shetty will be the key speaker.

IIM Sambalpur director Mahadeo Jaiswal said, "The conference aims to provide a platform for brilliant minds from India and around the world to come together in a hybrid mode and explore the future course of management thought and practice."

Following the NEP guidelines, IIM Sambalpur has announced that the inclusion of research paper presentations in regional languages will be a unique feature of the conference this year.

## Polish dancer Zofia Lichota mastering the art of Odissi

Polish dancer Zofia Lichota took to the stage Saturday for her Odissi dance performance, "Mahabhutas: Between Air and Earth", creating a synergy between the movements of the classical dance form and the two elements.

Organised by Utsav Educational and Cultural Society at India International Centre, the dance performance was a composition of five separate pieces, tied together with a single theme.

"This programme is about these two elements which we are trying to connect with the classical Odissi dance repertoire, so in each item we are going to describe how we see different elements in these

dances," Lichota told PTI. Starting with 'Mangalacharan', the 33-year-old dancer invoked Saraswati, the goddess of music, poetry, and dance- the art forms that surround everyone.

"We are just all using these beautiful art forms in our daily life. And this is very similar to the air because it just surrounds us and without air we cannot breathe. And I feel without art it would be very difficult to live also. So that's how we are trying to connect this element with classical Odissi repertoire," she said.

In the second piece, 'Shankarbarnam Pallavi', Lichota evoked the beauty of nature and the divine sculptures found in Odisha temples.

The dancer also performed



'Lalit Lavang Lata' - an ashtapadi taken from the Geet Govind, and 'Radharani', a playful love story of Krishna and Radha.

The dance performance came to an end by paying homage to the eternal Shakti and her 16 forms, followed by 'Moksha',

"depicting the freedom from the cycle of death and rebirth and emphasising the continuous interplay between air and earth throughout life".

Lichota has been learning the Indian classical dance form under Odissi exponent Ranjana Gauhara for the last 11 years and sees herself "as the flag bearer of Odissi in Poland".

Talking about her dance journey, she said coming to a culture entirely different from her own was difficult initially but the determination to learn Indian dance in India helped her overcome the obstacles.

"In the beginning it was very difficult because of the cultural differences, different languages, and many other things. Indian

classical dance is very different from western dances because the positions are quite different. But I was very sure that I wanted to learn Indian dance in India so I was very determined to do this," she said.

Lichota added that learning the dance under the 'guru shishya parampara' also instilled in her a strong connection with her guru.

"In Europe, we are mostly focusing on movements and technique, whereas in India, where you have this 'guru shishya parampara'; it's not only about the movements, it's also about the connection with the guru to learn how to live and be a good human being, it's not only about dance," she said.

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# Newly-wed woman 'killed' over dowry

**Papadahandi/Nabarangpur, Jan 20:** A newly married woman was allegedly killed by her in-laws over dowry at Bhimasahi village under Papadahandi police limits in Nabarangpur district, Friday afternoon. The incident came to the fore Saturday after the deceased's mother lodged an FIR in this connection seeking justice.

The deceased woman was identified as Gita Sethi, daughter of Ram Sethi and Sushama Sethi of Canal Colony under Sadar police limits in Malkangiri district.

According to sources, Gita was married to Sudam Sethi, a teacher by profession and a resident of Bhimasahi under Papadahandi police limits in Nabarangpur district in July 2023.

However, after marriage, Gita



was allegedly being tortured by her in-laws who were demanding more dowries. Gita told her parents about her ordeals and returned to her paternal home. However, her family members convinced her and again sent her back to her in-laws' house.

However, the family members of Sudam informed Gita's kin that she committed suicide by hanging with the help of a rope. They said, Sudam took Gita to a nearby hospital Friday after-

noon around 2pm, where the doctors pronounced her dead.

Gita's mother lodged a complaint alleging murder of her daughter by her in-laws over dowry at Papadahandi police station.

The in-laws of the woman are absconding and there was tension in nearby areas over the matter. Besides, the bereaved family along with the body staged a sit-in in front of the community health centre (CHC) in Papadahandi demanding justice.

On being informed, SDPO Aditya Sen and Papadahandi PS IIC, Dipak Kumar Jena reached the spot and pacified the agitating family members by assuring them arrest of all the culprits within one week.

After getting assurance the family members allowed the body to be taken for post-mortem.



**CAPTIVATING ACT:** Artistes enact a scene from play 'Banjha' on the first evening of 16th state-level drama festival organised by the Odisha Natak Samaroha Samiti at the Biju Patnaik Sanskruti Bhawan in Berhampur, Saturday

# RAMPANT MINING Minerals to run out in 20 yrs

**Keonjhar, Jan 20:** With mining activities continuing unabated in Keonjhar, the district is likely to run out of all its mineral resources within the next 20 years.

Rampant mining activities have sparked fears that if the mineral resources are not properly managed, the district will run out of all its mineral resources in 20 years.

Recently, the Supreme Court heard a public interest litigation (PIL, IA no-42571) seeking a cap on mining activities in states like Goa and Karnataka. Hearing the matter, the Supreme Court issued notices to the Centre asking it to file its reply in affidavits on the matter within a period of four weeks. Similar demands to cap mining activities in Odisha have also started doing the rounds.

The Shah Commission, which was probing the mining scam in the state earlier, had given a very scathing remark on the state of mining activities. The Commission had said that the miners are mindlessly excavating the mines for mineral resources.

The extraction of minerals more than the permissible limits has adversely impacted the environment, infrastructure like roads and the public life, it had clarified. The Commission had recommended the Central government to take action against the errant leaseholders by collecting penalties from them. It also directed to protect the environment and take steps for the development of affected areas.

Later, penalties were collected from the leaseholders and the mines were given on lease



through tenders to maintain transparency. On the other hand, the government also brought in some amendments in Mines and Minerals Act, formed the District Mineral Foundations in the mining districts and made arrangements of funds which were utilised for the development of the mining-affected areas.

However, mining activities continue unabated for which demands are being raised to put a cap on mining activities like other states.

According to documents submitted in the Supreme Court by the senior advocate Prashant Bhushan, the state has 4,748.52 MT of mineral deposits while 58 mines have been given on lease for mining. The annual extraction of mineral resources is 227.13 MT. However, this has sparked fear that the state will run out of its mineral resources if their extraction continues at the current rate.

Hearing the matter, the apex

**The Shah Commission, which was probing the mining scam in the state earlier, had given a very scathing remark on the state of mining activities**

court has also directed the Odisha government to consider whether there is a need to put a cap on mining activities in the state and conduct a review and take steps in this regard.

Environmentalist Dushkar Barik said that the mineral resources could be properly utilised and environmental damage checked if a cap is enforced on mining activities in Odisha like Goa and Karnataka.

Social activist Gulab Mukhtar Rayen said that the state has a total of 9,229 million tonne of the details provided by the

state government. However, the mineral reserves could well be more.

The state has several mines but all are not being made operational, he said. He questioned why new and virgin mines are being given on lease instead of the old mines.

Notably, there are several mines in Keonjhar district where mining activities have been stopped but these are not being made operational. Lack of mining activities and proper management has turned these mines into large pits which are only endangering the wildlife and humans.

Such mines are not being covered up or buried as per the mining closure plan. When there is a talk of putting a cap on mining, the state government's move to lease out a mine in Gandhalpada which is surrounded by a dense and virgin forest under Joda mining division has sparked of a row.

# 25cr people lifted out of poverty by Centre: Sonowal

**PNN & AGENCIES**

**Kendrapara, Jan 20:** More than 25 crore Indians have been pulled out from poverty during the nine and half years of the BJP-led NDA government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal.

Speaking at a public gathering in Kendrapara district Friday, the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways and Ayush said Modi's dynamic and inspiring leadership has ensured that the fruits of governance reach everyone in the society.

By nipping rampant corrupt practices of previous Congress governments in the bud, he has ensured that the progressive and inclusiveness in governance are executed in letter and spirit, Sonowal said. The days of "corrupt, inefficient and clueless" governance under Congress, which was marked with people suffering from poverty, hunger and distress, are a thing of the past now, he said.

"The Modi Ki Guarantee programme will ensure welfare of the people and reinforce our commitment towards building a Viksit Bharat, an Atmanirbhar Bharat by the end of Amrit Kaal," the Union minister said.

Earlier, Sonowal led a Swachhata movement to clean up the temple campus at the Lakshmi Baraha Jew Temple at Aul as he offered 'Shramdaan' as part of the 'Swachha Teerth' campaign. This cleanliness campaign is in line with PM Narendra Modi's call for the cleanliness and cleaning up of temples ahead of 'Pran Pratishtha' of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya's Ram Temple January 22.

# CEILING COLLAPSE Compensate all injured students: NHRC asks CS

**POST NEWS NETWORK**

**Keonjhar, Jan 20:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) January 18 directed the state Chief Secretary to pay compensation ₹10,000 to each of the seven injured minor students who were admitted to the hospital after the ceiling in their classroom collapsed at Arjunbilla Primary School in Ghatagaon block in this district.

Apart from submission of the proof of payment, the commission has also directed to recover the compensation amount from the erring junior engineer for his negligence in supervision of works undertaken, due to which the accident took place.

The apex rights watchdog passed the order acting on a couple of petitions filed by civil rights activist and advocate Radhakanta Tripathy.

He alleged that one boy student and six girl students got injured as the ceiling of the school collapsed on them. The headmistress repeatedly informed the block education officer (BEO) for reconstruction of the new classroom and, after no action, the classroom was repaired with the help of Badjamupasi panchayat official. The incident allegedly occurred due to use of sub-

standard construction materials. Acting on the directions of the NHRC, the SP, Keonjhar, sent the report of an enquiry conducted by the SDPO, Ghatagaon, stating therein that Arjunbilla Primary School in Ghatagaon block has been existing since last 20 years and the school building needed repairs. The repair work was conducted under the supervision of JE, Ghatagaon block and was completed September 19, 2022. Later, the rooms were utilised by the school authority for taking classes. However, plaster slab of around three feet length collapsed when the students of Classes IV and V were attending their classes.

As a result, some students sustained critical injuries and were admitted to the community health centre at Ghatagaon. They were discharged from hospital after two days. Demanding an inquiry, the guardians filed petitions before the BDO, Ghatagaon alleging use of sub-standard materials in the repair work of the school building. Accordingly, a probe was conducted and the District Collector transferred the JE. Departmental action has been taken against the JE for her lack of supervision to monitor the repair work of the school building and negligence in her duty.



# Man, daughter-in-law killed over land dispute

**Berhampur:** A 60-year-old man and his daughter-in-law were allegedly killed by a member of their family over a land dispute in Ganjam district, police said Saturday. Sibaram Dakua (60) and Jayanti Dakua (40) were on the way to the disputed plot of land Friday evening when they were attacked. The main accused in the case, Dactor Dakua (45), is the nephew of Sibaram, they said. They were hacked to death, said Jagannath Mallick, the inspector-in-charge of the Khandikote police station. The accused was detained for interrogation, police said. The bodies were sent for post-mortem examination, they said. The exact cause of the murders would be known after a thorough investigation, police said.

# Steel City gears up for Jan 22



**Rourkela, Jan 20:** Following the inauguration of the Srimandir Parikrama project, the Steel City and the entire Sundargarh district are gearing up for the consecration of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya January 22. There is a palpable enthusiasm among the denizens to celebrate the great day.

"Rourkela will turn into a mini Ayodhya, even if we are away from the holy city. There will be no let down as far as celebration of Lord Ram's homecoming is concerned," said Anup Jaiswal, a leading businessman and active member of one of the committees dedicated to the celebration. The main attraction and celebration will be visible on the main road in old Rourkela, the main business district. "Earlier there were nine akhadas in Rourkela. Now another one has been added to that number especially for the celebration," said a member Vivek Sharma. The akhadas are basically home to Lord Hanuman. "For us Lord Jagannath and Ram are very dear because logically Hanumanji is the devotee of both," said one member of Hanuman Akhada.

Some of the leading sweet shops like Kailashpuri, Dwarkapur, Shalimar and Atithi Bihar are overflowing with orders.

They have added new sweetmeat makers to their existing list of workers. "I am not accepting any new order for January 22. I already have orders for more than 15,000 laddus, bundi, and other sweets," said one of the sweet shop owners. Besides, they are also preparing for voluntary sweet distribution for the devotees.

Shops selling goods for the occasion like flags, diyas, pure ghee, castor oil, saffron vermilion and many other things have sprouted up. "I cannot say which particular thing has the most demand because everything is selling like hot cake," said one of the shopkeepers.

Meanwhile, the celebration is not limited to the main business district. Starting from temples and individual households to community celebrations, the zeal is visible across the city. "I have purchased over a hundred diyas and distributed them among my friends along with a small ghee packet and wick for the celebration," said one RSP employee.

Another person RSP worker Bablu Padhi said, "I stay in Koelnagar 'C' block and in our neighbourhood the preparation is in full swing. More than 20 families will join for a community celebration and we will do it on the road by lighting diyas and distributing prasad after worship of Lord Ram."

# Leopard skin seized; wildlife criminal held

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** The STF of Odisha Crime Branch has arrested one wildlife criminal and recovered a leopard skin among other incriminating materials from him.

STF sources here said, based on reliable information, an STF team conducted a raid near Ranipathar village under Puruna Katak police station limit in Boudh district Saturday. During the search, one wildlife criminal identified as Goutam Behera was apprehended, and one leopard skin was recovered from him.

Behera was arrested under Section 51 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and forwarded to the JMFC court in Harbhanga.

The leopard skin seized from him will be sent to the Director, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, for biological examination, STF sources said.

# NIT Rourkela holds 21st Convocation Day

**Rourkela:** Professional opportunities for young engineers in India is plenty, because of the high industrial growth rate, said Coal India CMD Polavarupu Mallikarjuna Prasad, in his address as the chief guest during the 21st convocation of NIT Rourkela. Prasad exhorted the students to grab the opportunities available in the country with both hands. He said, "With the continuing reforms and globalisation, India is accelerating its growth rate. And globalisation means additional job opportunities." In his welcome address NIT R Director K Umamaheswar Rao charted out the achievements of the institute and also its erstwhile alumni. "Our former students Ashutosh Parida, 1968 batch has got the Kendriya Sahitya Akademi Award for 2023 for his poetry collection. Similarly, Soma Mandal ex-CMD, SAIL-1984 batch featured in Forbes' Most Powerful Women list."

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E-Tender Notice No. ST-SBP-TENDER-2024-01  
Dt.: 12.01.2024

Name of Work: TELECOM ZONAL WORK IN THE CONTROL SECTION UNDER JURISDICTION OF SSE/TELE/ISBP, SSE/TELE/BLGR OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION OF EAST COAST RAILWAY FOR A PERIOD OF TWELVE MONTHS.  
Tender Value : Rs. 62,43,593.50

Bid Security: Rs. 1,24,900/-  
Tender closing Date & Time: At 1100 hrs. on 05.02.2024

No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-Tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website: [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 15 days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/ corrigenda issued for this tender. Website: [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

Div. Sig & Telecom Engineer (TELE) Sambalpur  
PR-1003/O/23-24

# Ex-MLA Jaynarayan Mohanty no more

**Balasore:** Senior BJP leader and former MLA Jaynarayan Mohanty passed away Saturday after prolonged illness, family members said. Mohanty, 73, is survived by two sons and a daughter. He breathed his last at AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, where he was undergoing treatment for kidney ailments and diabetes, they said. Mohanty was elected twice as MLA from the Jaleswar Assembly constituency - in 1995 and 2000 - as a Congress candidate. He had joined the BJP in 2019.

**बैंक ऑफ इंडिया**  
**Bank of India**

Zonal Office : Star House,  
1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015

**Bank of India**

Zonal Office : Star House,  
1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015

**POSSESSION NOTICE**  
[Rule-8 (1)] of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of India under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the borrowers/guarantors in the loan account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest & expenses thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described here-in below in exercise of the powers conferred on him / her under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the Act read with Rule-8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002. The borrowers/guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property & any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank of India, Sastri Nagar Branch for the amount stated below with interest thereon. **The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of the Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to them, to redeem the secured assets.**

SASTRI NAGAR BRANCH Name & Address of the Borrower(s)	Liabilities due as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession	Description of Immovable Property/ies
Borrower: Mr. Debaraj Pradhan, S/o Kaibalya Pradhan, Plot No.: 544, Mouza: Bhagabatipur, Village: Badadhia, P.S.: Tangi, Dist.: Khurda, Odisha-752023	₹ 13,78,437.24 + interest & expenses thereon	31.10.2023 / 19.01.2024	All the part and parcel of land at Khata No.: 1067, Plot No.: 544, Area: Ac.0.30dec., Mouza: Bhagabatipur, Tahasil: Chilika, SRO: Tangi, P.S.: Tangi, P.S. No.: 41, Dist.: Khurda, Bounded by: North: Road, South: Plot No. 543, East: Plot No. 539, West: Plot No. 545

Date: 20.01.2024, Place: Bhubaneswar  
Authorized Officer, Bank of India

FOCUS ECONOMY

# DANGEROUS DELUSION



Attempts to build domestic capabilities in exclusionary ways have never brought the national resilience or international peace that advocates of self-reliance promised

Over the past three years, COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine exposed the vulnerabilities stemming from deep global economic integration. Now, governments and companies around the world have given high priority to shortening supply chains, rebuilding domestic production capacity, and diversifying suppliers. But these responses are motivated not only by pragmatic risk-management considerations but also by the goal of economic self-reliance, an aspiration that threatens to derail any stable restructuring of the global economy.

than an outward-looking program of punishment, it appears benign, even sensible. But this is an illusion. Even if self-reliance is an understandable response to a world that is moving away from economic openness, it risks fueling even greater systemic instability.

Today's autarkic tendencies are a symptom of the fading Pax Americana. The intensifying US-China rivalry and the widening divide between democratic and authoritarian regimes have increasingly impaired America's ability to keep the global market economy open.

According to one theory of international relations, a trusted and committed hegemon that enforces global rules and provides global public goods is a prerequisite to keeping international markets open. When the predominant power no longer has the means or will to play this role, markets suddenly become inaccessible. The hegemon will use protectionism to contain rising challenges and preserve its own global status while reducing its international commitments. In response, new challengers, like China today, will undermine the international system by challenging its legitimacy.

Signs of America's diminished commitment to the global liberal order have been multiplying. During Donald Trump's presidency, the United States openly rejected the principles and sense of purpose that had animated its international engagement for the preceding

seven decades. And though Biden declared early in his presidency that "America is back," his administration has only marginally repaired the damage that was done over the preceding four years. The US is still using trade as a weapon against China and pursuing an exclusionary industrial policy. At the same time, China, along with other emerging economies, has been building a parallel international system centered around its own institutions and partnerships.

The world thus finds itself in an increasingly unstable equilibrium. While the international economic order still exists in a formal sense, it no longer delivers stability in practice. Countries are left with no choice but to build up their own domestic capabilities and regional groupings. As the world divides along democratic and authoritarian lines, international exchange will be based more on political discrimination than on comparative advantage.

Historically, leading intellectual exponents of self-sufficiency - from Englebert Kaempfer, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Johann Fichte to Mohandas Gandhi and John Maynard Keynes - mistakenly assumed that such strategies contributed to international peace by insulating countries from foreign influences that encouraged war. But the inward-looking nature of self-reliance inevitably clashes with the desire for larger economic areas or unavailable goods.

More than a century ago, European empires tried to achieve exclusive control over economically valuable regions, contributing to the great-power tensions that fueled wars throughout the nineteenth century, before erupting decisively in Sarajevo in 1914. Similarly, during the interwar years, Imperial Japan tried to reduce its dependence on the US for key commodities by expanding its footprint in Asia; but that duly brought it into direct confrontation with Western powers in the region. Today, tensions over the status of Taiwan, a critical link in the global semiconductor supply chain, epitomize this risk.

If the fragmentation of the global economy continues, great-power tensions will likely intensify, increasing the likelihood of a clash. Alternatively, the US could come to terms with the erosion of its hegemonic position. While it still exercises substantial influence, it could take the lead in restructuring global governance to make it more inclusive and consensual. That is what the world needs to re-establish trust among countries and encourage economic openness.

Mutual reliance among countries should be the goal. To prevent the global economy's costly fragmentation into separate blocs, we need less authoritarian-versus-democratic rhetoric, greater efforts to separate economic issues from concerns about values, and a renewed diplomatic focus on the global commons.

Self-reliance strategies invariably lead to systemic chaos, as key goods and markets become inaccessible. Attempts to build domestic capabilities in exclusionary ways have never brought the national resilience or international peace that advocates of self-reliance promised. On the contrary, such policies have usually been harbingers of conflict.

The writer is Senior Fellow at the Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government at the Harvard Kennedy School

PROJECT SYNDICATE



Edoardo Campanella

**SELF-RELIANCE STRATEGIES INVARIABLY LEAD TO SYSTEMIC CHAOS, AS KEY GOODS AND MARKETS BECOME INACCESSIBLE**



Aakar Patel

**Officials, employees, and owners working in GIFT City near Gandhinagar would be exempt from the prohibition law, while other Gujaratis who drank would continue to be forced to abstain or to do it illegally**

## Selective Prohibition

I am writing this from Gujarat, where the government has decided to lift prohibition in one part of the state. As a news report put it, this was done to "attract global financial institutions", and to that end 'alcohol would be allowed at hotels/restaurants/clubs offering "Wine and Dine" in Gujarat International Finance Tec-City near the state capital Gandhinagar.'

This, the report added, would be available only to officials, employees and owners working in GIFT City who would be exempt from the prohibition law, which makes alcohol consumption illegal across the state. Other Gujaratis who drank would continue to be forced to abstain or to do it illegally. It is interesting to see what the origin of prohibition in law in India has been from a constitutional point of view.

Sociologist MN Srinivas has written that the use of alcohol and intoxicants in Hindu religious rituals is part of the practices of popular and indigenous cultures. However, formal religious rites involve no alcohol, and like beef, the idea of consuming the 'som' intoxicant in a ritual was given up long ago and made taboo. In the Constituent Assembly, the claim was made (by Congressman BG Kher) that 'the drinking of liquor is one of the five deadly sins which the Smritis have laid down' and that not only Hindus and Muslims but even Christians viewed it as a sin.

When the point was made by other members that alcohol was a part of Adivasi culture and ritual, Congressman VI Muniswami Pillai claimed that 'there is no such thing as require liquor, toddy, brandy or any such thing, at the time of the ceremonies of the aborigines'. He said that alcohol came to the indigenous people with the British and had left with them.

A spirited response to the Hindu conservatives came from BH Khardeka, an independent who represented Kolhapur. He said that the arguments being put forward in favour of prohibition did not hold. The first argument, that the Americans had enforced it between 1920 and 1933, was flawed because the Americans had let it go. The second, that the Congress Party had pledged itself to it, did not matter because the Congress was only one political party after independence and did not represent the nation. The third, that the claim that Parsis and Christians were also in favour of prohibition, was bogus. And last, that Gandhi was in favour of it, did not hold because Gandhi was also against compulsion.

Khardekar also spoke of lost excise revenues which could be put to use to build the state and quoted the economist Harold Laski's Liberty in the Modern State, in which he says prohibition infringes on personal liberty.

His is the most structured and factual intervention in the debate. But his primary arguments were dismissed by the others as being either of no consequence or resolvable. In the absence of any pushback other than from Khardekar and a clear Congress desire to push this through on moral grounds, the amendment was accepted. Article 47 reads: 'The State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties and, in particular, the State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medicinal purposes of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health.'

The provision was smuggled in under the cloak of health and well-being. But as the decades have shown, the obligation of the State in the first part, of raising the levels of nutrition and standard of living and improvement of health, and indeed these being its primary duties, has been followed in the breach. India stood 129th out of 189 nations in the 2019 United Nations Development Programme human development index, which measures life expectancy, education, and per capita income. In 2023, it was ranked at 132.

Since independence, Gujarat has always been under prohibition but had an HDI rank of 14 among 25 Indian states in 2017 ('Human Development Index across Indian states', State Bank of India, Issue 94, FY 2019). Bihar, which is currently under prohibition ranked 25, the very last among all states surveyed.

In 2022, the Harvard Centre for Population and Development Studies assessed the performance of India's states and districts on the POSHAN Abhiyan. This was a programme launched in March 2018 with a stated aim to achieve improvement in the nutritional status of pregnant women, adolescent girls, lactating mothers, and children under six. Gujarat has the lowest rank at 28.

The data shows that it is very hard to relate prohibition in India to the constitutional goal of raising the level of nutrition, the standard of living of its people, and the improvement of public health. And to be honest, this was never the real reason, just as the desire to ban cow slaughter is unrelated to the state's 'endeavour to organise agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines', as Article 48 puts it. It is religious conservatism parading as science.

Prohibition in India is always pushed from the moral point of view of women's and societal well-being. The point made by Srinivas, that it represented a Sanskrit act that was linked to caste, is never raised in Indian debates, and the disapproval of drink is almost universal.

### WISDOM CORNER

- One is never afraid of the unknown; one is afraid of the known coming to an end. **JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI**
- The life of man is of no greater importance to the universe than that of an oyster. **DAVID HUME**
- To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here. **JONATHAN EDWARDS**

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1793:** Louis XVI, the last Bourbon king of France, was executed by guillotine in Paris during the French Revolution. The son of Louis, Dauphin of France, and Maria Josepha of Saxony, Louis became the new Dauphin when his father died in 1765.
- 1885:** Lead Belly—an African American folk-blues singer, songwriter, and guitarist whose ability to perform a vast repertoire of songs, in conjunction with his notoriously violent life, made him a legend—is believed to have been born this day.
- 1941:** Spanish-born singer Plácido Domingo—an operatic tenor whose voice, physical stature, and dramatic ability made him one of the most popular tenors of the late 20th and early 21st centuries—was born in Madrid.
- 1976:** First commercial Concorde flight commissioned. Generating a sonic boom as it traveled through the atmosphere at supersonic speed, the Concorde, a commercial aircraft built with funding from the British and French governments, began regular service on this day in 1976.

### SPECTRUM RAM TEMPLE

## Ayodhyconomics energises UP



Shivaji Sarkar

**THE FATE OF SEVERAL PROJECTS, PUSHED BY UPA II IN ITS FINAL MONTHS NOW, HANGS IN BALANCE**

The economic boom in Ayodhya unveils an ambitious vision with ₹85,000 crore investment for the township of 30 lakh people, as majestic ₹1800 crore Ramlala Mandir set to open on January 22 amidst grand celebrations. It is wonder economics. More than its economics, the politics around Ram keeps people more engaged. Not only does the BJP see it as the religious trump card, even the Opposition finds it uncomfortable, if not troublesome to handle.

The small township of less than five square km sees a flurry of activity to welcome an estimated 45 lakh visitors, and the Ayodhya commissioner says it would see an investment boost of ₹85,000 crore over the next ten years.

A contrast is Jagdishpur industrial hub, 66 km from Ayodhya, attempted to be developed in the 1980s by the Gandhis with thousands of crores of public sector investments. The latest of that was in the 2012 plan for creating a food hub. It all collapsed, partly for it being an interior area and largely for unsustainable business model and as some alleged because of unfavourable political atmosphere.

The redevelopment of Ayodhya, as envisaged in Master Plan 2031, broadly hinges on eight themes to guide civic authorities for the upcoming smart city. The scheme includes a spiritual university, a green-field township, an urban forest, to name a few.

Property prices, as per industry sources, have risen nearly four times over the past three years. Top five-star hotel brands such as the Taj, Radisson, ITC are opening new properties to cater to the projected rise in demand. In fact, over 73 new hotels are in the pipeline in Ayodhya.

Interestingly, civic authorities are projecting a ratio of 1:10 of residents to tourists. According to industry estimates, around 3.25 lakh tourists visited Ayodhya in 2021 and the following year this number rose to 2.39 crore. Now, after the inauguration of the temple, local authorities are expecting over 4 crore pilgrims to visit Ayodhya this year. The state government has promised that the holy town will become a world-class city in the coming years with modern amenities

around its cultural aesthetics.

There are 324 five-star hotels in the country. Agra is said to have a dozen, but they do rarely have full occupancy as most people prefer to stay in Delhi and make short trips. Vrindavan, a popular pilgrim centre, has no 5-star accommodation. Pilgrims spend moderately. The ground-breaking ceremony in Ayodhya, scheduled for February, will launch 126 hospitality sector projects worth ₹3,800 crore.

Ayodhya has been one of the low-priority stations for most devotes. The hype created would need efforts to sustain. The government investment is low and so far, it seemingly has not much of an industrial activity planned. The flow of tourists at ratio 1:10 or residents would be the only factor for sustaining an economy.

The political atmosphere contributes a lot to sustain a project. Jagdishpur, launched with much fanfare did not succeed. The region was planned to become an industrial hub and public sector companies were forced to set up factories in the region, irrespective of feasibility and concerns of profitability.

Similarly, Amethi, 100 km away from Ayodhya suffered what congressmen say, "politics of revenge" and BJP minister Smriti Irani says unviable projects pushed by the UPA government. The fate of several projects, pushed by UPA II in its final months now, hangs in balance.

Small traders are having a spurt in business. There is growing demand for handicrafts such as decorative pendants, bangles, lockets, key rings, garlands, among others. Exports from Ayodhya, according to reports, rose by 130 percent to ₹254 crore in 2023.

Ayodhya has not much of public investments. It is designed mostly to survive on private investments. Dinesh Goyal, Vice President, Indian Industries Association, told the press that he expects a business turnover of ₹50,000 crore because of on-going preparations ahead of opening ceremonies at Ram Mandir. Business entities across the country are capitalising on these opportunities. A tall order or not, the unfolding developments beyond the temple consecration would reveal.

INFA

### Education of future leaders

Sir, The future of any country is determined by the quality of education and health services provided to its children. As the country enters the era of the technological revolution of AI, we have to focus all our energy on educating children. This year's report by the NGO ASR is as alarming as the reports of all previous years. If every fourth teenager in the 14-18 age group cannot even read second grade phrases in their own language, and if only every third teenager wants to study science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), while 56% want to study the humanities, it is not difficult to understand why more than half of teenagers in this age group are unable to solve simple third-grade addition and division questions. In the next few years, these teenagers will participate in the democratic process by becoming voters/leaders, and they will stand in the labour market, but they will not be needed in new types of industries. Surprisingly, according to the report, 90% of these teens have smartphones in their homes, but more than half are not aware of their security features. An ASR report a year ago revealed that four out of five students in South India choose STEM as their educational path. Needless to say, their chances of advancing in the modern-era race would be greater.

N Ashraf, MUMBAI

### Left-handed Dhoni

Sir, Past and present cricket greats have lauded the young Rinku Singh's exceptional talent, perseverance, and presence of mind. Indian captain Rohit Sharma, coach Rahul Dravid, and spin ace R Ashwin have sung a paean of praise for the 26-year-old. Ashwin has gone to the extent of calling him 'left-handed Dhoni' though he clarified that it is still early days for Rinku to be compared with the former Indian captain. However, it cannot be forgotten that Rinku has modelled his game on the inimitable Dhoni. He appears unruffled on the field, seems to have a good head on his shoulders, and runs like a hare between the wickets. By the look of things, similar to his idol Dhoni, Rinku is a through-and-through team man. At this rate, the day may not be far away when Rinku earns the sobriquet 'left-handed Dhoni.'

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

## 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**  
B-15, Rihabagar Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Maha cringes as Marathas start 'big march' for quotas

ORGANISERS CLAIM AT LEAST 3 CRORE PEOPLE WILL VIRTUALLY LAY SIEGE TO MUMBAI, SENDING PANIC WAVES AMONG VARIOUS AUTHORITIES IN THE COMMERCIAL CAPITAL

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jalna (Maharashtra), Jan 20: Shivba Sanghatana leader Manoj Jarange-Patil launched his promised 'March to Mumbai' from his native village Antarvali-Sarati along with thousands of supporters to press for Maratha reservation, here Saturday morning.

wards the country's commercial capital where he hopes to get the proverbial pot of 'quotas'. "This is a fight for justice for the Marathas. They must get what they are entitled to... We will not back off from the march to Mumbai. No bullets can deter me now. I am ready to give up my life for the Marathas. Whether I remain or not... But we will return only after the reservation is given to us," vowed Jarange-Patil with a grim demeanor.

of Marathas from all over the state are expected to march and over the next few days, the organisers claim at least 3 crore (30 million) will virtually lay siege to Mumbai, sending panic waves among various authorities. The Maratha leader, who has been single-handedly leading the agitation since August 2023, had earlier demanded the quotas with the slogan: 'Either my funeral procession or a victory march', and today he expressed readiness to face bullets if the government attempted to thwart the Maratha marchers to Mumbai. In Mumbai, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has renewed his appeal to Jarange-Patil to put off his walkathon to Mumbai and reiterated that a Special Session of Maharashtra Legislature will be held in February to declare the



Maratha quotas. Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar jeered at the government asking "where are the two Ministers

who had promised the Maratha quotas... And why are they not showing their faces now". Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut called upon the government to stop taking the issue lightly, "call Jarange-Patil for talks and finalise his demands without delays." Minister Shambhuj Desai claimed that the 'quotas issue is about 70-85 percent solved," and said it was not appropriate to hold Mumbai at ransom, while expressing concerns over the pressures the march would place on the state capital. Referring to Jarange-Patil's claims that some people in the government were trying to trap and break the Maratha agitation, Minister Hasan Mushi asked him to "give the names of those people" and promised action against them. Jarange-Patil has submitted his list of demands including

giving quotas in education and government jobs to the Marathas, immediately issuing certificates to those whose 'Kunbi Caste' (OBC) certificates have been found, withdrawal of all police cases filed against his supporters, etc. "I have given enough deadlines and extensions to the government, but the issue has still not been resolved even after seven months. Now we will not budge, the Marathas will come out in massive strength. They will not tolerate any injustice now," declared Jarange-Patil, walking and talking with the media en route. He said he was toying with the idea of launching a simultaneous hunger-fast from Saturday, but would take the decision after consulting his team, though he plans to sit on indefinite hunger-strike in Mumbai from January 26.

RAM TEMPLE CONSECRATION TISS warns students against protests; IITB plans events

Mumbai: The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) has cautioned its students against holding any protest on its campus here against the idol consecration ceremony of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya January 22 and warned them of action by law-enforcement agencies. The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, on the other hand, will hold programmes, such as the inauguration of a 'gaushala' (cow shelter) and recitation of a poem based on the epic Ramayan, to mark the occasion. A notice issued by TISS January 18 said it was brought to the notice of the administration that a few students were planning to organise protests in the old or new campus of the institute against the Ram Janmabhoomi 'pran pratishtha' January 22.

Celebrations begin at Raghunath shrine

The Raghunath Temple comprising seven shrines is one of the largest ancient temple complexes in north India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Jan 20: A three-day programme began at the ancient Raghunath temple here Saturday to celebrate the consecration ceremony of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

The event commenced with the sacred 'Sundarkand Path' this morning as the Dharmarth Trust invited people of the region to participate in the grand celebrations spanning from January 20-22. "On behalf of J&K Dharmarth Trust, we invite the people of Jammu to partake in the grand celebrations," said MK Ajatshatru Singh, former minister and trustee of J&K Dharmarth Trust. "We have planned a grand function January 21 and 22, featuring recitations of Ramayana, dance, music, and bhajans sung by artists. It will



RAM TEMPLE CONSECRATION

be broadcasted live," Singh said. Devotees are flocking to the temple to pay obeisance at the numerous shrines in the Raghunath Temple complex and to participate in the 'Sundarkand Path' led by the temple priests. The atmosphere is filled with enchanting bhajans with people dancing to kirtans. "Shri Ram is coming back home in Ayodhya. We are very happy. We are taking part in the celebration at the Raghunath temple for all the three days from today to seek the blessings of the Lord," a devotee Sangeet Devi said. The Raghunath Temple compris-

ing seven shrines is one of the largest ancient temple complexes in north India. It was attacked twice by terrorists. Maharaja Gulab Singh and his son Maharaj Ranbir Singh built the temple between 1853 and 1860. Singh said 33,000 Devis and Devas reside at the Raghunath temple and it has 32 shrines outside the complex. The minister said those who are unable to go to Ayodhya should come to this temple and partake in the celebrations here. He added that the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony will be telecast live and a Rath Yatra will also be held as part of the three-day programme. Work on flower decoration and facelift of the temple complex is underway, members of the J&K Dharmarth Trust said. The celebration is expected to resemble Diwali, with a large number of people joining in the festivities, transforming this historic event into a collective and joyous celebration for all, they said.

Kashmir's ski industry melts sans snow

AGENCE-FRANCE PRESSE

Gulmarg, Jan 20: Winter in the Himalayas should mean blanketing snow, and for Gulmarg in Kashmir, one of the highest ski resorts in the world, that usually means thousands of tourists. This year, the deep powder once taken for granted is gone. The slopes are brown and bare, a stark example of the impact of the extreme weather caused by the rapidly heating planet, experts say.



"The current dry spell is an extreme weather event - which are predicted to become more intense and frequent in the future," said climate scientist Shakil Romshoo, from Kashmir's Islamic University of Science and Technology. Rising temperatures For decades, an insurgency seeking independence or a merger with Pakistan - and military operations to crush that movement - has seen tens of thousands of civilians, soldiers and rebels killed in Kashmir. The rebellion has lost much of its former strength, and India has been heavily promoting domestic tourism in the region, home to spectacular mountain scenery. But in Gulmarg, hotel bookings

have plunged by as much as three-quarters, tourism professionals say, as hundreds of guides and scooter drivers sit waiting in the sunshine, praying for snow. "Most foreigners who mainly come for skiing on the deep powder slopes have cancelled," Bakshi said. "I have lost about 70 percent of bookings so far." Perched at 8,694 feet, the Himalayan resort is also home to the Indian army's High Altitude Warfare School, located close to the highly militarised Line of Control, the de facto border that divides contested Kashmir between India and Pakistan. Kashmir has recorded little rain, and temperatures are about six degrees Celsius higher than normal since autumn last year, according to meteorology officials.

AN-32 Kargil courier service from Jan 22

Kargil/Jammu: The air courier service from Kargil to Jammu will resume its operations from January 22 to facilitate movement of people during the winter months. The administration of UT of Ladakh has taken an initiative to operate subsidised plane and helicopter service from Ladakh during winters, when roads in the entire region remain cut off from the rest of the country. The Air Force will commence AN-32 courier service from Kargil to Jammu and back from January 22. Ladakh remains cut off for more than seven months from the rest of the country during winter.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (AGRI.), KORAPUT DIVISION, JEYPORE. INVITATIONS FOR BIDS THROUGH e-Procurement. Bid Identification No. E.E. (Agril), Koraput Division, Jeypore - 07/2023-24. Includes table with columns: Sl. No., Nos. of the Work, Nature of Work, Estimated Cost (Rs. in Lakh), Cost of Bid Documents (in Rs.), EMD, Class of Contractor, Period of Completion.

DISTRICT PROJECT OFFICE SAMAGRA SHIKSHA, KANDHAMAL. NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT). No. n-264. Sealed tenders under two bid systems are invited from the reputed and credible printing firms / agencies having valid PAN, GST & IT Clearance, registration of firm etc. for printing & supply of Holographic Report Card for Class -I to VIII Students under SS Scheme.

OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI LAXMIPUR, DIST.- KORAPUT. Letter No. 174/2024. Dated 18.01.2024. E-TENDER CALL NOTICE. No. i-595:- Sealed tenders are invited from Registered Contractor from state PWD / M.I / Irrigation / Rural Works for execution of buildings etc.

PANCHAYAT SAMITI, KHAJURIPADA, DIST.- KANDHAMAL (Odisha), Pin-762012. Adv. No. KAJ-01/2023-24/ Dt.: TENDER CALL NOTICE. No. i-596:- Tender call notice is invited from the intended Class - 'B' Contractors for Development of Pakadajhar Waterfall, Sudrukumpa, GP: Sudrukumpa under Panchayat Samiti, Khajuripada, Dist.- Kandhamal (Odisha) 762012.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. B-1643. e-Procurement Notice, ANGUL (R&B) DIVISION. Bid Identification No. 35 of 2023-24. e-mail ID - angulrbdivision@yahoo.co.in. Includes table with columns: Sl. No., Approximate estimated cost, Period of completion, Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal, Last date / time for receipt of bid in the portal, Date of opening of bid, Name and address of the office inviting bid, The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER SUNDARGARH (R&B) DIVISION, SUNDARGARH. E-mail ID: pwd\_sng@yahoo.co.in. No. B-1648. Bid Identification No. - SE-R&B-SNG-51 OF 2023-24. Letter No. 337/ Date: 18.01.24. Includes table with columns: Sl. No., Nature of work, No. of work, Tender cost, Class of contractor, Availability of bid document in the website, Date of opening of bid, The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only.

WORKS DEPARTMENT No. B-1649. OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, ROURKELA (R&B) DIVISION, UDITNAGAR, ROURKELA. E-Mail Id - eepwrkl@gmail.com. Government of Orissa 'e' Procurement Notice Bid Identification No.: 121 / 2023-24 Dated: 18.01.2024. Includes table with columns: Sl. No., Number of works, Estimated cost, Period of completion, Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal, Last date / time for receipt of bids in the portal, Date of opening of bid, Name and address of the officer inviting bid, Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal http://tendersorissa.gov.in.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SOIL CONSERVATION, PURI. Station Bazar, Puri - 752002. E-Mail: asco.puri@gmail.com/pdws.puri@gmail.com. Bid Identification No. ADSC, PURI-03 of 2023-24. No. L-209: The Assistant Director, Soil Conservation, Puri on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in Single Cover System in ONLINE MODE as detailed below: Includes table with columns: Sl. No., Estimated Cost, Bid Cost, Period of Completion, No. of Works (Tender), EMD, Class of Contractor, Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal, Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal, Date of submission of documents, Date & time of opening of online bids, Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid, Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal http://tendersodisha.gov.in.

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER CUM WILDLIFE WARDEN ROURKELA FOREST DIVISION, ROURKELA, SUNDARGARH, ODISHA. Phone No. 0661-2664637, Fax No. 0661-2664638, e-mail: dforourkela.od@gov.in. Order No. 14 Dtd. 19.01.2024. No. MM-419 INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) E-Procurement Bid Identification No. RKL-FE&CC-26/2023-24 Dtd. 19.01.2024. Includes table with columns: Sl. No., Name of Work, No. of Works, No. of Covers, Estimated Cost, Period of Completion, Date & Time of availability of bid documents in portal, Last date/time for receipt of bid in the portal, Date of opening of bid documents, Class of Contractor, Name and address of Officer Inviting Bid, Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal www.tendersodisha.gov.in. The Addendum/Corrigendum if any will be hosted in the website only.



Riders go through flames during the annual 'Luminarias' celebration in the village of San Bartolome de Pinares, northwest of Madrid, Spain



A woman takes a dip in icy water during celebrations of the Orthodox Christian feast of Epiphany in the town of Sertolovo in the Leningrad Region, Russia



People click pictures with a giant lock ahead of the consecration ceremony of Ram Temple in Ayodhya



PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) supporters lie on a Union Jack flag as they hold a 'die-in' near the Ministry of Defence's headquarters to protest the slaughter of Canadian black bears for purely ornamental bearskin caps in London



A team of CRPF's 'Daredevils' during rehearsal for the Republic Day parade in New Delhi



Anti-abortion activists participate in the annual 'March for Life' in front of the Supreme Court in Washington



A girl sits in a makeshift cart as Palestinians wait to receive food amid shortages of supplies, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip



Houseboat owners demonstrate the first-ever fire and emergency services boat during its launch, at Dal Lake in Srinagar

## of the day quote

The Rajasthan government's move to discontinue the previous regime's internship programme is an act of vengeance

The Himachal Pradesh government will make a provision in the 'Mukhyamantri Sukh Ashray Yojana' of providing rent for accommodation to the orphan children

The BJP-led government has implemented several initiatives for systemic change in the state since 2014

## SHORT TAKES

### AAP opposes simultaneous polls

New Delhi: The Aam Aadmi Party Saturday said holding simultaneous elections in the country will damage the idea of parliamentary democracy and the basic structure of the Constitution. It will not be able to deal with hung legislature and will actively encourage anti-defection, the AAP said. The remarks of the AAP, a constituent of the INDIA bloc, came a day after the Congress, also part of the same grouping, strongly opposed the idea of holding simultaneous elections in the country, saying it goes against the guarantees of federalism and the basic structure of the Constitution.

### BJP leader murder case: 15 convicted

Alappuzha (Kerala): A Kerala court Saturday found 15 men guilty of killing a BJP OBC wing leader in this coastal district in December 2021. The convicted persons are associated with the now-banned radical Islamist group, Popular Front of India (PFI). Ranjith Sreenivasan, the BJP OBC Morcha state secretary, was brutally attacked and killed in his home on December 19, 2021, in front of his family, allegedly by activists affiliated with PFI and Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI).

### Delhi teen kills grandmother

New Delhi: A 15-year-old boy along with his friend has been apprehended for allegedly killing his 77-year-old grandmother to stealing money from her house in the Shahdara area here, police said Saturday. The police said the stolen cash worth ₹14,000 was recovered from the main accused.

## Congress alleges assault during Nyay Yatra in Assam

North Lakhimpur, Jan 20: The Congress Saturday alleged that its workers were assaulted, their vehicles vandalised and banners torn in Assam's North Lakhimpur town, through which the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra proceeded. State Congress president Bhupen Kumar Borah said that Friday night all hoardings and posters put up to welcome the Yatra in the town were torn and party members who had gone to put up the banners were beaten up. "Two vehicles used by the party to carry the displays were also damaged by miscreants, who also threatened Congress workers of dire consequences if they did not leave at once," he alleged. "We have filed two police complaints - one over beating our workers and damaging the vehicles, and the other over tearing up the posters," he said. Borah claimed that the car in which the miscreants arrived at the spot belonged to a person who is known to be close to the local BJP MLA. The Congress also shared a video of some persons tearing down posters with Congress leaders' photos. PTI could not verify the authenticity of the video independently. Congress leader Bharat Narah said that never in the political history of Assam had anyone witnessed "rival parties" damaging banners and posters.

## ED grills Soren for over 7 hours



Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) workers gather outside the residence of Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, in Ranchi. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials Saturday visited Soren's house for his questioning in a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam

ED officers reached Soren's residence, which was virtually turned into a fortress with heavy deployment of security forces, around 1 pm for the interrogation, and left after over seven hours around 8:30 pm.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, Jan 20: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Saturday interrogated Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren for over seven hours in connection with a money laundering case linked to land deals, following which he claimed that a conspiracy was hatched against him.

ED officers reached Soren's residence, which was virtually turned into a fortress with heavy deployment of security forces, around 1 pm for the interroga-

tion, and left after over seven hours around 8:30 pm. Soren, 48, who is also the executive president of the ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), had earlier skipped seven summonses of the ED, and gave his nod for questioning when the eighth summons was sent. The investigation pertains to a "huge racket of illegal change of ownership of land by the mafia" in Jharkhand, according to the central probe agency. The ED has so far arrested 14 people in the case, including 2011-batch IAS officer Chhavi Ranjan who served as the director of the state's Social Welfare Department and deputy commissioner of Ranchi.

Sources said that Soren's questioning was incomplete, and he will be quizzed again. As the questioning went on inside, his supporters and some tribal outfits demonstrated a few hundred metres away from his house, alleging that the BJP-led government at the Centre was targeting Soren through agencies such as

the ED as he was a tribal. As the protests went on, security personnel were seen using high-resolution body cameras to keep track of activities around Soren's house. The measure comes in the wake of the attacks on ED officers in neighbouring West Bengal during a raid. The Ranchi district administration had also imposed prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC near Soren's house, disallowing any demonstration, carrying weapons and public meetings.

Demonstrations similar to the one near Soren's house were held across the state, with the protestors burning effigies of "ED officers" at some places. As the team of ED officers left his house, the chief minister came out and addressed his supporters.

"A conspiracy was hatched against me, but the final nail in the coffin of the conspirators will be put by us... We will not be scared, your leader will face the bullets first and keep your morale high," he told the JMM workers.

## Creator of Rashmika's deepfake video held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: Delhi Police Saturday said it has arrested a B-Tech graduate from Andhra Pradesh in connection with a deepfake video of actor Rashmika Mandanna that was widely circulated on social media.

The accused identified as 23-year-old Eemani Naveen, a native of Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, had created the video to increase the followers on his fan page of Rashmika Mandanna on Instagram, an official said.

November 10, an FIR was registered under Sections 465 (punishment for forgery) and 469 (forgery for purpose of harming reputation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and sections 66C and 66E of the Information Technology Act at the Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) Unit of the Delhi Police's Special Cell. The case was registered on the complaint of the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW).

Soon after registering the FIR, the IFSO Unit wrote to Meta to get the URL and other details to identify the accused who made

the video and put it on the social media, the official added. Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), IFSO, Dr Hemant Tiwari, said that Naveen created the deepfake video of the actress just to increase the followers and posted it on the fan page on October 13.

He had used the AI (artificial intelligence) technique with the help of Youtube to make the video, he added. The DCP said that the fan following of this page increased from 90,000 to 1,08,000 within two weeks due to the deepfake video.

When Naveen later realised that it became a national sensation and also saw tweets from famous film stars against the said deepfake video, he got scared and deleted the said posts from the Instagram Channel and also changed the name of Insta channel, he added. Tiwari further said that Naveen had also deleted the relevant digital data from his devices.

Another officer said it was found during the preliminary analysis that the original video was uploaded by a British Indian girl on her Instagram account on



October 9, 2023, and later on deepfake video of Mandanna was created and circulated on various social media platforms.

The officer said that more than 500 social media accounts related to the alleged deepfake videos were analysed during the investigation. After the deep analysis and interrogation of suspected persons, finally Naveen's account was traced on Instagram, the officer said.

A team of Inspector Hansraj Swami and Sub-Inspector Kapil Yaduvanshi under the supervision of ACP Manoj Kumar was sent to Guntur, Andhra Pradesh,

## MP poll drubbing: Congress serves notices to 150 leaders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Jan 20: The Madhya Pradesh Congress's disciplinary committee has issued show cause notices to nearly 150 local leaders for allegedly engaging in "anti-party" activities during the November 2023 state assembly polls.

The committee issued the notices Friday, giving the leaders 10 days to respond, failing which strict action including expulsion from the party would be initiated, according to a senior party functionary.

This move by the Congress comes after the assembly poll results in which the party managed to win just 66 seats in the 230-member House.

It is also seen as a part of the party's efforts to reorganise before the general elections, signalling a zero-tolerance policy towards internal sabotage and indiscipline. The stern stance from the Congress comes following numerous complaints from the majority of the 164 nominees who lost in the polls, attributing their defeat to "internal sabotage."

The notices were issued after a meeting of the state Congress's disciplinary committee Friday. In a press release, the disciplinary committee chief and MPCC treasurer Ashok Singh warned that the party will consider taking action against those who engaged in "anti-party" activities.

"If we don't get satisfactory explanation from those who had been served notices, we are going to expel them," a senior Congress functionary said. At the disciplinary committee's meeting, its members endorsed the decision to show the door to party rebels who contested the assembly polls. The Congress has expelled a number of rebels who defied leadership and fought against official candidates.

## BJP TO LAUNCH MASS CONNECT PROGRAMME

Ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, the BJP will run a mass connect programme between February 4 and 11, with its 30 lakh members expected to reach out to seven lakh rural polling booths and all urban booths during the period



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, in Tiruchirappalli district, Saturday

## India-Myanmar border to be fenced soon: Shah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Jan 20: Home Minister Amit Shah Saturday said the government will end the free movement of people at the India-Myanmar border, and fence it completely so that it can be protected like the country's boundary with Bangladesh.

Shah made the announcement while addressing the passing out parade of the first batch of the five newly constituted Assam Police Commando battalions in Guwahati. "The Narendra Modi government has decided that the India-Myanmar border, which is open, will be protected by barbed fencing. The entire border will have barbed fencing like what we have at the India-Bangladesh border," he said.

"The Indian government is rethinking the free movement agreement with Myanmar. Now, the Government of India is going to stop this facility," he added. The Free Movement Regime allows people living on both sides of the border to travel 16 km into each other's territory without a visa. Four Indian states - Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram, share a 1,643-km-long border with Myanmar.

Earlier, officials had said that the government was planning to fence a 300-km stretch of the border. More than 31,000 people from Myanmar, mostly from the Chin state, have taken refuge in Mizoram following the military coup in the neighbouring country in February 2021. Many also took shelter in Manipur.

Dozens of Myanmar soldiers stationed near the international border with India also fled to Mizoram following intense gun-fights with militia group People's Defence Force (PDF) last year. They were later sent back to their country.

Shah also said that there has been a huge change in the law and order of the country under



The Narendra Modi government has decided that the India-Myanmar border, which is open, will be protected by barbed fencing. The entire border will have barbed fencing like what we have at the India-Bangladesh border

the leadership of PM Narendra Modi during the last 10 years. Attacking the Congress, he alleged that people had to pay bribes to get government jobs during its tenure, and maintained that not a single penny had to be paid for employment under the BJP rule.

On the consecration ceremony in Ayodhya, Shah said that Lord Ram would return home after 500 "disrespectful" years. "It's a matter of pride for the entire India," he said, noting that it was happening at a time when the country was on course to become a superpower.

Congratulations the 2,551 commandos who were inducted into the force at the function, Shah said that the Assam Police has faced challenges such as riots during the Partition, refugee problem, infiltration, the Bangladesh liberation war, insurgency and drug menace. "However, the Assam Police has a rich history of fighting these challenges and winning," he said.

## In a first, Army couple set to march down Kartavya Path

CAPT SUPREETHA IS FROM MYSORE, KARNATAKA, AND IS A LAW GRADUATE FROM JSS LAW COLLEGE IN THE CITY. MAJOR BLAIZE IS FROM WELLINGTON, TAMIL NADU, AND DID HIS GRADUATION FROM JAIN UNIVERSITY, BANGALORE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: Major Jerry Blaize and Captain Supreetha C T are all set to become the first couple to march down the Kartavya Path as members of two different contingents in the Republic Day parade January 26.

"This is a first in the history of the Republic Day parades," Major Blaize said. The couple, who got married in June 2023, said it was a sheer coincidence that they were getting to march together on the occasion.

"This did not happen in a planned way. It is a coincidence. Initially, I gave my selection test and got through. Then my husband also got selected from

his regiment," Captain Supreetha said. They were part of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) during college.

"My wife took part in the NCC Republic Day parade in 2016 at the Kartavya Path, New Delhi and I got the opportunity to be part of the NCC Republic Day camp in 2014 New Delhi. This was also one of the motivating factors for me to lead my regiment in the Republic Day 2024 at Kartavya path and make my regiment proud," Major Blaize said.

Capt Supreetha is from Mysore, Karnataka, and is a Law graduate from JSS Law College in the city. Major Blaize is from Wellington, Tamil Nadu, and did his graduation from



Major Jerry Blaize and his wife and Captain Supreetha C T of the Indian Army speak with the media, in New Delhi. Blaize and Supreetha are set to become the first couple to march down the Kartavya Path as members of two different contingents in the Republic Day parade

Jain University, Bangalore. They currently live in Delhi. They are from different regiments and take part in practice sessions separately. "My husband is from the Madras regiment and I am part of the Corps of Military Police contingent," Captain Supreetha said.

"We are posted at different places and this is one such opportunity that both of us are getting to spend time together for these two months in New Delhi. It is a very proud moment for both of us that we are here with our respective contingents," she added. They said their families are delighted and they will be coming to attend the parade.

# international

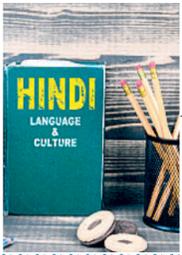


For the last 19 months, I've been saying that I'm ready to talk ... I'm a politician. "My biggest mistake was to accept a weak government"

IMRAN KHAN | FORMER PM, PAKISTAN

## HINDI IN TWO US GOVT SCHOOLS

In a first for California, two government schools in the Silicon Valley would be introducing Hindi as a world language in its school curriculum. The decision to introduce Hindi as an optional subject was welcomed by the large Indian American community at Fremont who have been seeking to have their children learn Hindi in schools



## of the day quote

We are looking to make a deal for Japanese shipyards to regularly overhaul and maintain US Navy warships so they can stay in Asian waters ready for any potential conflict

RAHM EMANUEL | US AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN

The war in Gaza is immoral and unacceptable. We demand an immediate end to this unjust war against Palestinians and implementation of the two-state solution

MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT | CHAIRMAN, AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

We want the status quo. We want the way it is - neither unification, neither independence. The way it is the way we want to live right now

ALEXANDER TAH-RAY YUI | TAIWAN'S DE-FACTO AMBASSADOR TO US

## ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

THE CONFLICT CONTINUING FOR OVER 100 DAYS HAS KILLED SOME 16,000 WOMEN AND CHILDREN, SAYS UN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, Jan 20: Women and children are the main victims in the Israel-Hamas war, with some 16,000 killed and an estimated two mothers losing their lives every hour since Hamas' surprise attack on Israel, the United Nations agency promoting gender equality said Friday. As a result of the more than 100-day conflict, UN Women added, at least 3,000 women may have become widows and heads of households and at least 10,000 children may have lost their fathers.

In a report released Friday, the agency pointed to gender inequality and the burden on women fleeing the fighting with children and being displaced again and again. Of the territory's 2.3 million population, it said, 1.9 million are displaced and "close to one million are women and girls" seeking shelter and safety.

UN Women's executive director, Sima Bahous, said this is "a cruel inversion" of fighting during the 15 years before the Hamas attack October 7. Previously, she said, 67% of all civilians killed in Gaza and the West Bank were

# Women, kids pay the price



- At least 3K women may have become widows
- At least 10K kids may have lost their fathers
- Out of 2.3mn Gaza population, 1.9mn displaced

These women and girls are deprived of safety, medicine, health care, and shelter. They face imminent starvation and famine. Most of all they are deprived of hope and justice

SIMA BAHOUS | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UN WOMEN

men and less than 14% were women.

She echoed UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' calls for a humanitarian cease-fire and the immediate release of all hostages taken captive in Israel October 7.

"However much we mourn the situation of the women and girls of Gaza today, we will mourn further tomorrow without un-

restricted humanitarian assistance and an end to the destruction and killing," Bahous said in a statement accompanying the report.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza says nearly 25,000 Palestinians have been killed in the conflict, 70% of them women and children. The United Nations says more than a half million people in Gaza - a quarter of the

## ISRAELI STRIKE KILLS 4 IRANIAN SOLDIERS

Damascus: An Israeli missile strike on Syria's capital Damascus Saturday killed four members of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards, including the head of the force's information unit, a security source in the regional pro-Syria alliance told Reuters. In Tehran, the Revolutionary Guards named four military advisers who were killed in the Israeli strike, but did not give their rank, and said further details would be announced later. Iranian state television said the targeted building was the residence of Iranian advisers in the Syrian capital. There was no immediate comment from Israel, which has long pursued a bombing campaign against Iran's military and security presence in Syria. It has shifted to deadlier strikes in the wake of the attack on Israel by militants of the Iranian-backed Palestinian Islamist group Hamas from Gaza.

population - are starving. In Israel, around 1,200 people were killed during the October 7 attack by Hamas that sparked the war, and some 250 people were taken hostage by militants. More than 100 hostages are believed to still be held captive in Gaza.

Bahous said UN Women had heard "shocking accounts of unconscionable sexual violence during the attacks" by Hamas, and she echoed UN calls for accountability, justice and support for all those affected.

Despite escalating hostilities in Gaza, the agency said women and children's rights organizations continue to operate. It

found that 83% of women's organizations surveyed in the Gaza Strip are at least partially operational, mainly focusing on the emergency response to the war. But UN Women said its analysis of funding from last year's flash appeal for Gaza found that just 0.09% of funding went directly to national or local women's rights organizations.

Bahous said there is a need for much more aid to get to Gaza, especially to women and children, and for an end to the war.

"This is a time for peace," she said. "We owe this to all Israeli and Palestinian women and girls. This is not their conflict. They must no longer pay its price."

## Ethnic killings in a Sudan city left up to 15K dead

REUTERS

United Nations, Jan 20: Between 10,000 and 15,000 people were killed in one city in Sudan's West Darfur region last year in ethnic violence by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and allied Arab militia, according to a United Nations report seen by Reuters Friday.

In the report to the UN Security Council, independent UN sanctions monitors attributed the toll in El Geneina to intelligence sources and contrasted it with the UN estimate that about 12,000 people have been killed across Sudan since war erupted April 15, 2023, between the Sudanese army and the RSF.

The monitors also described as "credible" accusations that the United Arab Emirates had provided military support to the RSF "several times per week" via Amdjarass in northern Chad. A top Sudanese general accused the UAE in November of backing the RSF war effort.

In a letter to the monitors, the UAE said 122 flights had delivered humanitarian aid to Amdjarass to help Sudanese fleeing the war. The UN says about 500,000 people have fled Sudan into eastern Chad, several hundred kilometers south of Amdjarass.

## SHORT TAKES

### China fires claim 21

Beijing: At least 21 people, including school students, were killed in two separate fire incidents in China, local authorities said Saturday. In the first accident, 13 students were confirmed killed in a fire that took place at the Yingcai School in Henan Province's Yanshanpu village Friday night. The local fire department received an alarm about the fire at the school at 11 pm local time Friday night. Rescuers arrived at the scene quickly and the flames were extinguished at around 11:30 pm. One person injured in the fire is currently receiving treatment at the hospital and is in stable condition, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

### NK teenagers jailed

Seoul: Video footage released by an organisation that works with North Korean defectors shows North Korean authorities publicly sentencing two teenagers to 12 years' hard labour for watching K-pop. The footage, which shows the two 16-year-olds in Pyongyang convicted of watching South Korean movies and music videos, was released by the South and North Development (SAND) Institute. North Korea has for years imposed tough sentences on anyone caught enjoying South Korean entertainment or copying the way South Koreans speak in a war on outside influences since a sweeping new "anti-reactionary thought" law was imposed in 2020.

## TOWARDS SPACE

### 4 astronauts, including Turkey's first, arrive at ISS

Washington: A four-man crew including Turkey's first astronaut arrived at the International Space Station (ISS) early on Saturday for a two-week stay in the latest such mission arranged entirely at commercial expense by Texas-based startup company Axiom Space. The rendezvous came about 37 hours after the Axiom quartet's Thursday evening liftoff in a rocketship from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. Both the Crew Dragon vessel and the Falcon 9 rocket that carried it to orbit were supplied, launched and operated by Elon Musk's SpaceX under contract with Axiom, as they were in the first two Axiom missions to the ISS since 2022. Once the astronauts reach the space station, they fall under the responsibility of NASA's mission control operation in Houston.



## Iran launches satellite into its highest orbit yet



Jerusalem: Iran said Saturday it had conducted a successful satellite launch into its highest orbit yet, the latest for a program the West fears improves Tehran's ballistic missiles. The announcement comes as heightened tensions grip the wider Middle East over Israel's ongoing war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and just days after Iran and Pakistan engaged in tit-for-tat airstrikes in each others' countries. The Soraya satellite was placed in an orbit at some 750 kilometers (460 miles) above the Earth's surface with its three-stage Qaem 100 rocket, the state-run IRNA news agency said. It did not immediately acknowledge what the satellite did, though telecommunications minister Isa Zarepour described the launch as having a 50-kilogram (110-pound) payload. The launch was part of Iran's Revolutionary Guards' space program alongside Iran's civilian space program, the report said.

## PANNUN MURDER PLOT

## CZECH COURT RULES GUPTA CAN BE EXTRADITED TO US

IN THE INDICTMENT, US INVESTIGATORS CLAIMED THAT GUPTA WAS HIRED BY AN INDIAN GOVERNMENT AGENT TO KILL KHALISTANI SEPARATIST GURPATWANT SINGH PANNUN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prague, Jan 20: A Czech high court has ruled that Indian national Nikhil Gupta, detained in a prison here on murder-for-hire charges in an alleged assassination attempt on a Khalistani extremist on American soil, can be extradited to the US, according to local media reports.

Gupta, 52, was charged by US federal prosecutors in an indictment unsealed in November last year with working with an Indian government employee in an alleged plot to kill Khalistani separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, who holds dual US and Canadian citizenships, on American soil.

Gupta, arrested in the Czech Republic June 30 last year, is currently held in Prague's Pankrak prison.

The Prague High Court confirmed in a closed session that Gupta can be extradited to the US, the Seznam.cz web portal reported Friday.

The Prague High Court's order came as it rejected Gupta's appeal against a December decision by a lower court that ruled that extradition was allowed.



A spokesman for the Prague High Court declined to immediately comment.

"We have not yet confirmed that the resolution has been delivered to all procedural parties, for that reason we cannot comment on the decision in more detail," Katerina Kolarova, the spokeswoman of the Prague High Court, said.

Minister of Justice Pavel Blazek now has the final say on whether Gupta will be extradited to the US.

He has yet to give his consent to the extradition, the portal re-

ported.

"Justice Minister Pavel Blazek will decide later whether or not to allow Gupta's extradition to the US," Czech Justice Ministry spokesman Vladimir Repka was quoted as saying by news.Eseuro.Com.

Repka added that the time-frame of the minister's decision cannot be predicted.

"If the Minister of Justice has doubts about the correctness of the court's decision in a given matter, he can submit a motion to the Supreme Court to review their decision within

three months from the day the matter was submitted to the Ministry," added Repka.

Gupta's lawyer Petr Slepicka at the Prague High Court said they will still file a complaint with the Constitutional Court.

"We will file a constitutional complaint and at the same time we will ask the Minister of Justice not to extradite my client to the US," said Slepicka.

Gupta claimed that his case had a political or military background.

According to Slepicka, it was supposed to be a "task" most likely financed by the Indian government. But the High Court rejected this claim.

According to Judge Vladimir Kral, this case cannot be viewed as a political case.

"It is absurd to think that a state that presents itself as democratic and governed by the legal order and international treaties would choose such means as the murder of a citizen of another state on its territory to solve its problems and in time of peace," the portal quoted the judge as saying.

India has already constituted a probe committee to investigate the allegations.

# Haley makes final sprint as Trump steps up attacks

Former US president Donald Trump has thrown cold water on the idea of picking Indian-American presidential candidate Nikki Haley as a running mate, saying that she was not of that calibre, hours after she herself nixed the possibility

REUTERS

Concord, Jan 20: Former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley was set to campaign across New Hampshire this weekend in a final push against Republican rival Donald Trump ahead of Tuesday's nominating contest, as the former US president ramped up his verbal attacks and again targeted her Indian heritage.

Haley, who served as US ambassador to the United Nations under Trump, has hit back at her former boss following his Iowa caucuses victory last Monday in a bid to thwart his momentum and pitch herself as the best alternative to face Democratic President Joe Biden in November's general election.

New Hampshire boasts a more moderate brand of

Republicanism with a semi-open primary that can attract more centrist voters, who may be turned off by Trump's four criminal cases, authoritarian language and efforts to overturn his 2020 re-election loss.

One of two remaining candidates challenging Trump for the Republican nomination, Haley needs a strong showing after placing third narrowly behind Florida Governor Ron DeSantis as Trump handily won in Iowa, the first stop in the state-by-state battle to determine the party's choice to face Biden.

The second Republican contest could help her build support as a viable alternative to Trump or close her already-narrow path to the nomination even before reaching South Carolina's contest next month.

Haley is scheduled to sprint



across independent-leaning New Hampshire with three stops ahead of a rally Saturday and four more events Sunday and Monday.

Trump also returned to New Hampshire for evening rallies throughout the weekend.

DeSantis, who had largely written off New Hampshire, held a brief last-minute stop Friday before three events Saturday in South Carolina.

Haley sharpened some barbs

against Trump during her final campaign swing through New Hampshire even as she paired them with attacks on Biden and told CNN she would pardon Trump if he is convicted on criminal charges.

On Friday, however, she ruled out serving as his vice presidential running mate as he continued to slam her, including again targeting her given first name on his social media platform. Trump has also amplified

## I prevented nuclear holocaust: Trump

During a fraud lawsuit deposition, former US President Donald Trump claimed he averted a "nuclear holocaust" and saved millions of lives. He repeated this on the stand, while also lashing out at the judge and AG. Months earlier, during questioning about his business practices, Trump stated he was "too busy... saving millions of lives" to focus on his businesses, entrusted to his children. This released deposition footage adds a dramatic layer to the ongoing legal battle against the former president. "I was very busy. I considered this the most important job in the world, saving millions of lives. I think you would've had a nuclear holocaust if I didn't deal with North Korea. I think you would've had a nuclear war if I weren't elected. And I think you might have a nuclear war now, if you want to know the truth," he said.

..... false posts questioning her birthright US citizenship.

Haley, the daughter of two immigrants from India, was born Nimarata Nikki Randhawa but has long used her middle name Nikki and later took her husband's surname.

## Nepal requests Russia not to recruit its nationals into army

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, Jan 20: Nepal has requested Russia to not admit Nepalese nationals into the Russian Army and help repatriate those who have already joined the country's forces to fight the war in Ukraine.

Nepalese Foreign Minister NP

Saud, during his meeting with Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Vershinin Sergey Vasilievich Friday at the sideline of the ongoing Non-Aligned Summit in Kampala, Uganda, asked Russia "not to recruit Nepalese nationals into the country's Army and to help repatriate those who have already joined the forces," according to the private secretary of Saud.

Saud clarified that "Nepal has no policy to send its nationals to foreign army except those few countries with which it has traditional arrangements".

"Therefore, I have asked the



Russian minister not to recruit our nationals into its army," Saud was quoted as saying by his personal secretary.

Saud also asked the Russian side to "send back the dead bodies of those killed in the Russia-Ukraine war while fighting for the Russian Army and to provide due compensation to the family of the victims".

The Russian side has informed Saud that necessary arrangements will be made to provide compensation to the family of the deceased as per the Russian law.

## of the day quote

Generative AI will boost new job roles and can help people with limited skill levels perform higher level jobs, thus reducing the economic divide

VISHAL TALWAR | DIRECTOR, IMT GHAZIABAD

Applications pouring in from women in tier II-III cities...totaling 1 crore. The surge reflects the unstoppable rise of women in reshaping our workforce

NIRMIT PARIKH | FOUNDER AND CEO, APNA.CO

With its significant contribution to GDP, employment generation, and infrastructure development, the real estate sector needs a supportive budget that addresses long-standing challenges and paves the way for sustainable growth, especially for the affordable housing segment

BOMAN IRANI | PRESIDENT, CREDAI

## Q3 RESULTS

### IREDA profit zooms

**New Delhi:** State-owned IREDA Saturday posted a 67 per cent rise in net profit at ₹335.54 crore during the quarter ended December 2023, pushed by higher income. It had clocked ₹200.75 crore net profit during the October-December period of the preceding 2022-23 fiscal, the company said in an exchange filing. During the quarter under review, the company's total income surged to ₹1,253.19 crore, from ₹868.97 crore a year ago. Its expenses were ₹867.05 crore in the period under review, as against ₹634.27 crore in the year-ago period.

### Union Bank shines

**New Delhi:** State-owned Union Bank of India Saturday posted a 60 per cent jump in net profit to ₹3,590 crore for the December quarter on the back of lower provisioning and better interest income. The bank had reported a net profit of ₹2,249 crore in the year-ago period, Union Bank of India said in a regulatory filing. The total income of the bank increased to ₹29,137 crore during the third quarter of the ongoing fiscal as compared to ₹24,154 crore a year ago, the filing said.

### ICICI Bank net up

**Mumbai:** ICICI Bank Saturday said its consolidated net profit for the December quarter jumped 25.7 per cent to ₹11,052.60 crore, up from ₹8,792.42 crore. The second largest private sector lender posted a 23.6 per cent rise in standalone net profit for the third quarter of the current fiscal to ₹10,272 crore. The bank's core net interest income was up 13.4 per cent to ₹18,678 crore, on the back of net interest margin narrowing to 4.43 per cent and the domestic advances growth coming at 18.8 per cent.

### Kotak profit rises

**Mumbai:** Kotak Mahindra Bank Saturday reported a 6.75 per cent growth in consolidated net profit to ₹4,264.78 crore in the December quarter. The lender had reported a consolidated net profit of ₹3,995.05 crore in the year-ago period. On a standalone basis, the private sector lender's profit after tax rose to ₹3,005.01 crore from ₹2,791.88 crore in the year-ago period, but was lower than the preceding September quarter's ₹3,190.97 crore. Its total income rose to ₹14,096 crore from ₹10,947 crore in the year-ago period, while operating expenses increased to ₹4,284 crore from ₹3,751 crore, the bank said.



Our annual turnover stands at ₹11,500 crore and we hope that it will reach ₹25,000 crore by 2030 or we will be able to achieve this figure even before that

SHRIKANT GOENKA | CHAIRMAN, IAAP

## CCPA LENS ON SALE OF 'RAM MANDIR PRASAD'

After it received a notice from the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) for selling sweets as 'Shri Ram Mandir Ayodhya Prasad', e-commerce company Amazon Saturday said it is taking appropriate action against such listings in line with its policies



# SENSEX, NIFTY END LOWER

Dragged by IT firms, HUL, shares ended lower but gains in lenders helped limit some losses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Jan 20:** Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty pared initial gains and settled lower Saturday due to selling in FMCG and IT shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell by 259.58 points or 0.36 per cent to settle at 71,423.65 as 24 of its components declined and six advanced. The Nifty declined 50.60 points or 0.23 per cent to 21,571.80.

Among the Sensex firms, Kotak Bank, PowerGrid, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, PowerGrid were the major gainers. HUL, TCS, M&M, IndusInd Bank, HCL Tech were among the losers.

"Amid rising optimism about AI, US markets surged over the weekend. However, domestic markets exhibited a subdued trend influenced by extended holidays, low volumes, and weekly option expiration," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

Among sectors, FMCG and IT



stocks suffered the most, while banks and financial services gained.

Shares of HUL and Reliance Industries were under pressure after their December quarter results.

Reliance Industries shares settled 0.80 per cent down at ₹2713.20 on BSE post its third quarter earnings announcement Friday.

The company posted a 9 per cent rise in its December quarter net profit as a December maintenance-induced weakness in oil business earnings was offset by stability in retail and telecom verticals.

The stock of HUL was closed 3.72 per cent down at ₹2469.30 apiece. On Friday, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 496.37 points or 0.70 per cent to settle

The equity market traded in a full session Saturday, and will remain shut Monday due to a public holiday in Maharashtra and as the central govt observes a half-working day on the occasion of the inauguration of the Ram Temple in the northern city of Ayodhya

at 71,683.23 points. The Nifty climbed 160.15 points or 0.75 per cent to close at 21,622.40 points. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded

## S&P 500's wild ride to all-time high

**New York:** Hopes for lower interest rates and resilient growth in 2024 took the S&P 500 stock index to a record high Friday, after two roller-coaster years featuring soaring inflation, turmoil in the banking industry and economic unease. The benchmark index ended Friday at 4,839.81, which was above its prior closing high of 4,796.56 set January 3, 2022. During the session it also set a record intraday high of 4,842.07. The new closing record confirmed that the S&P 500 has been in a bull market since October 2022, by one widely used definition. Stocks began wobbling in early 2022 on worries that surging consumer prices inflation would force the Fed to raise interest rates. The central bank's monetary tightening cycle turned out to be its most aggressive in decades, boosting Treasury yields to 16-year highs and battering stocks. The index slumped as much as 25% from its peak, hitting its bottom for the cycle in October of 2022. A sharp rally came in the latter months of 2023, as evidence that inflation was decisively cooling and a dovish message from the Fed helped drive stocks higher. The S&P 500 ended 2023 with a 24% increase, and has moved modestly higher in a bumpy start to 2024.

equities worth ₹3,689.68 crore Friday, according to exchange data.

Profit booking was noted in IT and FMCG, while private banks witnessed selective buying post the recent sharp correction and stable Q3 earnings

VINOD NAIR | HEAD OF RESEARCH, GEOJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

## No app for Apple's Vision Pro: YouTube follows Netflix steps

YouTube offers an app for the rival headset Meta Quest. Netflix has confirmed that it will not create a separate app for the device, nor will it be modifying its existing iPad version



it's also unclear if the company plans to support Vision Pro in the future.

**San Francisco, Jan 20:** Google-owned YouTube has now followed the footsteps of streaming giant Netflix, as it decided not to release a dedicated app for Apple's highly-anticipated mixed reality (MR) headset 'Vision Pro'.

Similar to Netflix, viewers will need to go to the web browser version to watch YouTube content, reports TechCrunch.

"We're excited to see Vision Pro launch, and we're supporting it by ensuring YouTube users have a great experience in Safari," a YouTube spokesperson was quoted as saying. However, YouTube did not reveal the reason behind this decision and

As per MacStories, numerous other firms, like Meta-owned Instagram, Facebook, Threads, and WhatsApp, might also be holding off on releasing compatible apps. Among the other apps that are missing include - Bumble, Snapchat, Roku, YouTube Music, Lyft, etc.

However, some companies are willing to participate.

A total of twenty apps, including TikTok, Disney+, Max, Discovery+, Amazon Prime Video, Paramount+, and Peacock, among others, will be the first to offer entertainment experiences on the headset. Apple to launch Vision Pro in the US February 2.

# Tata keeps IPL sponsorship rights for record ₹2,500cr

The conglomerate to continue as title sponsor for world's richest T20 tournament for next five years at ₹500cr per year



This unprecedented amount not only sets a new benchmark in the history of the league but also reaffirms the IPL's position as a premier sporting event with global impact

ARUN SINGH DHUMAL | CHAIRMAN, IPL

**New Delhi, Jan 20:** Indian conglomerate Tata Group has bagged the title sponsorship of the Indian Premier League (IPL) for 2024-28 for a "record-breaking" ₹2,500 crore, the league organisers said Saturday.

Backed by celebrity franchise owners and featuring the best players in international cricket, IPL has become the world's richest T20 tournament with an estimated brand value of \$8.4 billion. It has been a cash cow for the Indian cricket board (BCCI) with the 10-team league's 2023-27 media rights fetching \$6.2 billion.

Tata Group has been the title sponsor of both the men's IPL and the Women's Premier League, which took off last year.

"The unprecedented financial commitment reflects the immense scale and global impact of the IPL on the international sports stage," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in a statement. Some IPL franchise owners

## UPCOMING FY25 BUDGET

# Fiscal deficit to be budgeted at 5.3% of GDP, says BofA

The brokerage estimates a 'modest increase' in the divestment proceeds in the new fiscal



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Jan 20:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will opt for a further reduction in fiscal deficit to 5.3 per cent of India's gross domestic product in the upcoming budget for FY25 despite poll pressure, a foreign brokerage said Friday.

The government will meet the FY24 commitment to reduce the important number to 5.9 per cent, BofA Securities said in a note.

"We see Centre's fiscal deficit to consolidate further to 5.3 per cent of GDP, despite poll pressure," its analysts wrote in a note.

The government will opt for continuing with its strategy of consolidating fiscal deficit through capital expenditure driven growth instead of expenditure compression, it said.

The brokerage said digitization-led formalization has aided the fiscal math through tax buoyancy on one side and reducing

wasteful expenditure (subsidy leakage) on the other.

The government had earlier committed to reduce the fiscal deficit to 4.5 per cent by FY26 as part of its glide path to gradually reduce the gap, which is seen as a major factor influencing macroeconomic position.

The brokerage estimated a 10.5 per cent growth in the revenue receipts at ₹30.4 lakh crore, which will be led by a 10 per cent increase in tax revenue and 14 per cent jump in non-tax revenue.

It also said that there will be a "modest increase" in the divestment proceeds in the new fiscal.

Fresh market borrowings in FY25 will come at ₹11.6 lakh crore, and given maturities of debt worth ₹3.61 lakh crore in FY25, the gross market borrowings are estimated at ₹15.2 lakh crore, it added.

## FOREX KITTY JUMPS TO \$618.9 BILLION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Jan 20:** India's forex reserves jumped \$1.634 billion to \$618.937 billion for the week ended January 12, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had declined sharply by \$5.89 billion to \$617.3 billion.

The country's forex kitty had reached an all-time high of \$645 billion in October 2021. The reserves took a hit as the central bank deployed the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments since last year.

For the week ended January 12, the foreign currency assets - a major component of the reserves - increased \$1.859 billion to \$548.508 billion, the data said.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound, and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves were down \$242 million to \$47.247 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up \$12 million to \$18.31 billion, the apex bank said.

# World's first smart binoculars

THE VISIONARY AX VISIO BINOCULARS MADE BY SWAROVSKI OPTIK CAN IDENTIFY 9,000 BIRDS THANKS TO BUILT-IN AI

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 20:** To commemorate the company's 75th anniversary, Swarovski Optik, the world-leading sports optics manufacturer, is beginning 2024 with a technological sensation.

The AX Visio, designed by Marc Newson, is the world's first AI-supported binoculars and a perfect symbiosis of high-performance analog long-range optics and digital intelligence. At the touch of a button, they assist with the identification of birds and other creatures, allow discoveries to be shared, and offer a wide range of practical extra functions.

With these binoculars, Swarovski Optik is introducing the future of nature observation. From February 1, 2024, the AX Visio will be available from selected retailers and online at swarovskioptik.com.

"In the seven decades of our existence, we have developed a deep understanding of our consumers' requirements in the hunting, birdwatching, and outdoor target groups. We leverage our know-how and cutting-edge



production technologies to offer optimum technological solutions for each area of application. The integration of digital components and functions in our products brings significant added value," explained Stefan Schwarz, CEO of Swarovski Optik, at the product presentation.

The AX Visio 10x32 adds new dimensions to natural experiences with numerous functions intelligent technology combined with high-precision analog optics in Swarovision quality assist with real-time identification of more than 9,000 birds and other wildlife.

The integrated camera cap-

tures photos and videos. These can then be immediately managed and shared with a connected smartphone using the associated Swarovski Optik Outdoor App.

The "Share discoveries" function is another exciting development that allows users to guide another person to the observed object using arrow markers in the display.

The AX Visio is not only a flagship project which is demonstrating Swarovski Optik's technological leadership in the sport optics market, but it also marks the beginning of a new technological era.

## India, Cuba sign MoU on digital public infra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 20:** India and Cuba have signed a MoU for cooperation in the field of sharing successful digital solutions implemented at population scale for digital transformation.

The MoU was signed between India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and the Ministry of Communications of the Republic of Cuba Friday.

The MeitY said that India will collaborate with Cuba by building upon development partnership on digital transformation leading to a smooth adoption of Digital Public Infrastructure in Cuba.

It said that the MoU intends to promote digital transformation (vis-a-vis. INDIA STACK) through capacity building programs, exchange of best practices and other collaborative activities to mutually benefit the digital ecosystems of both countries.

The MeitY said that the signatories to the MoU were S Krishnan, Secretary MeitY from India's side and Wilfredo Gonzalez Vidal, First Deputy Minister of Communications, from Cuba's side.

## EPFO adds 13.95 lakh net members during Nov '23

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 20:** Retirement fund body EPFO added 13.95 lakh net members in November 2023, as per the latest payroll data released Saturday.

Cumulative net addition of members during the current financial year continues to remain higher than that of the corresponding period of the previous year, a labour ministry statement said.

According to the statement, the EPFO's (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) provisional payroll data highlighted that the body added 13.95 lakh net members in November. The data indicates that around 7.36 lakh new members were enrolled during the month.

The 18-25 age-group constitutes 57.30 per cent of the total new members added during the month, showing that a majority of members joining the organised sector workforce of the country are youth, who are mostly first-time job seekers.

The payroll data reflects that about 10.67 lakh members exited but rejoined EPFO during



the month.

A gender-wise analysis of payroll data showed that of the 7.36 lakh new members added, around 1.94 lakh are new female members joined EPFO for the first time, it stated. Total female members addition during the month stood at around 2.80 lakh.

State-wise analysis of payroll data denotes that net member addition is highest in the five states/Union Territories of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Haryana, and Delhi. These constitute around 58.81 per cent of net member addition, with 8.20 lakh members during the month.

# Swiatek out of Oz Open India colts outclass Bangladesh

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Melbourne, Jan 20: Top-ranked Iga Swiatek is out of the Australian Open after a 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 third-round loss to 50th-ranked Linda Noskova Saturday. Swiatek is a four-time major winner but has never been past the semifinals at Melbourne Park.

The 19-year-old Noskova is playing in the main draw of the Australian Open for the first time. Swiatek beat Sofia Kenin and 2022 finalist Danielle Collins in the first two rounds and was on an 18-match winning streak.

But, after taking the first set against her Czech opponent, she struggled for rhythm. After saving a breakpoint in the seventh game of the second set, Noskova won 11 of the next 12 points to level the match at one set apiece. Noskova continued to pound away and troubled Swiatek, who held at love in the penultimate game and made her rival serve it out. After falling behind 0-30, Noskova won four points to finish it off quickly. She earned a match point with an ace and sealed it when Swiatek sent a forehand long.

**Alcaraz through**  
Carlos Alcaraz cruised into the fourth round when his opponent, Shang Juncheng, retired early in the third set of their



third-round encounter Saturday. The No. 2 was leading the 18-year-old 6-1, 6-1, 1-0 when Shang, who had his right thigh heavily strapped from the start, called it a day after just 66 minutes. Alcaraz will play Miomir Kecmanovic, the Serbian who saved a match point as he beat last year's semifinalist Tommy Paul 6-4, 3-6, 2-6, 7-6(10-7), 6-0.

No. 9 Hubert Hurkacz saw off No. 21 Ugo Humbert 3-6, 6-1, 7-6(7-4), 6-3 to reach the fourth round for the second year in a row. He will play the wild-card entry from France, Arthur Cazaux, who beat 28th-ranked

Tallon Griekspoor 6-3, 6-3, 6-1. Two-time former champion Victoria Azarenka took out 11th-ranked Jelena Ostapenko 6-1, 7-5 to make the pre-quarterfinals for the seventh time. Azarenka's next opponent will be Ukrainian qualifier Dayana Yastremska, who equalled her best Grand Slam performance with a 6-2, 2-6, 6-1 win over 27th-ranked Emma Navarro.

Sloane Stephens, the 2017 US Open champion and a runner-up at Roland Garros the following year, lost 6-7(8-10), 6-1, 6-4 to Anna Kalinskaya in a 2-hour, 45-minute match on Kia Arena.

No. 26 Jasmine Paolini reached the fourth round of a major for the first time with a 7-6(1), 6-4 win over Anna Blinkova, who had knocked out No. 3 Elena Rybakina in the previous round.

**Balaji-Cornea duo loses**  
India's N Sriram Balaji and his Romanian partner Victor Vlad Cornea lost their second round men's doubles match to Marcelo Arevalo of El Salvador and Mate Pavic of Croatia Saturday. The Indo-Romanian combo went down 3-6, 3-6 to their 10th-seeded opponents at the Rod Laver Arena.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bloemfontein, Jan 20: Left-arm spinners Saumy Pandey (4/24) and Musheer Khan (2/35) headlined a dominant Indian performance as the defending champions outclassed Bangladesh by 84 runs in their opening game of the ICC U-19 World Cup here Saturday.

While the total of 251/7 didn't look big, the two Indian spinners choked the run-flow, shooting out 'Tiger Cubs' for a meagre 167 in 45.5 overs.

Skipper Uday Saharan (64, 94b, 4x4) and left-handed opener Adarsh Singh (76, 96b, 6x4) hit half centuries after Bangladesh invited the holders to take first strike.

Saumy was economical and bowled the lethal arm ball with a skiddy action while all-rounder Musheer tossed it up and got enough drift to tighten the noose around Bangladeshi batters.

Musheer, younger brother Mumbai's domestic stalwart Sarfaraz Khan, was a livewire on the field. He also effected a run-out. What was impressive to see was no overt celebrations from either Saumy or Musheer, who carried on their job like thoroughbred professionals.

It was a fairly ill-tempered match with players from both sides indulging in sledging as the two teams have history of tension across senior men, senior women and U-19 level. For Indian team, it was a sweet revenge after losing the Asia Cup



Adarsh Singh celebrates his fifty as Uday Saharan looks on, Saturday

semifinal to Bangladesh.

While the Indian batters found it difficult to get boundaries, the target was never below par as average score of teams batting first in Youth ODIs (U-19 ODI) at this ground was 201, and the highest successful chase being 243. In fact, India's 251/7 on the day was the third highest score at this ground.

The team's designated finisher Sachin Dhas showed admirable technique and temperament during death overs with a nice little unbeaten 20-ball 26-run cameo.

Left-arm seamer Maruf Mridha (5/43) did damage at the

start and during slog overs by bowling in right areas but would be a bit miffed with his skipper, who got his calculations wrong and didn't let him complete his quota of 10 overs.

The foundation of the Indian innings was laid by Adarsh and skipper Saharan, who added 116 runs for the third wicket in nearly 23.5 overs.

**BRIEF SCORES:** India U-19 251/7 (Adarsh Singh 76, Uday Saharan 64; Maruf Mridha 5/43) beat Bangladesh U-19 167 (Mohammad Shihab James 54, Ariful Islam 41; Saumy Pandey 4/24, Musheer Khan 2/35) by 84 runs.

## SHORT TAKES

### Malik ties knot with Pak actor Sana

Karachi: Pakistan's former captain Shoaib Malik announced Saturday that he has married a second time to the country's popular actor Sana Javed after getting divorced from Sania Mirza. The cricketer who was previously married to Indian tennis star, Sania, with whom he has a son, released a photograph on a social media platform with his new wife, with the words "And We created you in pairs". Their five-year-old son Izaan lives with Sania. A family source told PTI that "it was a 'khalua'", which refers to the right of a Muslim woman to unilaterally divorce her husband.



### Dhillon, Naruka secure Olympic quotas

Kuwait City: Raiza Dhillon and Anant Jeet Singh Naruka secured two more Paris Games quota for India to stretch the total number to 19, by winning silver medals in their respective skeet events at the Asia Olympic Qualification for Shotgun Saturday. Dhillon earned the 18th quota place by claiming the silver in the women's skeet before Naruka finished second on the podium in the men's skeet final with a total of 56, missing the gold by one point to Taipei's Meng Yuan Lee (57).

### Gukesh outwits Foreest, Pragg shares spoils

Wijk Aan Zee: Grandmaster D Gukesh scored his second victory on the trot at the expense of Jordan Van Foreest of Holland and jumped to joint third spot after the end of the sixth round of Tata Steel Masters chess tournament here. After beating Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia, Gukesh firmly posted another victory with black pieces in the fifth decisive game played by the Indian. Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa played out a draw with Nepomniachtchi.

## Prannoy bows out of semifinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: India's HS Prannoy was completely outplayed by World No. 2 Shi Yu Qi of China as he crashed out of the India Open Super 750 badminton tournament after a straight-game loss in the semifinals here Saturday.

The World No. 9 Indian matched his rival in the initial phase but after 14-14 in the opening game, he faded into oblivion as Yu Qi registered a 21-15, 21-5 win in what turned out to be a lop-sided contest at the KD Jadhav Indoor Hall here.

Yu Qi moved with ease across the court and played with patience and precision to outwit Prannoy, who looked sloppy in the second game.

In the opening game, Prannoy opened up a 6-3 lead with two steep returns and after winning a net duel. A backhand going to net and another net error from



the Indian brought Shi Yu Qi back at 6-6.

The two engaged in a fierce battle as lead changed hands too frequently, moving together till 14-14. But the Indian seemed to have lost his focus thereafter.

After the change of sides, Prannoy just didn't look in his element as Yu Qi looked by far the better player as he held a handsome 11-4 advantage at the break. Prannoy body language said

it all as he couldn't put any pressure on his fancied opponent. In a jiffy it was 17-5 in the Chinese favour. He took 15 match points and sealed it when the Indian went long again.

In the final, Yu Qi will face Hong Kong's Lee Cheuk Yiu, who stunned World Championships silver medalist Kodai Naraoka of Japan 21-13, 15-21, 21-19 to qualify for his first Super 750 men's singles final at the India Open.

## Rajesh bags five-wicket haul, but batters disappoint again

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 20: Rajesh Mohanty bagged an impressive five-wicket haul (5/64) to help Odisha bowl out Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) for 180 in their first innings, Saturday.

However, the home team batters disappointed again at the DRIEMS Ground in Banki, Cuttack as they reached 126/7 at stumps on the second day of their Ranji Trophy Elite Group D encounter.

After limiting J&K's first innings lead to 50 runs on a difficult pitch, Odisha would have expected to keep the momentum with the willow as well. However, the visiting bowlers troubled them reducing Odisha to 67/7.

Sandeep Pattnaik (47 batting, 108b, 6x4), however, held his nerves and played watchfully. He

found able ally in Suryakant Pradhan (27 batting) as the duo had already stitched 59 runs for the unbeaten eighth wicket taking a lead of 76 runs by the time umpires called off the day's play. Anurag Sarangi (16) was the only other batter to reach double-digit score for the home team.

The visitors have so far used four bowlers with three of them bagging two wickets apiece - Rohit Sharma (2/23), Umar Nazir Mir (2/27) and Auqib Nabi (2/44). Umran Malik (1/24), who is known for his raw pace, got the other wicket.

Earlier, the visitors lost two wickets in quick succession to be reduced from overnight 45/4 to 85/6. However, Abid Mushtaq (50, 51b, 7x4, 1x6), Shubham Pundir (34) and Umar Nazir (25) helped J&K take a crucial 50-run lead.

## BRING HOME INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS THIS NEW YEAR FROM PRESTIGE

\*Offer Valid from 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec 2023 to 28<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024.

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