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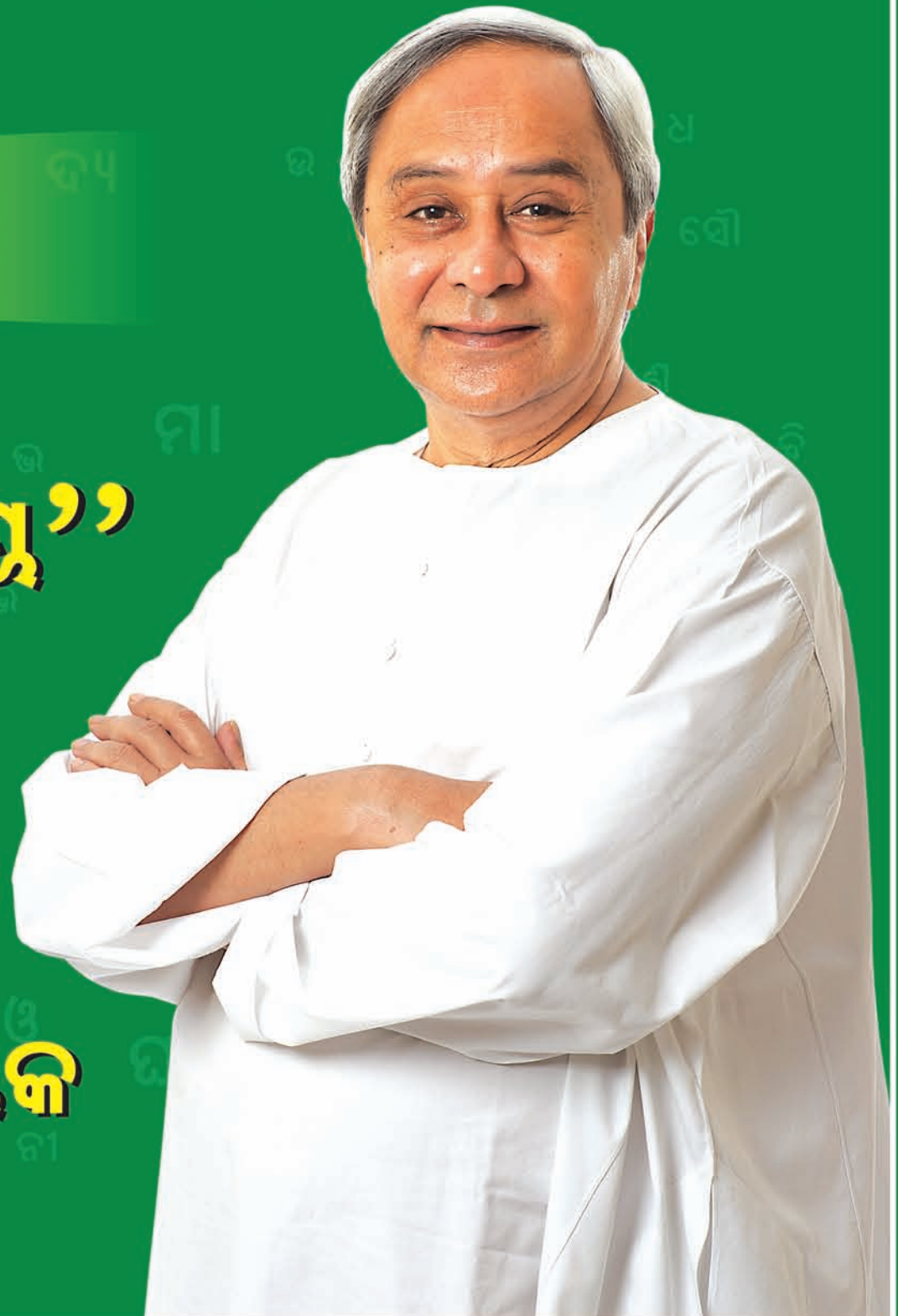
“ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ”

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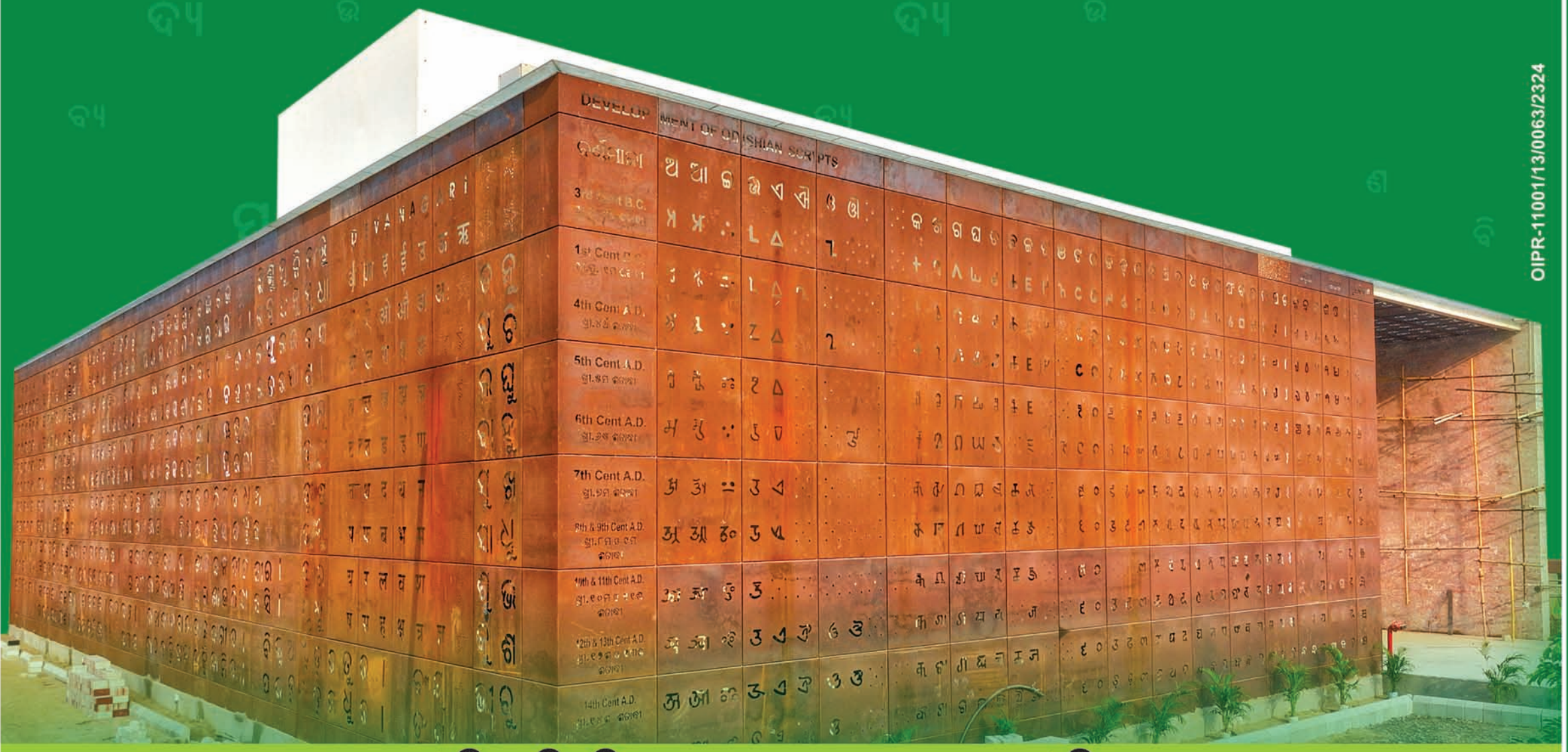
ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଅତିଥି

ଶ୍ରୀଯୁକ୍ତ ନବୀନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ

ମାନ୍ୟବର ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା



୨୪ ଜାନୁଆରୀ ୨୦୨୪ || ଦିବା ୧୧.୩୦ ଘଟିକା
ପଞ୍ଚସଖା କ୍ରୀଡ଼ାଙ୍ଗନ, ସତ୍ୟବାଦୀ, ପୁରୀ



ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ, ସତ୍ୟବାଦୀ, ପୁରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

OIPR-11001/13/0063/2324

leisure



SELENA REFLECTS ON BODY CHANGES

Singer-actress Selena Gomez has spoken candidly about her body image. The singer recently shared a series of Instagram stories, showing off her body in photos from over the years. Sharing a past photo of her wearing a zebra bikini, Selena wrote, "Today I realised I will never look like this again."

ALICIA PROVIDES INDIAN KIDS WITH VEGAN MEALS

Hollywood actor Alicia Silverstone teamed up with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India to provide delicious vegan desi food to HIV-positive orphans and children with learning disabilities.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today will be a difficult day full of action. You may not agree with your friends about trifling matters, but you will love it. You will complete all work that has been pending, which will give you relief. Ganesh says it is an optimistic day.

TAURUS
Be careful, says Ganesh. All your calculations and conclusions, plans and moves are likely to go haywire. Time and again, you could fail and, ultimately, get frustrated. Even simple and obvious things are likely to get you worked up. Knowing that you are basically gentle, benign and large hearted, your friends and elders will rally round and provide you the help and advise you need.

GEMINI
You know where you are headed, and will redouble your efforts to reach your goals today. You are full of energy and enthusiasm, which helps you to achieve all your targets. You will receive unexpected gains owing to your hard work. Bountiful success will be yours at the end of a hard day's labour, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Sentimentalism will be hinder your path of success. So, says Ganesh, give up too much sentimentalism. It can be quite a hazard in the future. You will win over people with the force of speech and polite approach.

LEO
You will be able to influence people with your co-operative and accommodating attitude today. You will have discussions on various topics with people who come into contact with you. You will also come into contact with people who share the same mental wavelength as you do, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Today you may understand the utter uselessness of your dogged efforts and feel extremely anxious about success eluding you constantly. However, Ganesh advises you not to lose hope, but to re-energise your mind, give a boost to your curiosity and pay attention to long-term goals.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that today you will get worried over petty matters and be tense. To get mental peace keep yourself occupied with religious or spiritual activity. Along with that if you go to some religious place you will gain mental peace, which will stay with you for a long time.

SCORPIO
You may be in a mood to build castles in the air today, says Ganesh. You may be caught up in a whirlpool of thoughts and nostalgia. However, you will soon realise that the time once gone, never comes back and so, you make up for the lost time by beginning the new chapter of your life from today itself.

SAGITTARIUS
You rule your hear today, predicts Ganesh. You are likely to become an expert in reading people's mind. Everything is fair in love and war, is what you believe! Win over your sweetheart and set out on a journey toward destination unknown, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
You are busy as a beaver. It is extremely difficult for you to think for yourself as you are all tied up by the demands of your work. You want to be creative, but again, the workload will not let you have that freedom, says Ganesh. You have learnt the art of time management. So, you have properly lined up your priorities and success is waiting for you.

AQUARIUS
You will hit the bull's eye, today. From the smallest to the biggest, all of your plans will turn into reality. Don't get disheartened if there are some obstacles on your path; you are fully armed to face the challenges and come out triumphant.

PISCES
For those looking for a promotion at the work-place, now is the time to ask for it. Freelancers could find interesting projects falling into their laps. Businesses are likely to see a surge in profits. No conflicts in personal life are indicated.

Joseph's Son showcases conflicts of Manipur



IFFB: DAY 2
FSB president Subrat Beura(L) and Manipuri director Haobam Paban Kumar during an interactive session

Bhubaneswar: The second day of the ongoing 13th Indian Film Festival of Bhubaneswar (IFFB), organised by Film Society Bhubaneswar (FSB), began here at the Odissi Research Centre, with the screening of a 40-minute short film *Bablu Babylon Se* by Abhijit Sarthi.

Aashad Ka Ek Din, under Mani Kaul Retrospective, was the next to enchant the viewers. The 115-minute Hindi film of 1971 portrays the love of Mallika and Kalidasa, the renowned Sanskrit poet and dramatist.

Next on the list was the Manipuri movie *Joseph's Son*.

The film tells the story of Joseph, a musician who is on a long journey to find his son David in constant conflict with his past, present, and fears.

The movie's director Haobam Paban Kumar said the film might be among the few Indian films to talk about the ethnic and armed conflict that is unique to his birthplace, Manipur. "As a storyteller, it is important that my films reflect my contemporary realities," he added.

Two other movies that were screened during the day were - Kannada film *Mithya* by Sumant Bhat and Lubdhak Chatterjee's *Whispers of Fire and Water*. *Mithya* showcases how an orphan boy, Mithun, comes to terms with the loss of his parents, while *Whispers of Fire and Water* follows the plight of an audio installation artiste in a coal-mining region of eastern India.

12TH AJIT NATYA MAHOTSAV CONCLUDES



With the enactment of the Assamese play *Bibhranata Rang*, the four-day National Theatre Festival organised by Abhinaya Jagruti Institute of Theatre (AJIT), a Bhubaneswar-based drama troupe, came to an end at Bhanjakala Mandap, Tuesday. Written by Apurba Thakuria and designed & directed by Ujjala Barman, the play, about a passionate sculptor, was presented by Angana (Guwahati). Talking about AJIT, the troupe was formed by a few students of eminent actor-director Ajit Das in 2001 to pay tribute to their Guru by staging a play every year on his birth day.

OSCAR NOMINATIONS

Oppenheimer tops list with 13 nods



New York: Christopher Nolan's masterly portrait of the father of the atomic bomb -- *Oppenheimer* topped the Oscars nominations Tuesday, earning an impressive 13 nods including for best picture. It was followed by *Poor Things*, a female-focused take on the Frankenstein myth, with 11, and Martin Scorsese's *Killers of the Flower Moon* on 10.

The summer blockbuster *Barbie* earned six nominations. *Oppenheimer's* other nominations include best actor in a supporting role, costume design, best actress in a supporting role, makeup and hairstyling, adapted screenplay, original score, production design, film editing, sound, cinematography, actor in a leading role and direction.

Barbie has been nominated in six categories including best actor in the supporting role, costume design, best actress in a supporting role, original song, production design, and, best picture. The Oscars will take place March 10, hosted for a fourth time by Jimmy Kimmel.

PARIS FASHION WEEK

Ananya turns showstopper

Mumbai: Actress Ananya Panday, who has been receiving a lot of positive response to her work in the recently released streaming film *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan*, walked the ramp at the ongoing Paris Fashion Week.



The actress turned showstopper for designer Rahul Mishra at the Paris Haute Couture Week 2024. She became the youngest Hindi film actor to walk the ramp. However, it was her attire that left people talking on the internet. Ananya wore a butterfly-inspired black mini dress (inset). She also carried a giant sieve decorated with butterfly motifs. The sieve was seemingly attached to the dress underneath. She rounded up her look with a sleek hair bun and black high heels. The actress took to her Instagram stories and posted a video from the show. Ananya wrote in the caption, "Walking for @rahulmishra_7 at Paris Couture week."

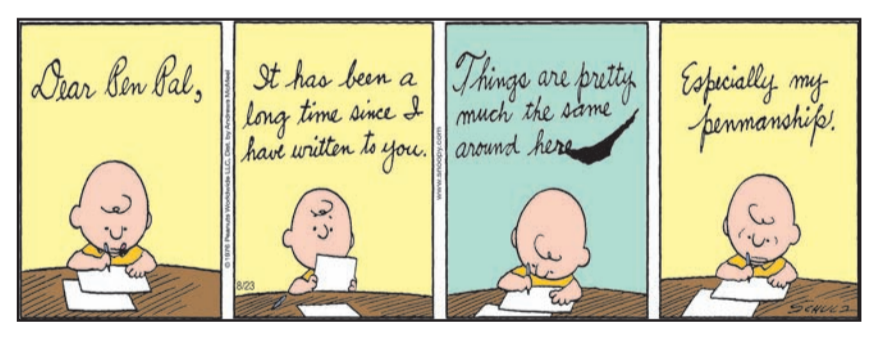
The Internet had a field day reacting to the outfit sported by the actress on the ramp. One user wrote in the comment section, "Ananya in Paris couture week so proud of her". Another commented, "Fashion inspired from Urfi". A third user wrote, "As a model, she is fantastic." Another user wrote, "Is this a new Uorfi?" Meanwhile, on the work front, the actress will be next seen in a cyber-thriller tentatively titled *Control*, directed by Vikramaditya Motwane.

Boman to get spl honour from British Parliament

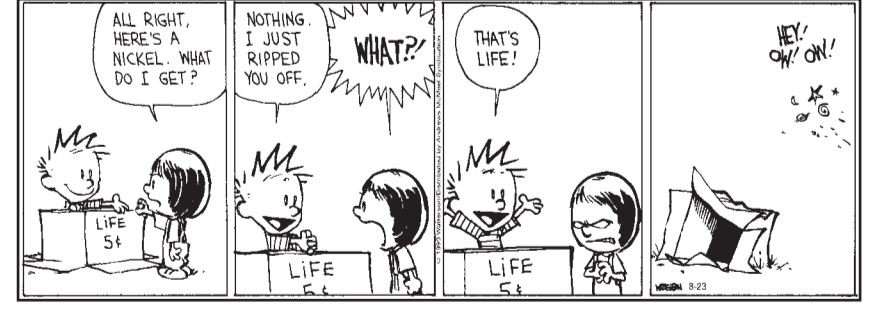


Mumbai: Actor Boman Irani, who is known for *Munna Bhai* franchise, *3 Idiots*, *Khosla Ka Ghosla*, and others, will be conferred with a special honour by the British Parliament for his contributions to Indian cinema. The actor has also been invited as a featured speaker at Oxford University and The London School of Economics. Boman will be travelling to London January 24 with his family for the events. He will deliver speeches at the aforementioned venues January 25. With this memorable achievement, Boman has now joined the ranks of esteemed speakers at Oxford, following in the footsteps of Shah Rukh Khan and Shashi Tharoor. Boman expressed his gratitude for the opportunity and honour, as he said: "It's truly humbling to represent India on such esteemed global platforms and receive this recognition." He added, "I look forward to sharing my life experiences and the wisdom gained throughout my two-decade career with other bright minds there. Taking a piece of India with me."

PEANUTS



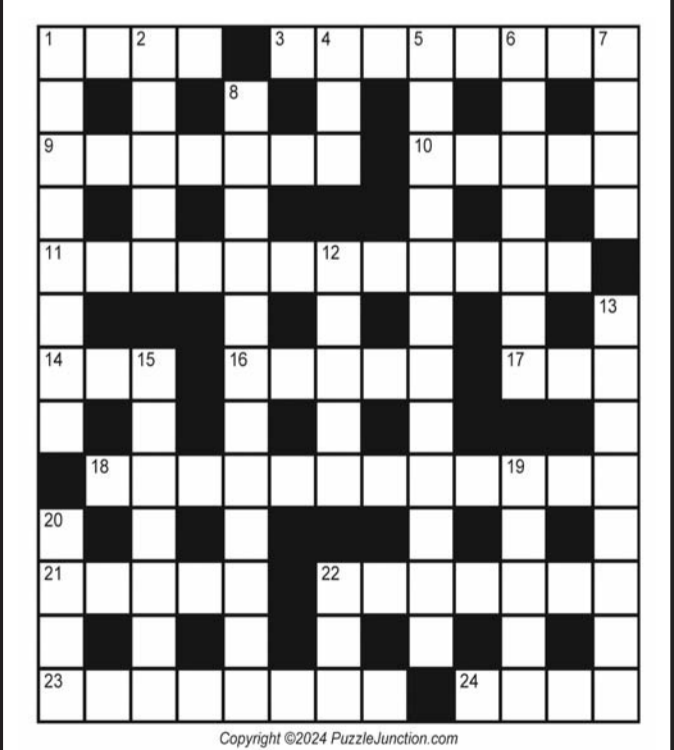
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY

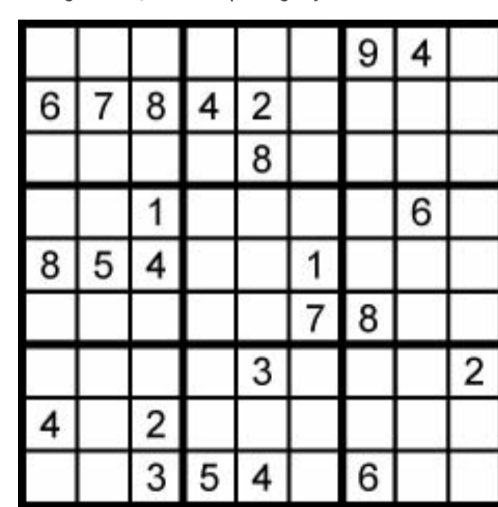


FUN post CROSSWORD

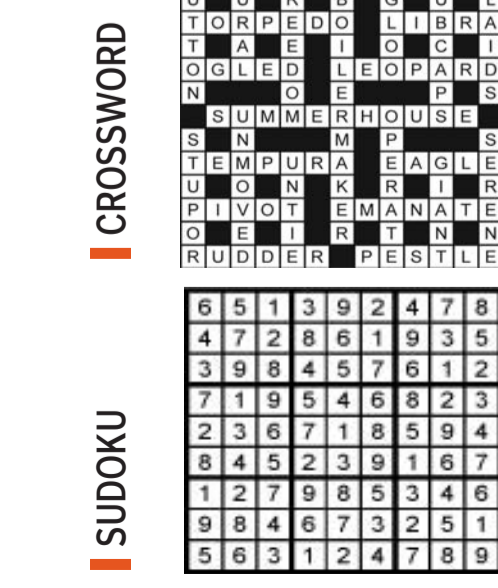


- Across**
- 1 Sukiyaki ingredient
 - 3 Cook out
 - 9 Corrupt
 - 10 Wedding band, maybe
 - 11 Chief assistant (5-4,3)
 - 14 King preceder
 - 16 Title holder
 - 17 Young goat
 - 18 Frozen dessert (3-5,4)
 - 21 Clutch
 - 22 "Totally cool!"
 - 23 I beg your pardon (6-2)
 - 24 Jog
 - 5 Like some hats (5-7)
 - 6 Theatre platform
 - 7 Young newts
 - 8 Physicians' tools
 - 12 Comics orphan
 - 13 Disciple
 - 15 Antiquated
 - 19 Smell
 - 20 Malaria symptom
 - 22 Aspiration
- Down**
- 1 Lesson
 - 2 Cast
 - 4 Append

SUDOKU



SOLUTIONS

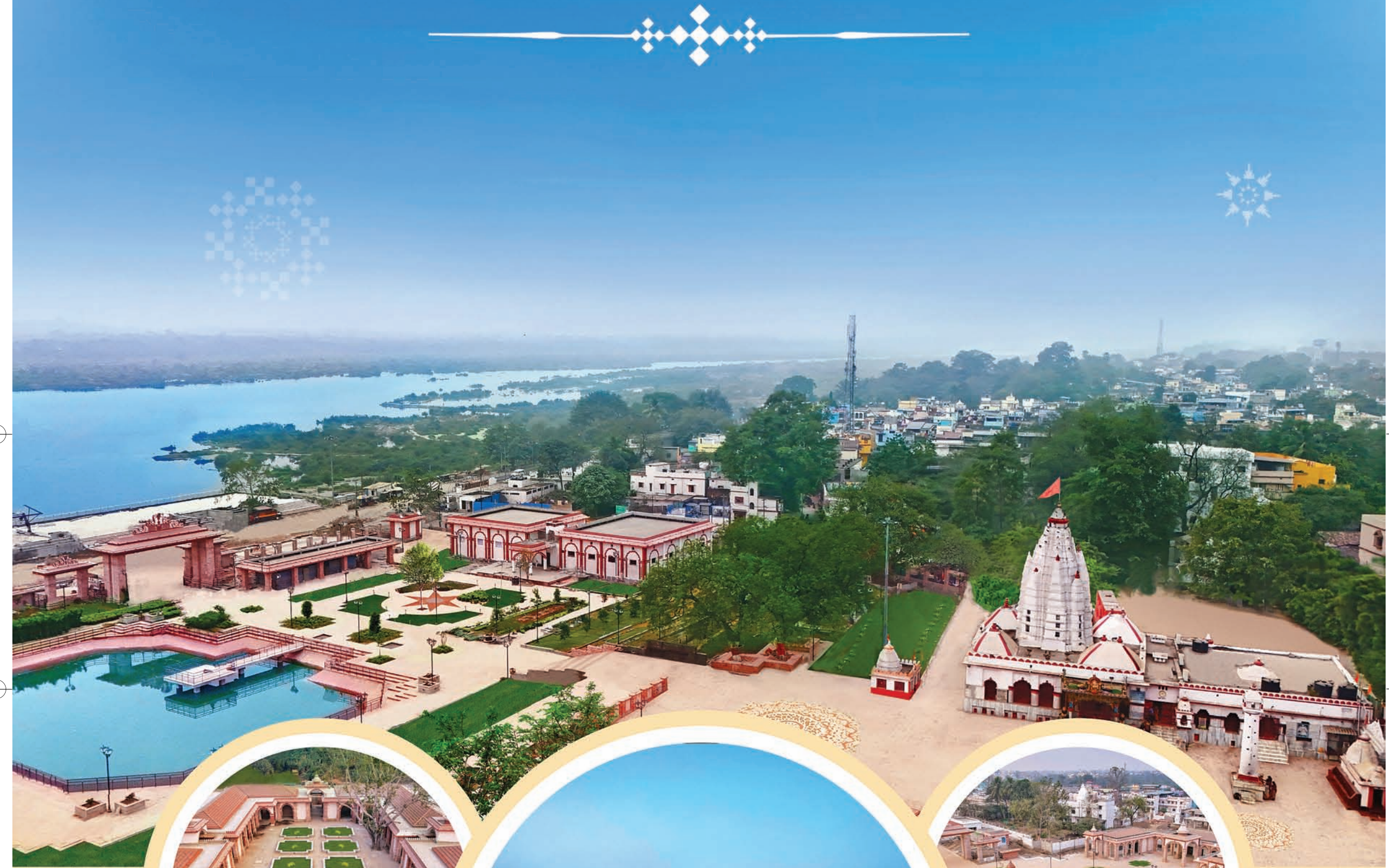


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

DADLS-90



JAI MAA SAMALEI



OIPR-15001/13/0284/2324

With The Divine Blessings of Maa Samalei
'Samalei Prakalpa' to be Inaugurated on
27th January 2024



5T Chairman reviews projects in Gajapati



crore. A total of ₹279 crore worth projects were sanctioned following his last visit to the district in May 2023.

Later, he took stock of other major projects which include Chheligada Irrigation project at a total cost of ₹996 crore; Mega Piped Water Supply projects to Rayagada block at a total cost of ₹180.5 crore; Paralakhemundi Bypass Road at a cost of ₹54 crore; Development of different Waterfalls and view points at a total cost of ₹13.5 crore; Development of Jeerango Monastery at a cost of ₹2.68 crore and development of different major temples of the district.

In addition, a new government degree college was sanctioned for Gumma block. The college will start functioning from the upcoming Academic Year 2024-25.

Pandian interacted with the public at Kashinagar and Ramagiri and received the grievances on various issues and assured early resolution.

Programme being organised at Gajapati Stadium and interacted with college students.

He exhorted the students to work hard with self-confidence to achieve success in life. He said that the college transformation projects in the district will be completed by February.

Pandian reviewed the progress of 9 bridges being constructed with an estimated cost of 54

Juvenile among 3 held in chain snatching case

Bhubaneswar: Three persons, including a juvenile, were arrested by the Khandagiri police here Tuesday in connection with a chain snatching incident that took place in the area last week. The police have recovered five gold chains, mobile phones and a rented bike from the accused. Two of the arrested accused, P Ramulu Rao and Suresh Nayak, were earlier arrested in over a dozen of robbery cases within the Commissionerate Police area in the past, they said. ACP Zone III Pradeep Kumar Rout said the trio had snatched a gold chain from a woman January 20 while she was on her way to CRPF square market with her husband on a motorcycle. "The accused followed the couple from Khandagiri market square on a bike. Near Baramunda over-bridge, one of them riding pillion snatched away the woman's necklace. The juvenile was riding the bike," he said. Later the victim's husband, Laxmidhar Nayak, lodged a complaint following which the trio was arrested, Rout said.



AT LORD'S ABODE: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, in presence of 5T Chairman Kartik Pandian, interacts with a servitor near the Patitapabana during his visit to Srimandir, Tuesday

AIIMS Bhub to use drone for medical deliveries

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: In a bid to ensure health care services in cut-off areas during emergencies, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Bhubaneswar is set to use drone technology in the healthcare sector in the state.

The national institute Tuesday conducted a successful drone trial to deliver blood to a nearby hospital in Khurda.

The drone, which completed the 120km journey from the institute to CHC (Community Health Centre) Tangi in 70 minutes, carried essential blood supplies weighing around 2kg.

There were no operational issues during the trial, according to AIIMS Bhubaneswar executive director Asutosh Biswas.



Biswas said the national institute is committed to developing a model that integrates technology into the healthcare system as a supplement to existing logistics methods. "Induction of drone delivery can boost healthcare services in rural, tribal, and semi-urban

locations," he added.

These drones are capable of carrying multiple health products, including vaccines, essential drugs, and diagnostic samples.

AIIMS Bhubaneswar, as a leading tertiary healthcare provider, has created this opportunity for

the people of Odisha, Biswas said.

He also highlighted the pivotal role that drone services can play during natural disasters, overcoming geographical barriers and ensuring timely delivery of critical medical supplies to remote areas.

These supplies include emergency medicine, blood samples, blood products, and others. The drone used for the trial has a capacity to carry up to 5kg and can travel up to 160km.

This initiative, which is part of the PMSSY (Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, aims to enhance accessibility of healthcare services for people residing in remote and flooded areas, an official said.

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: Chairman 5T and Nabin Odisha Kartik Pandian Tuesday visited Gajapati to review the progress of various developmental works in the district and interact with students and general public.

During his visit, Pandian participated in the Nua-O

SCB's Bhubanananda Maharana no more

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 23: SCB Medical College and Hospital emergency officer Bhubanananda Maharana passed away here Tuesday. He was 69.

Maharana was undergoing treatment at SCB's Neurosurgery ICU following a surgery for brain stroke, said SCB

administrative officer Abinash Rout. Maharana completed his MBBS from SCB in 1973 and PG from the premier state-run facility in 1984. He started his career as a doctor at the Behrampur medical. Later, he joined his alma mater as an assistant surgeon.

CLASSIFIED LOST

This Public Notice is made for general information as all, that Plot No.- 436/841, Ac. 0.11dec., under Khata No.- 26/437 of Hinjilibahili, P.S.- Junagarh, Dist.- Kalahandi is purchased by Bhabesh Kumar Sahu, S/o - Rabindranath Sahu of Junagarh vide Regd. Sale Deed bearing No.- 10891201926. The above original Regd. Sale Deed has been lost. I am intending to avail loan from Utkal Grameen Bank, Junagarh Branch by mortgaging the property. If anybody is in possession of the original Sale Deed, which I have lost please intimate me. If anybody have any objection to my availing the loan the loan on production of Certified copy of Sale Deed. He/she at liberty to make any objection upon me/Branch Manager, Utkal Grameen Bank, Junagarh Branch within fifteen days of this publication. Bhabesh Kumar Sahu, S/o- Rabindranath Sahu, At- Hinjilibahili, P.O./P.S.- Junagarh, Dist- Kalahandi, Mob. No.-9937273759.

New staff to help in Rourkela flight ops



RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

Rourkela, Jan 23: Amid all the allegations of irregular flight services from this city, there is a possibility that the issue will be resolved Wednesday onwards. This is because of the certification granted to two officials of the Airport Authority of India (AAI). Sources said that with the granting of the certification, the hindrances disrupting flight services have been cleared.

Flights from the airport here have been disrupted since December 26. Now with two persons receiving the certification of "visual flight rights" (VFR), landings will be possible from heights as low as 1,500 metres. Sources feel that this will go a long way in resumption of regular flight services. These two officials will work in the approach control unit of the airport.

AGM air traffic control Saroj Sahu, who trained the newly-appointed duo, confirmed of this development. One of the per-

sons is from Patna while the other from Kolkata. "With the posting of these two persons, the Rourkela Airport will be all-weather ready for flight landings," Sahu said.

Sahu however, clarified that this new development will not aid night landings and take-offs. For that the airport will need the installation of the instrument landing system (ILS), Sahu added.

The president of Sachetan Nagarik Manch (SNM) Bimal Bisi thanked Sundargarh MP Jual Oram for the development. Sources meanwhile said that there will be direct flights from Rourkela to Kolkata thrice a week (Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday). On the remaining days of the week the flight services will be Rourkela-Bhubaneswar-Kolkata-Bhubaneswar-Rourkela.

It should be stated here that the FIH Pro League (hockey) for Women will be held here in February. Hence it is imperative that flight services become regular from the airport here.

Cong revokes suspension of Mohd Moquim, Biswal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: The Congress has revoked the suspension of two senior Odisha leaders including a sitting MLA and expulsion of a tribal leader.

The party has withdrawn the suspension of Barbati-Cuttack MLA Mohammed Moquim and ex-legislator Chiranjib Biswal and expulsion of former MLA Krishna Chandra Sagaria, Congress Odisha-in charge Ajoy Kumar said at a press conference here.

"Moquim Ji and Biswal Ji had written to the AICC president for revocation of their suspension. Now, their suspension order has been withdrawn. Similarly, Krishna Sagaria Ji had also requested to rejoin the party and

we have accepted it and welcomed him back to the party", Kumar said.

The Congress leader appealed to all leaders, who have left Congress and want to come back, to come forward for a discussion. "We will welcome them back with all due respect", he added.

"After having a discussion with me Monday, Ajoy Kumar Ji has withdrawn my suspension. I am grateful to him. I was a family member of the Congress...I am with the party and will remain in Congress. I will discharge my responsibility in the party," said Moquim.

Similarly, Sagaria also expressed his gratitude to the party leadership including Rahul Gandhi and Malikarjun Kharge

for revoking his expulsion. "I was discussing with the Congress leaders to take me back as I believe in the ideology of Congress and Rahul Gandhi. Thanks to Ajoy Kumar Ji for taking me back to the party. I will work to strengthen the party", Sagaria said.

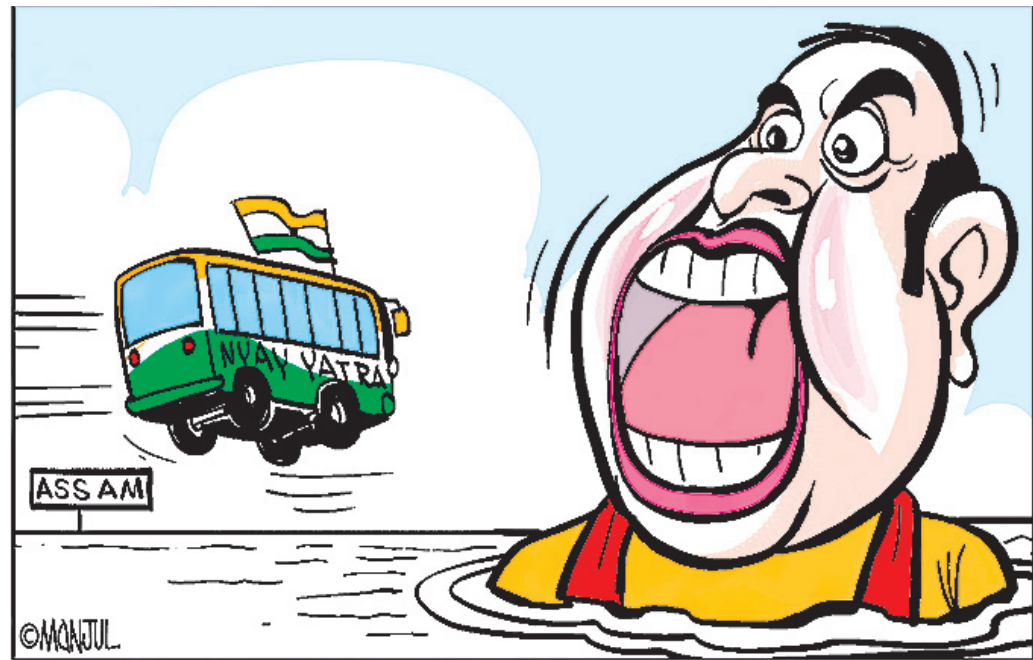
The party in July 2023 had suspended Moquim and Biswal on charges of anti-party activities. Moquim is considered a good organiser, while former OPCC working president Biswal is the son of Congress stalwart of yesteryear Basant Biswal.

Similarly, Sagaria, a former MLA and tribal leader from Koraput district, along with former Union Minister Srikant Jena was expelled from the party on a similar charge.

Parley on energy transition at NISER

Bhubaneswar: A two-day policy dialogue on 'Energy Transition in Eastern India: Issues and Challenges' was inaugurated at the Centre for Policy Research (CPR) at National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER) Tuesday to give researchers and policy makers a platform to brainstorm ideas to enhance renewable energy transition. The policy dialogue is being organised in collaboration with the state Energy department and the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER). On the first day, RB Grover, member of Atomic Energy Council, Akhilesh Gupta, secretary of SERB and senior adviser and head at DST, HN Ghosh, director of NISER, Amarendra Das, coordinator of DST-CPR and Pranay Kumar Swain, chairperson, SHSS addressed the participants in the inaugural session. Carbon emission in Eastern India is largely driven by the mining and metal based industry. Two policy briefs were released at the event.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Maoist camp busted in Boudh dist

PNN & AGENCIES

Boudh, Jan 23: Odisha Police's elite Special Operation Group (SOG) busted Tuesday a Maoist camp following an exchange of fire with the left-wing extremists in this district. The shootout took place near Matakupa reserve forest close to the Boudh-Kandhamal border when the SOG jawans were undertaking a search operation at Sagada, a senior police officer engaged in anti-Maoist operations informed.

The official said the ultras, about 25 to 30 in numbers belonging to the KKBN (Kalahandi-Kandhamal-Boudh-Nayagarh) division of the outlawed CPI(Maoist) fled from the spot leaving behind their articles and one sophisticated weapon. Even some land mines were seized from the Maoist



hideout, the official said and added that some Maoists have sustained injuries during the shootout. The officer said that the exchange of fire lasted more than 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, combing operations have been intensified with deployment of more SOG jawans following the exchange of fire. Search and combing operation is continuing, he said. Sources informed that it was the Maoists who first opened fire on the security forces following which the latter retaliated.

It should be stated here that SOG jawans and members of the district voluntary force in a joint operation had destroyed a Maoist camp January 18 inside Budhakhol forest in this district. Then also some firearms and explosives had been seized from the hideout, officials informed.

Ultras belonging to the KKBN fled from the spot leaving behind their articles

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Massive rush
A huge crowd thronged the main gateway to the Ram temple in Ayodhya as the shrine opens its doors to public, Tuesday

NATIONAL | P5

No money for Ukraine
US urges its allies to continue supporting Ukraine in its war against Russia, despite running out of funds

INTERNATIONAL | P6

Direct tax collections up
The country's net direct tax collections witness a rise by 160.52 per cent between financial years 2013-14 and 2022-23

BUSINESS | P7

Djoko reaches semis
Novak Djokovic defeats Taylor Fritz in match that lasted three and half hours to reach the Australian Open semifinals for the 11th time

SPORTS | BACK PAGE

SHORT TAKES

Moquim & Biswal's suspension revoked

Bhubaneswar: The Congress has revoked the suspension of two senior Odisha leaders, including Barabati-Cuttack MLA Mohammed Moquim, and expulsion of a tribal leader. The party has withdrawn the suspension of Moquim and legislator Chiranjib Biswal and expulsion of former MLA Krishna Chandra Sagar, Congress Odisha-in-charge Ajoy Kumar said at a press conference here. (OPP PAGE)

Two killed in Joda as soil dump caves in

Joda: Two labourers were killed and another injured after a heap of soil collapsed on them during excavation works for construction of an approach road to Joda flyover on State Highway-2 at Kamarjoda in Joda town of Keonjhar district, Tuesday. The deceased were identified as Arjun Lohar, 23, and Charan Lohar, 17, of Kalapahad, Talak hutting in the area. Injured labourer Mukesh Sardar was admitted to Tata Steel Hospital, said sources.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Why are we giving them solar panels when people are willing to live in Ram Rajya



WEAVING PATRIOTISM: An elderly woman prepares yarn for making Tricolor ahead of Republic Day celebrations in Nadia, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

BHARAT RATNA FOR KARPOORI THAKUR

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 23: Two-time Bihar Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur, considered the fountainhead of OBC politics in Bihar, has been named for the country's highest civilian award Bharat Ratna posthumously, a Rashtrapati Bhawan communique said Tuesday on the eve of his birth centenary.



Thakur, who passed away in 1988, was the first non-Congress socialist leader who became CM twice – first for seven months in December 1970 and later for two years in 1977.

"The President has been pleased to award Bharat Ratna to Shri Karpoori Thakur (posthumously)," the communique said.

Thakur, known affectionately as 'Jan Nayak', is the 49th recipient of the country's highest civilian award. The award was last conferred on late President Pranab Mukherjee in 2019.

Polls ahead, BJD starts family contact prog

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 23: Coinciding with the birth anniversaries of freedom fighters Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Veer Surendra Sai, the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday launched a 'Paribar Sampark Yatra', a statewide family contact programme ahead of the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections.

The family contact programme followed the regional party's 'Ghare Ghare Sankha' (conch shell is each house) and 'Jana Sampark Padayatra' (Public contact foot-march) schemes.

"The party's Paribar Sampark Yatra will continue till Biju Patnaik birth anniversary March 5," BJD vice-president and MLA Debi Prasad Mishra said.

During the programme, Mishra said BJD leaders and workers will visit every family and highlight the achievements of the Naveen Patnaik government and the Chief Minister's flagship schemes like KALIA former farmers, temple heritage corridor project and other welfare schemes.

The party will get feedback from households regarding their problems and how the government can resolve them. The aim is to reach out to voters across the state in the run up to the upcoming elections, he added.

BJD leader Shreemayee Mishra and Bhubaneswar-North MLA Susant Kumar Rout visited several houses in City slums and pasted conch stickers in front of the dwelling units.

PUBLIC FLOGGING OF MUSLIMS

SC blasts Guj cops

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 23: The Supreme Court Tuesday came down heavily on Gujarat Police over its officials publicly flogging five people belonging to Muslim community at a village in Kheda district in 2022, asking angrily from where did they draw the authority to tie people to poles and beat them up. The five were among the 13 people picked up for their alleged involvement in throwing stones at a garba event in Undhela village of Kheda district during Navratri festival in October 2022.

A bench of Justices BR Gavai and Sandeep Mehta was hearing an appeal by four police personnel – inspector AV Parmar, sub-inspector DB Kumavat, head constable KL Dabhi and constable RR Dabhi – against the October 19, 2023 order of the Gujarat High Court by which they were sentenced to 14-day simple imprisonment for committing contempt of court for violating the apex court's guidelines about detaining and interrogating suspects.

"(Do) you have an authority under law to tie people to a pole and beat them? Go and enjoy the custody," a furious Justice Gavai said during the hearing. Severely reprimanding the officials, Justice Mehta said, "What



Do you have an authority under law to tie people to a pole and beat them? Go and enjoy the custody, a furious Justice BR Gavai says

kind of atrocities are these? Tying the people to a pole, beating them in public view and taking videos. Then you want this court to intervene."

Senior advocate Siddharth Dave, appearing for the officials, said they were already facing criminal prosecution, departmental proceedings and an inquiry by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

"The question here is the High Court's jurisdiction to proceed against them in contempt proceedings," Dave said, adding no offence of wilful disobedience was made out against them in terms of the apex court's 1996 verdict in the DK Basu case where it had issued guidelines for making arrest, and detention and interrogation of suspects.

He submitted the question right now was not about the culpability of these officials but the contempt jurisdiction of the High Court.

"Was there any wilful disobedience of this court's verdict? This is the question for which the answer has to be found. Were the policemen aware of the verdict?" he said.

Justice Gavai shot back, saying ignorance of law is not a valid defence.

"Every police officer ought to know what is the law laid down in DK Basu. As students of law, we have been hearing and reading about the DK Basu verdict," Justice Gavai said.

Dave, however, asserted the accused policemen cannot be prosecuted for the offence under contempt jurisdiction of the HC.

Justice Gavai then wanted to know about the status of a private complaint lodged against the accused policemen. Senior advocate IH Syed, appearing for the complainant, said it was pending.

Rahul booked for 'violence' in Assam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Jan 23: Assam police Tuesday registered an FIR against Congress MP Rahul Gandhi and other party leaders on charges of indulging in wanton acts of violence, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

The Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra is currently in Assam and the alleged acts of violence took place when the party supporters and leaders broke barricades and clashed with police personnel in their bid to enter Guwahati.

"With reference to wanton acts of violence, provocation, damage to public property and assault on police personnel today by Congress members, an FIR has been registered against Rahul Gandhi, KC Venugopal, Kanhaiya Kumar and other individuals under Section 120(B)(143/147/188/233/333/332/333/427 IPCR/W Sec. 3 of PDPP Act," the Chief Minister posted on X.

Sarma had earlier in the day instructed the Director General of Police (DGP) GP Singh to register a case against Gandhi for provoking the crowd to break barricades. Singh also said that appropriate action is being taken against those involved in unlawful activities.

On the sixth day of the party's Nyay Yatra in Assam, Gandhi addressed the public from atop a bus and said that they have broken barricades but won't break the



law. He alleged that while BJP president JP Nadda was allowed to take the same route earlier, Congress was not permitted.

"You should not think we are weak. We have broken the barricades," he told his workers and supporters, calling them "babbar sher" (lion).

Following this, the CM said in a post on X that he instructed the DGP to file a case for "provoking the crowd".

Youth Congress president Srinivas BV shared on X a video showing Congress workers breaking a barricade.

Sarma said evidence is emerging as to how Gandhi and senior leader Jitendra Singh "instigated the mob to kill Assam police personnel. ... Our police personnel are servants of the public and do not belong to any royal family. Rest assured, law has a long arm, it will definitely reach you."

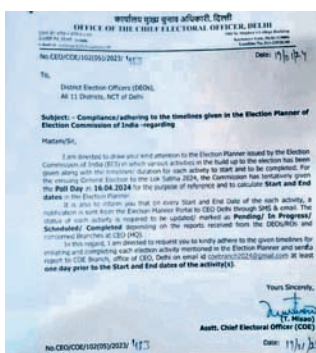
WILL THIS BE TRUE

Delhi CEO's internal note creates flutter about LS poll date

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: An internal note circulated by the office of Delhi's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) having April 16 as the "tentative poll date" to help officials schedule various activities "in the build up" to Lok Sabha elections Tuesday created a flutter while the CEO of office clarified that the date was mentioned only for "reference" for officials to plan activities in accordance with the Election Planner issued by the poll panel.

Taking to X, the CEO office said, "Some media queries are coming referring to a circular by @CeodelhiOffice to clarify whether April 16 is tentative poll day for Lok Sabha elections. It is clarified that this date was mentioned only for 'reference' for officials to plan activities as per



Election Planner of ECI." In a communication issued to all the 11 district election officers January 19, the CEO's office had referred to the Election Planner issued by the ECI in which various activities in the build-up to the election has been given along with the timelines and durations for each activity to start and to be completed.

Frozen zombie viruses may trigger new pandemic

HUGE MINING OPERATIONS IN SIBERIA WOULD DRIVE VAST HOLES INTO THE DEEP PERMAFROST TO EXTRACT OIL AND ORES, LEADING TO RELEASE OF VAST AMOUNTS OF PATHOGENS THAT STILL THRIVE THERE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

London, Jan 23: With a warming Earth and increasing human activities like shipping and mining, the chances of release of ancient zombie viruses trapped in permafrost in Siberia are higher than ever that could trigger another pandemic, warns a study.

Known for years as 'Methuselah microbes', the viruses that have stayed dormant in permafrost for tens of thousands of years carry the risk of propagating and spreading diseases.

With 2023 being the warmest year on record, the risk of permafrost thawing and eventually releasing the zombie viruses is higher than ever, said researchers from the Aix-Marseille University in the south of France.

"At the moment, analyses of pandemic threats focus on diseases that might emerge in southern regions and then spread north," said geneticist Jean-Michel Claverie, a geneticist from the varsity, was quoted as saying to the Guardian.

"By contrast, little attention has been given to an outbreak



that might emerge in the far north and then travel south – and that is an oversight, I believe. There are viruses up there that have the potential to infect humans and start a new disease outbreak."

Agreeing to this, virologist Marion Koopmans of the Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam said: "We don't know what viruses are lying out there in the permafrost but I think there is a real risk that there

might be one capable of triggering a disease outbreak -- say of an ancient form of polio."

"We have to assume that something like this could happen," she was quoted as saying.

Permafrost covers a fifth of the northern hemisphere and is made up of soil that has been kept at temperatures below zero for long periods. Some layers have remained frozen for hundreds of thousands of years, scientists have discovered.

"Huge mining operations are being planned, and are going to drive vast holes into the deep permafrost to extract oil and ores. Those operations will release vast amounts of pathogens that still thrive there. Miners will walk in and breathe the viruses. The effects could be calamitous," Claverie told the newspaper.

FOCUS NATION

BUDGET WISHLIST



The budget proposals can and should contain announcements, which can push the reform process ahead, even if keeping the restraint on electoral populism, and also not excessively burdening the incoming government

Whenever agricultural prices of commodities like sugar, rice or onions shoot up, the Union government arbitrarily imposes export bans. So, farmers are unable to exploit the opportunities to make some healthy windfall profits. The government's ban on food items is due to concerns about an urban backlash. The urban consumers' inflation pain is more important than the pain to farmers losing out on export profits. This also holds good for milk pricing which is heavily controlled. The Union budget should acknowledge this urban bias in agricultural policies and let go of the knee jerk reactions concerning export bans. The budget can also bless forward and derivatives markets in agricultural commodities.

A fourth suggestion relates to the education sector. The higher education sector badly needs massive funding to expand research, fill in vacancies for teachers, increase student intake and scholarship amounts. All of this cannot be done only with government funds. To enable a greater flow of private funds into education, all higher education institutions, or those which meet a certain criteria of quality, age and scale can be given free access to foreign funding. If we welcome foreign direct investment (FDI) in all sectors including defence, why is the education sector so over-regulated when it comes to receiving foreign funds? Can FCRA permission be made very liberal for educational institutions? This is worth exploring and can feature in the FM's proposals.

These are a few ideas to table in Parliament on February 1. The budget's size is about 15% of the national GDP (in nominal rupee terms). It is being presented just before the formation of the next Lok Sabha, which will oversee major initiatives like the next census and delimitation. Even then, it should signal continuity of economic reforms and a path toward fiscal consolidation.

The writer is a noted Pune-based economist.
@THEBILLIONPRESS

The Union Budget for the financial year 2024-25 will be presented in Parliament by the Finance Minister on February 1. This budget proposal will apply for the period April 1, 2024, to March 31 2025. Since the elections to the eighteenth Lok Sabha are due in the next five months, the FM will present only an interim budget, and it will be passed by a vote on account. What this means is that the present government cannot announce major initiatives which have potential electoral benefits for the incumbent government. The government also cannot pledge major new expenditures, which will become the responsibility of the next government to fulfil. Hence the February budget speech is expected to be mostly about items which are inevitable and routine expenditure items, and will also have revenue estimates based on linear extrapolation. We should not expect any big bang reforms or large welfare freebies.

Even then it cannot be forgotten that this is the annual budget presentation to the nation, an economy soon to be the third largest in the world. The budget proposals can and should contain announcements, which can push the reform process ahead, even if keeping the restraint on electoral populism, and also not excessively burdening the incoming government. This is the continuity of the reform process that we have seen for the past 34 years.

So here are some pointers as suggestion to the Finance Minister for the interim budget.

The first is about income tax exemption. The obligation to pay even a single rupee of income tax kicks in only when your minimum income is above Rs 7.5 lakh. This income is 300% of the per capita income of India, which is the average income of every man, woman and child. No other country gives an income tax exemption limit which is so high. Hence the FM is well advised to resist increasing this limit further. This high exemption limit means that India's income tax to GDP ratio is quite low. It also means

that the increased burden is on collecting taxes via indirect tax like Goods and Services Tax (GST). Indirect taxes are unfair. Since GST is paid by all, whether rich and poor, the burden falls disproportionately on the poor. We need to reduce the median GST rate from 18 to 12%. And we can do that only if we collect more direct taxes such as income tax. India's high exemption limit of Rs 7.5 lakh is also misleading. Because by the time your income crosses Rs 15 lakh you pay the highest marginal tax rate of nearly 42%. Which means that our marginal tax rate on income goes from zero to 42 in just Rs 7.5 lakh income. A healthier structure should be like this: zero income tax till first Rs 2.5 lakh income, 10% tax for income between Rs 2.5 lakh to Rs 7.5 lakh, 20% tax between Rs 7.5 to Rs 25 lakh, 30% from Rs 25 lakh to Rs 50 lakh and a higher rate above Rs 50 lakh. The total tax collected might actually go up if we switch to this structure. Of course, we will need to collect empirical data to confirm this.

A second point for the FM to note is about fiscal consolidation.

The fiscal deficit is about 5 to 6% of the GDP. This keeps adding to the debt mountain which is at 82% of the GDP. This high appetite for borrowing by the government leaves less room for credit and loans to be available for others. India's debt to GDP ratio is stuck around 80 plus percent, and the IMF says it might reach 100% if not checked. Look at Jamaica. It has reduced its debt to GDP ratio from 140 to 72% in the past fifteen years. That is cut by half. Surely India can go from 82 to 60%, as recommended by various committees appointed on fiscal responsibility. Of the targeted ratio of 60%, the Union government's share is 40 and the states' share is 20. For this to happen the fiscal deficit must be kept in check. Caving in to populist demands like the Old Pension Scheme will be fiscally disastrous and also unfair to the large workforce without any social security.

The third point is about farmers' incomes. This was supposed to double by 2022 or 2023. It has not happened. One of the reasons for this is that farm prices are not allowed to increase.



Ajit Ranade

WE NEED TO REDUCE THE MEDIAN GST RATE FROM 18 TO 12%. AND WE CAN DO THAT ONLY IF WE COLLECT MORE DIRECT TAXES SUCH AS INCOME TAX

Dad-Daughter Duo

An incredible development in North Korea - the 10-year-old daughter of Kim Jong-un being catapulted into limelight as a likely heir apparent - has triggered speculation about succession and image-building exercise. It could be an over-reaction of South Korea's intelligence agency to name Kim Ju-ae as the potential heir to Jong-un, but there is no doubt that the whole move has more than one ulterior motive.

Rarely has the attire of a 10-year-old girl been scrutinised the way it is being done in the case of Ju-ae as indications of momentous developments. When she made her first public appearance in November, 2023 during a missile launch, she wore a puffy coat and red flat shoes sporting a schoolgirl's fringe. But, she has taken on a more mature look since then. Her appearance at North Korea's New Year celebrations December 31, 2023 was the most dramatic as she strutted down the red carpet holding her father's arm, clad in a black leather jacket with a wide fur collar and a hairstyle favoured by her mother Ri Sol Ju and her aunt Kim Yo Jong. A week later she was seen accompanying her father to inspect a newly built chicken factory, her first non-military-related appearance. This time, she added waves to her hair.

North Korea watchers say the frequency of Ju-ae's public appearances coupled with the rapid transformation to a more womanly image is probably part of a grand propaganda blitzkrieg engineered by her aunt who heads the Propaganda and Agitation Department.

There could be two reasons for such a campaign. Jong-un is known to be a ruthless, whimsical, unpredictable ruler. He is now believed to be showing off his softer side as an affectionate father, while his wife completes the picture of a strong family bond. This seems to be the calculation when he hugged and planted a kiss on Ju-ae's cheek during the New Year's celebration. This was just days before he threatened to annihilate South Korea, if provoked.

On the other hand, from the perspective of the only ruling Workers' Party of North Korea and the North Korean military, Jong-un appears to be showing that he is securing the future of his country through nuclear capabilities as well as Ju-ae, who represents the fourth generation of the powerful dynasty. Experts say Jong-un is trying to prepare the deeply patriarchal society of North Korea to accept a female successor in the future. According to them he must be acutely aware that having a woman take his place as a successor is going to be very hard and the military is not going to accept it easily. This is believed to be one of the reasons why he started, a few years back, making his sister take a hard line to convince the military top brass that she could rule the North Korean military in his absence. The fact that he has now begun to take his daughter around military facilities reinforces the belief that he is keeping his options open.

As Jong-un keeps the world guessing about his plans for his daughter, the most charitable view that can be taken is that Ju-ae is being internally groomed for her role of heir apparent, but it is not being publicly announced so as not to invite mockery. The most likely interpretation could be that Pyongyang's propaganda department is planning his successor decades ahead, while refurbishing his brand image to divert global attention from the power dynamics in North Korean politics.

There are misgivings about the sincerity of Jong-un in promoting the ordinary women of North Korea, most of whom have to work hard, making them more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse outside the home. Food availability last year is believed to be at its worst since the 90s famine. COVID-19 has taken its toll on the livelihood of the people. Even if Ju-ae succeeds her father, she is unlikely to change things for ordinary North Korean women, who must struggle tirelessly to safeguard their home and hearth.

WISDOM CORNER

Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.
PABLO PICASSO

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.
ANNE FRANK

Everything passes. Nobody gets anything for keeps. And that's how we've got to live.
HARUKI MURAKAMI

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1848: Carpenter James Wilson Marshall found nuggets of gold in California's American River near the site of a sawmill he was building for John Sutter, ushering in a gold rush. Some 300,000 people travelled to California after Marshall had found gold at Sutter's Mill in Coloma, California.

1940: The Grapes of Wrath, the acclaimed adaptation of John Steinbeck's classic novel, had its world premiere; the character Tom Joad's soliloquy on the poor, reflecting his empathy for their plight, remains one of the most famous scenes in film history.

1984: Steve Jobs introduced Apple's revolutionary computer Macintosh, two days after the groundbreaking commercial "1984" aired before a national TV audience and heralded the product's impending release. The "Mac" was the first commercially successful personal computer using a graphical user interface and a mouse.

1989: American serial killer Ted Bundy—who confessed to murdering 30 women, though many believe the number to be much higher—was executed at age 42.

1990: Japan launches its first lunar probe. Hiten was the first robotic lunar probe since the Soviet Luna 24 in 1976 and the first deep space probe that executed an aerobraking maneuver.

IN JEST THIS

On V-Day, pay tribute to your favourite pest

Valentine's Day is just around the corner, and if you'd like to show someone how you truly feel about them, you might want to consider the most romantic of tributes: naming a cockroach after them.



Melvin Durai

IF YOU'RE FEELING SORRY FOR ROACHES, PERHAPS YOU HAVEN'T ENCOUNTERED MANY OF THEM IN YOUR LIFE

The Bronx Zoo in New York City is among several zoos that are offering people this most unique of opportunities. It costs just \$15 (Rs. 1,250) to name a Madagascar hissing cockroach after someone special.

"You don't always have the right words, but you can still give them goosebumps," the Bronx Zoo writes on its website. "Name a Roach for your Valentine, because roaches are forever."

Perhaps you can also include a short poem: "Roses are red, violets are blue; roaches are cute, more so than you."

As you can imagine, the Bronx Zoo's Name a Roach programme, entering its 13th year, is popular not because people are eager to express tender feelings for a

loved one, but because they want to demean an ex (ex-spouse, ex-partner, or ex-boss). They might even be looking to belittle someone who's current (current boss, current mother-in-law, or current wife of ex-husband.)

The Toronto Zoo in Canada started its "name a roach" programme last year to raise money for the zoo's conservation efforts. "Naming opportunities are not limited to exes," zoo engagement coordinator Kelsey Godel told CTV News Toronto. "You can name a roach after your boss, ex-friend, relative, or anyone else that has been 'bugging' you."

Canada has a big Ukrainian population, so I imagine that many roaches at Toronto Zoo are now answering to the name "Vladimir."

If you really want to show your disdain for an ex, you might be drawn to the "Cry Me a Cockroach Fundraiser" at San Antonio Zoo in Texas. Here's how the zoo is promoting it: "Be part of the global sensation and

ex-terminate your past and support a noble cause with the Cry Me a Cockroach Fundraiser. Symbolically name a roach, rat, or veggie after your ex or not-so-special someone and San Antonio Zoo will help squash your past, a true heartbreak healer, by feeding your selection to an animal resident."

Don't worry: the zoo does this type of feeding anyway. Just because you named a roach after your ex-spouse does not mean that you determined the fate of the roach.

If you're feeling sorry for roaches, perhaps you haven't encountered many of them in your life. I've lived in four countries and seen more cockroaches than I could possibly name. Some were small cockroaches, like the ones in Toronto that regularly visited my high-rise apartment with their extended families. Some were large cockroaches, like the ones in my childhood home in Zambia, coming out at night to terrorise me. Some were huge cockroaches, like the ones in

Florida that flew around like birds, swooping down periodically to snatch pizza slices from unsuspecting tourists.

Perhaps my worst experience with roaches was on an overnight train in Tamil Nadu. The roaches just showed up in our compartment at night, waiting for the moment when the train conductor had left and couldn't ask them for tickets.

I don't know about you, but I always have a hard time sleeping when there are insects around, especially insects that might crawl on me. According to scientists, cockroaches and other insects play an important ecological role in the world. This may be true, but why does this role have to involve me?

My favourite pests are the ones that do their work behind the scenes, the ones that stay as far as possible away from me. I don't want to get too familiar with them. I don't want to get so close to them that I feel the need to give them a name. The name of an ex, of course.

LOL

Safe to swim



While sports fishing off the Florida coast, a tourist capsized his boat. He could swim, but his fear of alligators kept him clinging to the overturned craft. Spotting an old beachcomber standing on the shore, the tourist shouted, "Are there any gators around here?" "Naw," the man hollered back, "they ain't been around for years!" Feeling safe, the tourist started

swimming leisurely toward the shore. About halfway there he asked the guy, "How'd you get rid of the gators?" "We didn't do nothin'," the beachcomber said. "The sharks got 'em."

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Historic occasion

Sir, This refers to "Ram returns home," OrissaPOST, Jan 23. The Pran Pratishtha of the Ram Mandir is not merely a religious event but a celebration resonating across the nation. It marks the culmination of a 500-year-old dream, an event of profound cultural and historical significance. People from diverse backgrounds joined together in joyous celebration, transcending religious and cultural boundaries. The unity is palpable as citizens, irrespective of their backgrounds, participated in various ways to mark this historic occasion. Under the leadership of PM Modi, Ayodhya has witnessed significant economic development. Also, the construction of the Ram Mandir has not only fulfilled a long-standing cultural and religious aspiration but has also acted as a catalyst for economic progress in the region. As the temple stands tall, it becomes a symbol of faith, resilience, and the enduring spirit of a nation that cherishes its past while forging ahead into a harmonious future. The nationwide celebration and unity witnessed in various expressions of joy underscore the collective pride and shared values defining the essence of India.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Coffee boost

Sir, The Odisha Cabinet has approved a coffee plantation for sustainable livelihood scheme with an outlay of Rs 1,144 crore. Under this scheme, coffee plantations in the state will be extended to one lakh from ten thousand acres. The scheme will be implemented in six districts - Koraput, Rayagada, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Keonjhar, and Gajapati. Additionally, women's self-help groups will be involved in raising coffee nurseries which will benefit more than fifty thousand farm families in the region. Recently, coffee has emerged as one of the major production from Odisha due to its agro-friendly climate and support from the state machinery. The coffee produced in the state has already gained international recognition. Coffee is a profitable commercial crop because of its growing popularity in the market. Good quality coffee production on a large scale will make a scope for export to other countries. This scheme will encourage the tribal people of the area to engage in these activities and earn profits. This will boost the economy, tourism, and scientific education in these six districts.

Deba Prasad Nayak, DHENKANAL

TURNING DREAMS INTO REALITY



Grand celebration on the cards

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is scheduled to dedicate the historic SAMALEI project to people on the pre-decided auspicious moment at 12.30pm January 27 which falls on the Dwitiya Tithi of Krsihna Paksha (waning moon), Sanjay Babu, president of the Samalei temple board said. Prior to that, the CM will take darshan of the revered Goddess before unveiling the plaque. After the inaugural ceremony the CM will visit the various transformative initiatives under the project and hold interaction with the invited guests. People who sacrificed their land to make way for the project will be felicitated by the Chief Minister on the occasion. The religious rituals in the lead-up to the public dedication programme began January 22. The Kalas procession will be held at around 10am January 26 wherein more than 1,100 women will collect pious water from Mahanadi at the Marwaripara Ghat and walk in a procession to the temple. They will install the Kalas' at the five yajna venues, including the main venue, on the temple premises, Babu added.



The much-awaited SAMALEI (Samaleswari Temple Area Management and Local Economy Initiatives) project that entails transformation of Maa Samaleswari temple and its precincts in the western Odisha district of Sambalpur, in line with the Srimandir in Puri and Lingaraj Temple in Bhubaneswar, will be dedicated to the people by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik January 27.

Announced by the CM February 17, 2021, the historic project has been completed in a record time of less than three years. Spread out over an area of around 40 acres, the project work includes beautification and peripheral development of the 16th century shrine, development of heritage corridor, state-of-the-art amenities for devotees, and improvement of access to the temple.

Another important feature of the project is the development of the riverfront of Mahanadi, the largest river in Odisha, which flows close to the temple.

The key components of the ambitious project include development of four gates around the shrine, temple office, priest rest-room, information centre, shoe stand and vending zone. It also comprises foot over bridge, lamp room, heritage corridor, parking, drinking water facility, toilets, CCTV and lighting facilities.

Development of religious institutions like Gopaljee mutt and beautification of the clock tower as well as riverfront by using precast mould have been emphasised, said an official,



adding that widening of road connecting the temple and railway station has also been prioritised.

The state government has been extending commensurate compensation to the people affected by the project. Arrangements have been made to rehabilitate residents displaced due to the project at a special colony in Durgapali, along with other provisions.

The Odisha Bridge

History in the making

No noteworthy developmental work was ever carried out at the Maa Samaleswari temple in the 400 years of the temple's history, said Special Officer, SAMALEI project, Umakant Raj. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik took upon himself the mantle of amending the historic wrong and announced the massive transformative project at the revered temple. Subsequently, under the leadership of Chairman 5T Kartik Pandian the transformative SAMALEI project, which is amongst the dream projects of the Chief Minister, could become a reality. Works on the project are on the final stages of completion, he added.



and Construction Corporation (OBCC) Limited has been executing the project that will not only offer a memorable and divine experience to devotees but will also give boost to tourism in entire western Odisha.

5T Chairman Kartik Pandian has been taking stock of the progress of the redevelopment work on a regular basis by conducting periodic ground visits.



New Ram Lalla idol to be known as 'Balak Ram'

The temple trust said that of the three, one would be placed in the sanctum sanctorum while the other two kept in other parts of the mandir



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ayodhya, Jan 23: The new Ram Lalla idol consecrated at the grand temple here January 22 will be known as "Balak Ram" as it depicts the deity as a five-year-old boy in a standing posture. "The idol of Lord Ram, whose consecration was done January 22, has been named as 'Balak Ram'. The reason for naming the idol of Lord Ram as 'Balak Ram' is that he resembles a child, whose age is five years," Arun Dixit, a priest associated with the consecration ceremony told PTI. "The first time I saw the idol, I was thrilled and tears started rolling down my face. I cannot explain the feeling I experienced then," he added. The Varanasi-

based priest, who has conducted nearly 50-60 consecrations, said, "Of all the consecrations (I have) performed so far, this is the most 'alaukik (divine)' and 'sarvoch' (supreme) for me." Dixit said he had the first glimpse of the idol January 18. The idol was consecrated Monday in a grand ceremony led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who said it marked the advent of a new era. Lakhs of people watched the 'pran pratishtha (consecration)' ceremony on television in their

homes and neighbourhood temples, becoming part of the historic event held just months before the Lok Sabha elections. According to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra, the ornaments for the idol have been prepared after extensive research and study of texts such as the Adhyatma Ramayana, Valmiki Ramayana, Ramcharitmanas and the Alavandar Stotram. The idol is adorned in Banarasi fabric, featuring a yellow

The old idol of Ram Lalla, which was earlier kept in a makeshift shrine, has been placed in front of the new idol

low dhoti and a red 'pataka' or 'angavastram'. The 'angavastram' are embellished in pure gold 'zari' and threads, featuring auspicious Vaishnav symbols - 'shankh', 'padma', 'chakra' and 'mayur'.

While the ornaments have been crafted by Ankur Anand's Lucknow-based Harsahaimal Shiamlal Jewellers, the garments were created by Delhi-based textile designer Manish Tripathi, who worked from Ayodhya Dham for the project.

The 51-inch idol chiselled by Mysuru-based sculptor Arun Yogiraj has been carved out of a three billion-year-old rock. The azure-coloured Krishna Shile (black schist) was excavated from Gujgegowdanapura at Jayapura Hobli in HD Kote Taluk of Mysuru. It is a fine-to-medium-grained, sky-blue metamorphic rock, generally called soapstone because of its smooth surface

texture and is ideal for sculptors to carve idols.

The Krishna Shile was found while levelling the agricultural land of Ramdas (78) and a local contractor, who assessed the quality of the stone, drew the attention of the temple trustees in Ayodhya through his contacts.

Yogiraj, who has received effusive praise for his work, told PTI, "I have always felt that Lord Ram has been shielding me and my family from all the bad times and I strongly believe that it was Him who chose me for the auspicious task."

"I spent sleepless nights working on the idol with precision but it was all worth it. I feel I am the luckiest person on Earth and today is the best day of my life. I learnt the art of sculpting from my father. He would have been very proud to see my idol here today," he added. Rama Lalla idols for the grand temple were made by three sculptors - Ganesh Bhatt, Yogiraj and Satyanarayan Pandey. The temple trust said that of the three, one would be placed in the sanctum sanctorum while the other two kept in other parts of the mandir.

Nitish meets Bihar Guv

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, Jan 23: Political circles in Bihar are abuzz as Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Tuesday went to the Raj Bhavan to meet Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, accompanied by his Cabinet Minister Vijay Kumar Choudhary.

Nitish Kumar stayed for 40 minutes in the Raj Bhavan but the reason for his visit has not been made public yet, leading to speculation of a government change in Bihar.

What has provided grist for the rumour mills is the fact that while Nitish, Tejashwi Yadav, Chodhary and Arlekar were together at a function to commemorate the birth anniversary of Subhas Chandra Bose, later Nitish and Choudhary went to the Raj Bhavan without Tejashwi.

Following the incident, former Chief Minister of Bihar, Jitan Ram Manjhi posted a cryptic comment on his X han-



Nitish stayed for 40 minutes in the Raj Bhavan but the reason for his visit has not been made public yet

dle saying the games have begun in Bihar. He posted "Khela Hobe" in Bangla, "Khela Hokto" in Magahi and "Khela Hokhi" in Bhojpuri. Manjhi was implying that Nitish would join the NDA any time and change the government in Bihar. Manjhi had claimed earlier also that the government might change in Bihar and his statement had come at a time when Nitish was not the National President of the JD(U).

Bihar has 7,64,33,329 voters

THE ELECTORAL ROLL ALSO SHOWED A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE OF 7,79,360 NUMBER OF YOUNG VOTERS IN THE 18 TO 19 YEARS AGE GROUP FROM 1,47,062 TO 9,26,422

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Jan 23: The final electoral roll of Bihar published Monday ahead of the Lok Sabha polls showed an increase of 12,09,347 voters taking the total number of voters in the state to 7,64,33,329. Bihar has 3,64,01,903 women voters, the state election department said. The electoral roll also showed a significant increase of 7,79,360 number of young voters in the 18 to 19 years age group from 1,47,062 to 9,26,422. According to a statement released by the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, there is a sharp decrease of 2,07,136 in the num-



ber of voters aged 80 years and above in the state. The number of voters aged 80 years and above in the state has come down from 16,57,552 to 14,50,416. Under house-

to-house verification, 2,07,136 entries from the electoral roll were deleted, which included names of permanently shifted electors, dead electors and mul-

tiples, said an official of the CEO office.

Special focus was on the enrolment of young voters in the 18 to 19 years age group.

"Total 7,79,360 young voters were added to the electoral rolls of Bihar during the special summary revision", the official said. However, the number of voters in the third gender category has decreased from 2,306 to 2,290, the statement said.

Of the total 7,64,33,329, the number of male voters is 4,00,29,136. The state has witnessed an increase of 5,78,766 male voters. There has been an improvement in the gender ratio from 907 to 909, it said.



A police official tries to stop contract rural doctors during their protest near the CM residence demanding permanent jobs in Patna, Bihar

UP govt frames rules for welfare of young workers



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 23: The Uttar Pradesh government has proposed stringent rules prohibiting lifting of heavy weight and ensuring mandatory paid weekly holidays for young workers, among others. The move is aimed at eradicating child labour and ensuring welfare of adolescents. "The state government is framing rules as a follow-up to various amendments made to the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation Act), 1986 by the Centre in 2016," said a senior labour department official. "The government has invited public comments to draft rules before finalising the same," he added. One of the key provisions stipulates that no adolescent shall be permitted to lift, carry, or keep a weight exceeding 10 kg. This restriction is aimed at preventing physical strain and injury to young workers. Recognising the importance of leisure and rest in the growing

The move is aimed at eradicating child labour and ensuring welfare of adolescents

years, the regulations seek to enshrine the right of each adolescent worker to a paid weekly holiday, and not just a holiday. The rules also address concerns related to the education of adolescent workers. If a child receiving education in a school remains absent consecutively for 30 days without notifying the school authorities, the principal/headmaster will be mandated to report such absences to the nodal officer concerned. "This provision will ensure that educational interests of adolescent workers are protected, and any prolonged absence triggers appropriate intervention since a long absence of a child from the school will be seen as the possibility of a young student being a potential child worker," the official stated. The proposed rules also man-

date the state government to launch public awareness campaigns, utilising various media platforms, to educate the general public, employers, and young workers about the provisions of the Act.

The rules further emphasise the establishment of the Child and Adolescent Labour Rehabilitation Fund, with specific guidelines on crediting, depositing, and investing amounts recovered from various sources. The proposed regulations outline the meticulous process of ensuring that the funds are paid to the child or adolescent in a timely and structured manner.

Furthermore, the rules address working conditions for adolescents employed in non-hazardous occupations and processes.

Employers are now mandated to uphold standards of cleanliness, ventilation, lighting, and safety measures. The regulations also underscore the importance of providing facilities such as safe drinking water, toilets, and medical aid.

In a bid to strike a balance between education and familial responsibilities, the draft rules outline provisions allowing children to assist their families without compromising their school education.

However, these provisions come with strict conditions, including limitations on working hours, type of work, and adherence to existing laws. Moreover, the rules permit children to engage in artistic pursuits, subject to approval from the district magistrate, and adherence to safety guidelines.

The draft rules notified by principal secretary, labour and employment, Anil Kumar are currently open for public scrutiny and feedback, with a 45-day window for objections and suggestions.

Unprecedented rush at Hanuman temples in UP



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 23: A day after the Pran Pratishtha ceremony in Ayodhya, Tuesday was witnessing huge crowds at various Hanuman temples.

Tuesday being the day of worship for Hanuman, his temples are now witnessing huge footfalls, despite chilly weather and dense fog.

Long queues of devotees lined at almost all Hanuman temples

across the state Tuesday and this is being directly linked to the opening of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

"There is a huge rush at Hanuman Garhi temple in Ayodhya and this is mainly because it is customary for devotees to visit this temple before visiting the Ram temple," said Ram Kumar, a regular visitor to this temple.

In Lucknow, despite bone-chilling cold, the Hanuman temples

Tuesday being the day of worship for Hanuman, his temples are now witnessing huge footfalls

were jammed with devotees.

"We could not visit Ayodhya for the Pran Pratishtha ceremony so we decided to offer prayers at Hanuman temple. Because of the huge rush, we may not be able to go to Ayodhya for some time," said Meenu Sharma, a Ram devotee.

In Prayagraj, according to sources, a massive turnout of devotees was seen since morning at the 'Bade Hanuman' temple near Sangam.

The rush of devotees included those who are attending the Magh Mela and also those from the city.

Bihar Cong expecting Lalu, Nitish to share dais with Rahul

Patna: With the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra set to enter Bihar January 29, Congress leaders in the state are expecting that RJD supremo Lalu Prasad and Chief Minister and JD-U chief Nitish Kumar will participate in Rahul Gandhi's rallies in Purnea and Katihar. Prem Chand Mishra, the official spokesperson for Bihar Congress, said that invitation to both the top leaders have been sent by the party, which expects them to share the stage with Rahul Gandhi. Besides them, the party has also sent invitations to other leaders as well, Mishra said. "We are expecting that Lalu Ji and Nitish Ji along with other leaders of Bihar will join the rallies in Purnea (January 31) and Katihar (February 1), and express their views before the common people of the state," Mishra said.

UP govt integrates 1 lakh CCTV cameras

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 23: In a significant move aimed at enhancing the safety and security of citizens, with a particular focus on women, children, and the elderly in Uttar Pradesh, the Urban Development Department, in collaboration with the Home Department, has successfully implemented a network of 1,00,000 CCTV cameras.

As part of the Smart City Mission, a total of 1,00,000 CCTV cameras have been installed in 17 municipal corporations and Gautam Buddha Nagar as well as integrated under the Safe City Project, maintaining continuous surveillance of these cities around the clock.

Amrit Abhijat, Principal Secretary, Urban Development Department, said that the Safe City project in Uttar Pradesh is an important example of the Smart City Mission, which is not only improving the infrastructure of the state, but also



ensuring the safety of the city residents.

Abhijat expressed confidence that the Safe City project would play a pivotal role in establishing the state as the safest in the country.

Under this initiative, all cameras are centrally monitored from the Smart City's Integrated Command and Control Centre and Integrated Traffic Management System. This cen-

tralised monitoring facilitates real-time responses to incidents, bolstering the overall security systems of cities.

Notably, the implementation of this initiative gained heightened importance with the influx of thousands of devotees to Ayodhya following the historic Pran Pratishtha ceremony. The Safe City project is designed to guarantee a secure and pleasant experience for devotees, un-

- Under this initiative, all cameras will be monitored in real time through the Integrated Command and Control Centre and Integrated Traffic Management System
- Intelligent video analytics will be used to detect suspicious activities
- Emergency response time will be reduced and the safety of women, children, and the elderly increased

derscoring a broader commitment to safeguarding citizens throughout the state.

Under this initiative, all cameras will be monitored in real time through the Integrated Command and Control Centre and Integrated Traffic Management System.

Intelligent video analytics will be used to detect suspicious activities. Emergency response time will be reduced and the safety of women, children, and the elderly increased.

national



Earlier, Modi government made a false promise of installing 40 GW of rooftop solar capacity by 2022. The status check of Modi government's grand announcements is the following - 70% of that target of 40 GW remains unfulfilled. Out of that, only 2.2 GW are installed in homes. Energy generated from residences was only 1/5th of the installed capacity. After its grand failure, Modi government changed the target to be completed by 2026, without any new funding in the scheme

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

GEARING UP

Getting battle-ready for the 2024 general elections, the Congress will from Thursday start holding state-level workers' conventions where party chief Mallikarjun Kharge will preside over meetings of office bearers to energise organisational cadres



of the day quote

Lord Ram is not the property of a single party. If you think so, we will have to make BJP-mukt Shri Ram

UDDHAV THACKERAY | SHIV SENA (UBT) LEADER

Disrupting Rahul Gandhi's march is snatching the liberty of an individual. Rahul Gandhi is doing the march to understand the problems of the nation, its people and the society. Some fringe elements in the BJP are trying to obstruct the march. So, the Congress is protesting against it

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER

The state government will introduce a degree course in Fisheries Science at Goa University soon in view of the burgeoning 'blue economy'

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

SHORT TAKES

Three railway staffers killed

Mumbai: Three railway staffers were killed after being run over by a Mumbai-bound local train near Vasai town in Palghar district when they were engaged in the task of fixing a signalling system fault, officials said Tuesday. The incident occurred at 8:55 pm Monday between Vasai Road and Naigaon stations when the local was going towards Churchgate terminus in south Mumbai, they said. The Western Railway (WR), under whose Mumbai division the accident occurred, said it was an unfortunate incident, and ordered a probe into it.

Seven railway employees booked

New Delhi: The CBI has booked seven railway employees and a private company, Bhartiya Infra Projects Ltd., in a Rs 60 crore bribery case related to projects in the North East Frontier Railway zone during 2016-23, officials said Tuesday. After registering the case, the biggest of its kind in recent times, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) conducted searches at 16 places in Assam, Tripura, Manipur and Delhi at the premises of the accused officers and the company. The searches led to the recovery of incriminating documents related to the case and acquisition of property by the accused, the officials said.



Local administration carries out demolition drive against alleged illegal structures built on a roadside at Mira Road, in Mumbai, Tuesday. Clashes broke out in the area, Monday during Ram Mandir consecration

PTI PHOTO

RELIGIOUS FERVOUR

Massive rush at Ram temple

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ayodhya, Jan 23: A massive crowd that swelled by the hour and became unmanageable in the afternoon thronged the main gateway to the Ram temple here as it opened its doors to the public Tuesday, a day after the consecration ceremony.

Ram Path -- the main thoroughfare -- was choked as devotees flooded the streets of the temple town, which has been gripped by religious fervour over the inauguration of the grand mandir. The entry of devotees to the temple complex began at 6 am and about 2.5 lakh people are likely to have visited the temple by 2 pm, Ayodhya Divisional Commissioner Gaurav Dayal said. It is estimated that about five lakh devotees will have visited by the end of the day, another official said.

Waiting in serpentine queues outside the temple, were people who had been camping in Ayodhya before the consecration ceremony, having made long and difficult journeys to reach the temple town.

An idol of the new Ram Lalla was consecrated at the Ayodhya temple Monday, a landmark event led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Tuesday, 'Ram dhun' was played in the streets as security personnel kept guard and sought measures to control the crowd even as many chanted 'Jai Shri Ram' and attempted to enter through the gateway.

For a couple hours in the afternoon, the crowd became so huge that the security personnel scrambled to maintain order.



For a couple hours in the afternoon, the crowd became so huge that the security personnel scrambled to maintain order

Security guards later made a semi-circular human fence to manage the crowd as other personnel made announcements on loudspeakers to keep order

The entire section of the Ram Path facing the gateway was blocked as many devotees, some of whom landed with suitcases and backpacks, wanted to have a 'darshan'.

At the main gateway, the commotion in the crowd led to one devotee fainting and having to be taken for medical treatment. There was a "sudden massive rush" in the morning and the people were continuously streaming in, seeking to visit the temple and have a darshan of Ram Lalla, Dayal said.

The administration is taking measures to keep the crowd in order, "with proper holding (area), queuing and proper barricading", he added. Uttar Pradesh information director Shishir said more than 8,000 policemen are deployed at the temple and "everything is under control".

Director General, Law Order, Prashant Kumar and Principal

Secretary, Home, Sanjay Prasad are inside the temple and overseeing the arrangements. Ayodhya police, in a post on X, also refuted rumours that the temple was temporarily closed due to the heavy rush.

Suresh Kumar and his friend from Chhattisgarh stood in the milling crowd, eager to have a 'darshan' but had little hope of getting in as they both carried suitcases.

"We have come from Durg. We took a train to Kanpur and then a bus to Lucknow and another bus to Ayodhya and reached Ayodhya at 10:30 am," he said. The pair said they made a "sudden plan" to visit Ayodhya. "We have come just for the 'darshan'. We will go back today," he said.

Security guards later made a semi-circular human fence to manage the crowd as other personnel made announcements on loudspeakers to keep order.

Sandeshkhali attack: ED challenges order

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 23: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has challenged before a division bench of the Calcutta High Court a single bench order forming a joint special investigation team of CBI and West Bengal police to probe an attack on ED officials at Sandeshkhali, a lawyer representing the agency said Tuesday.

The appeal has been listed for hearing before a division bench presided by Chief Justice T S Sivagnanam Wednesday. Challenging the formation of a joint SIT, the ED prayed for a holistic investigation by the CBI, the lawyer representing the ED in the matter said.

The ED said that three of its officials were injured and their belongings like laptops, mobile phones and purses were "looted" in a mob attack on them when they went to search the premises of Trinamool Congress leader Shajahan Sheikh January 5 at Sandeshkhali in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district.

The agency's counsel had prayed before the single bench for a transfer of the investigation into the attack to the CBI, claiming that the central agency does not have faith in a probe being done by the West Bengal police. Justice Jay Sengupta had January 17 directed that the probe will be monitored by the court and the SIT to file a progress report of the investigation February 12.



MIRACULOUS ESCAPE

Myanmar military plane crashes; 8 hurt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aizawl, Jan 23: In a miraculous escape, all 14 passengers on board a small Myanmar military plane survived after the aircraft overshot the table-top Lengpui airport runway near here and crash-landed Tuesday, officials said.

Of the 14 people on the plane, including the pilot, eight sustained minor injuries and were treated in a local health centre, they said. The plane had come to take back 92 Myanmar soldiers who crossed over to India last week, following gunfights

with an ethnic insurgent group, they said. Officials said the Myanmar airforce Y-8 cargo plane overshot the table-top runway of the Mizoram government-run airport

around 10:20 am and crash-landed. The injured were taken to Lengpui primary health centre for treatment, they added. The runway is closed for the time being and all flights have been cancelled for today, an official said.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has ordered an investigation into the accident, a state government official said. "All flights have been cancelled. Hopping all passengers would be able to fly in or fly out as soon as possible, especially people with medical emergency," she said.

In all, 276 Myanmar soldiers had entered Mizoram last week and 184 were sent back on Monday, officials said, adding

the remaining 92 soldiers were to be repatriated in batches, they said. The plane was supposed to take them to Sittwe in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

The Myanmar soldiers entered Bandukbanga village in Mizoram's Lawngtlai district with their weapons January 17 and approached the Assam Rifles. They fled to Mizoram after their camp was overrun and captured by 'Arakan Army' fighters.

The Myanmar soldiers were taken to the nearby Assam Rifles camp at Parva, and later majority of them were shifted to Lunglei, the official said.

They have been under the supervision of the Assam Rifles since then, the official said. These soldiers were brought to Aizawl over Saturday and Sunday to be sent to Myanmar from Lengpui airport. The group, headed by a colonel, has 36 officers and 240 lower-rank personnel, officials said.

With the 276 soldiers who entered last week, as many as 635 Myanmar soldiers have fled to Mizoram after their camps were overrun and captured by ethnic armed organisations and pro-democratic forces over the last few months, officials said.

In November, 104 Myanmar army personnel were sent to the border town of Moreh in Manipur from different places in Mizoram by Indian Air Force (IAF) helicopters, and then repatriated. Earlier this month, 255 soldiers were sent back via the Lengpui airport by Myanmar airforce planes.



AN INVESTOR EDUCATION AND AWARENESS INITIATIVE. Do join us to learn more about Mutual Funds. Date and Venue: Wednesday, 24th January 2024, 6:00 pm onwards. at Subham Hotel and Restaurants, Ballalpur, Balasore - 756 026, Odisha. For registration, please contact: Sandiptav Kar, Mobile: 91784 66814.

75th Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. An Investor Education and Awareness Initiative. Visit https://www.hdfcfund.com/information/key-know-how to know more about the process to complete a one-time Know Your Customer (KYC) requirement to invest in Mutual Funds.

पंजाब नैशनल बैंक Punjab National Bank. CIRCLE OFFICE: SAMBALPUR, Balaji Midtown, 1st Floor, Budharaja, Sambalpur- 768004, Odisha. PREMISES REQUIRED. Punjab National Bank requires suitable ready built and well-constructed hall type building having Carpet Area (1000 sqft to 1200 sqft), on lease /rental basis.

NEW MEASURE

140 CISF personnel deployed for Parliament security

AN ASSISTANT COMMANDANT (AC) RANK OFFICER OF THE FORCE WILL HEAD THE CISF UNIT THAT WILL HAVE 36 PERSONNEL FROM THE FIRE WING, SOURCES SAID

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: A contingent of 140 CISF personnel has been deployed at the Parliament complex as part of the new measure to frisk the visitors and their baggage from the Budget Session that commences from January 31, official sources said.

The Union Home Ministry has sanctioned the strength after a comprehensive security review of the facility was undertaken in the wake of a breach by a few people, who entered the Parliament hall filled with MPs and sprayed coloured smoke canisters December 13 last year. A total of 140 personnel of the



Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) have taken charge at the Parliament complex from Monday. They will frisk the visitors, their belongings and also provide a fire safety cover to the building, sources said.

An Assistant Commandant (AC) rank officer of the force will head the CISF unit that will have 36 personnel from the fire wing, sources said. The contingent is undertaking familiarisation of the Parliament complex along with the other security agencies already present there so that they are ready for the task from January 31 when the Budget Session com-

mences, they said.

The CISF will render access control to the new Parliament building in an airport-security like fashion where body frisking of the persons and their belongings will be done through X-ray machines, hand-held detectors with a provision to even scan shoes, heavy jackets and belts by putting them on a tray and passing them through the X-ray scanner, sources said.

The force has also written to the Home Ministry to sanction it this manpower of 140 personnel for Parliament security in a permanent manner. "The current unit that has been de-

ployed at the Parliament will be regularised under the Government Building Security (GBS) unit of the CISF that secures various government ministries and headquarters of probe agencies like the CBI and the ED," a senior officer said.

The about 1.70 lakh personnel strong CISF is a central armed police force (CAPF) under the Union home ministry and it guards 68 civil airports of the country apart from vital installations in the aerospace and nuclear energy domain.

Sources had earlier said that both the new and the old Parliament complex and their allied buildings will be brought under a comprehensive security cover of the CISF which will also have the existing elements of Parliament Security Service (PSS), the Delhi Police and the Parliament Duty Group (PDG) of the CRPF.

It was after the 2001 terrorist attack on the Parliament that the CISF GBS came into being and it was entrusted with security of central government buildings in the national capital like

the North and South blocks, Cabinet Secretariat, Vigyan Bhawan, UPSC building, the CGO complex and other such buildings.

The charter of the GBS is to "maintain a high level of security, including contingency response, access control and conduct of anti-sabotage checks".

In a major security breach on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack December 13 last year, two persons jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery during Zero Hour, released yellow smoke from canisters and shouted slogans before being overpowered by the MPs.

Around the same time, two others sprayed coloured smoke from canisters while shouting slogans outside the Parliament premises. Following this incident, a committee under the chairmanship of CRPF Director General Anish Dayal Singh is looking into the overall security issues of the Parliament complex and will make recommendations to the Union Home Ministry for improvement.

international



It's high time to implement the two-state solution with concrete steps, including a full membership for Palestine in the UN

RWANDA MIGRATION BILL SUFFERS A BLOW IN PARL

The upper house of Britain's Parliament has urged the Conservative government not to ratify a migration treaty with Rwanda. It's a largely symbolic move, but signals more opposition to come for the stalled and contentious plan to send some asylum-seekers on a one-way trip to the African nation



of the day quote

We are betting on Africa because...We have a shared past, not always a happy history, not between us, but between us and some other people

Israel will achieve total victory after which there will be no entity in Gaza that finances terrorism, educates for terrorism, or sends terror

We are beginning the process to remove the US-led international military coalition from the country

SHORT TAKES

Lanka arrests 6 Indian fishermen

Colombo: The Sri Lankan Navy has arrested six Indian fishermen and seized their trawlers for allegedly poaching in the island nation's waters, an official statement said Tuesday, in the fourth such incident this month. The fishermen were arrested, and their two trawlers were seized Monday north of the Delft Island, Jaffna, the Sri Lanka Navy said in a press release.

Iran executes another prisoner

Dubai: Iran Tuesday hanged another prisoner over crimes committed during nationwide protests that erupted in 2022 following the death of a young woman detained for improperly wearing her headscarf. According to a report on state television, Mohammad Qobadlu was executed after being sentenced for killing a policeman and injuring five others after he ran them over in his car during a rally in the town of Parand, near the capital of Tehran.

NZ to send defence team to Red Sea

Wellington: New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon Tuesday said that his government will be sending a small defence team to the Middle East to safeguard Red Sea shipping, the media reported. The country will be deploying a six-member New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) team to uphold maritime security in the Red Sea to ensure global trade, Prime Minister Luxon said.

Int'l journalists to cover Feb 8 polls

Islamabad: International observers and journalists would monitor and cover the February 8 general elections in Pakistan and the government is processing over 170 requests, including two dozen from India, Caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi said Tuesday.

France fines Amazon \$35mn

Paris: France's privacy watchdog said Tuesday that it slapped Amazon's French warehouse business with a 32 million euro fine (\$35 million) for using an "excessively intrusive system" to monitor worker performance and activity. The French Data Protection Authority, also known by its acronym CNIL, said the system allowed managers at Amazon France Logistique to track employees so closely that it resulted in multiple breaches of the European Union's stringent privacy rules, called the General Data Protection Regulation.

US 'out of money' for Ukraine

THE US HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL MUNITIONS SINCE THEN BECAUSE THE MONEY FOR REPLENISHING THOSE STOCKPILES HAS RUN OUT AND CONGRESS HAS YET TO APPROVE MORE FUNDS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Jan 23: For the first time since Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin established the international group to support Ukraine in April 2022, the United States will host the monthly gathering of about 50 countries out of money, unable to send the ammunition and missiles that Ukraine needs to fend off Russia's invasion.

While waiting for Congress to pass a budget and potentially approve more money for Ukraine's fight, the US will be looking to allies to keep bridging the gap.

Tuesday's meeting will focus on longer-term needs, deputy Pentagon press secretary Sabrina Singh told reporters.

"Even though we aren't able to provide our security assistance right now, our partners are continuing to do that," Singh said.

On Tuesday in Brussels, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced a new \$1.2 billion joint contract to buy more than 2,22,000 rounds of 155 mm ammunition.

The rounds are some of the most heavily used munitions in



More than \$110 billion in aid for both Ukraine and Israel is stalled over disagreements between Congress and the White House over other policy priorities, including additional security for the US-Mexico border

The Pentagon announced its last security assistance for Ukraine December 27, a USD 250 million package that included 155 mm rounds, Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and other high-demand items drawn from existing US stockpiles

this conflict, and the contract will be used to backfill allies that have pushed their own reserves to Kyiv.

While the conflict between Israel and Hamas has dominated headlines since October, Russia's bloody onslaught of Ukraine has continued.

Additional air defense systems and munitions for them

remain a top need of Ukraine, Singh said Monday.

The Pentagon announced its last security assistance for Ukraine December 27, a \$250 million package that included 155 mm rounds, Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and other high-demand items drawn from existing US stockpiles.

The meeting will be virtual because Austin is still recuperating at home from complications of treatment for prostate cancer.

The US has provided Ukraine more than \$44.2 billion in security assistance since Russia invaded in February 2022. About \$23.6 billion of that was pulled from existing military stockpiles and almost \$19 billion was sent in the form of longer-term military contracts, for items that will take months to procure.

So even though funds have run out, some previously purchased weapons will continue to flow in. An additional \$1.7 billion has been provided by the US State Department in the form of foreign military financing.

The US and approximately 30 international partners are also continuing to train Ukrainian forces, and to date have trained a total of 1,18,000 Ukrainians at locations around the world, said Col Marty O'Donnell, spokesman for US Army Europe and Africa.

The United States has trained approximately 18,000 of those fighters, including approximately 16,300 soldiers in Germany. About 1,500 additional fighters are currently going through training.

21 Israeli troops killed in one day

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu mourned the soldiers, who died when the blast from a rocket-propelled grenade triggered explosives they were laying



AGENCIES

Jerusalem, Jan 23: Palestinian militants carried out the deadliest single attack on Israel's forces since the Hamas raid that triggered the war, killing 21 soldiers, the military said Tuesday, a significant setback that could add to mounting calls for a cease-fire.

Hours later, the military announced that ground forces had encircled the southern city of Khan Younis, Gaza's second largest.

That marked a major advance, but it was unclear how much closer it would bring Israel to defeating Hamas or freeing Israeli hostages — two central war aims that have proved increasingly elusive — as cease-fire talks appear to be gathering pace.

A senior Egyptian official said Israel has proposed a two-month cease-fire in which the hostages would be freed in exchange for the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel and top Hamas leaders in Gaza would be allowed to relocate to other countries.

The official, who was not authorised to brief media and spoke on condition of anonymity, said Hamas rejected the proposal and is insisting that no more hostages will be released until Israel ends its offensive and withdraws from Gaza. Israel's government declined to comment on the talks.

Egypt and Qatar — which have brokered past agreements between Israel and Hamas — were developing a multistage pro-

posal to try to bridge the gaps, the official said. Families of the hostages have called for Israel to reach a deal with Hamas, saying time is running out to bring their relatives home alive.

The offensive has caused widespread death and destruction, displaced an estimated 85% of Gaza's 2.3 million people and left one-quarter facing starvation. Iran-backed groups in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen have meanwhile attacked US and Israeli targets in support of the Palestinians.

The US and Britain launched another wave of strikes Monday against Yemen's Houthi rebels, who have targeted international shipping in the Red Sea. Lebanon's Hezbollah group said it fired rockets at a strategic military installation in northern Israel for a second time this month.

ONE OF THE HARDEST DAYS FOR ISRAEL

Israeli reservists were preparing explosives Monday to demolish two buildings near the built-up Maghazi refugee camp as well as the Israeli border when a militant fired a rocket-propelled grenade at a tank nearby. The blast triggered the explosives, causing both two-story buildings to collapse on the soldiers.

At least 217 soldiers have been killed since the ground offensive began in late October, including three killed in a separate event Monday, according to the military.

Nikki Haley clean sweeps Trump in Dixville Notch

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dixville Notch (NH, USA), Jan 23: The six registered voters of tiny Dixville Notch in New Hampshire all cast their ballots for Nikki Haley at midnight Tuesday, giving her a clean sweep over former President Donald Trump and all the other candidates.

The resort town was the first place in the nation to vote in the 2024 primaries. The voters were outnumbered more than 10-to-1 by reporters from every corner of the globe — not to mention by



The flooding in Naburn Lock on the outskirts of York, Britain, Tuesday. Storm Jocelyn will thrash the UK with more wind and rain after Storm Isha left two people dead and one seriously injured. Another weather system will bring windy weather Tuesday night and into Wednesday for much of the northern half of the country, The Met Office said AP/PTI

Chinese ship permitted to dock, says Maldives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Male, Jan 23: A Chinese ship, equipped to carry research and surveys, will be docking at a Maldivian port after being permitted by the Male government to make a port call for replenishment.

The permission to allow the Chinese ship comes amid strains in ties between India and Maldives after its new President Mohamed Muizzu came to power and made Beijing as his first port of call early this month after assuming office. Traditionally, New Delhi has been the first port of call for a Maldivian President.

In a statement Tuesday, the Maldivian Foreign Ministry said a diplomatic request was made by the Chinese government for the necessary clearances to make a port call, for rotation of personnel and replenishment.

The statement, however, said the Chinese Research Vessel Xiang Yang Hong 3, will "not be conducting any research while in the Maldivian waters".

Further, the statement said Maldives has always been a welcoming destination for "vessels of friendly countries," and continues to host both civilian and military vessels making port calls for peaceful purposes.

Western countries press China on minority rights, HK law

Geneva: Western countries used a UN-backed review of China's human rights record Tuesday to press Beijing to do more to allow freedom of expression, protect the rights of ethnic minorities and repeal a security law in Hong Kong that is derided by independent activists, among other things. China's ambassador in Geneva, Chen Xu, led a delegation from some 20 ministries in China for the review under the UN Human Rights Council. He stressed China's progress in poverty eradication, said citizens engage in "democratic elections," and said freedom of religious belief is safeguarded.

Death toll in China landslide rises to 31

Beijing/Kunming: The death toll from a landslide that struck southwest China's mountainous Yunnan province has climbed to 31, with scores of others still missing, local authorities said Tuesday. Thirty-one people were confirmed dead after a landslide struck a village in Zhenxiang County, southwest China's Yunnan Province Monday, state-run CGTN reported quoting local authorities. The landslide occurred in Liangshui village in Zhaotong city Monday morning, trapping a total of 47 people. Situated in the cold mountainous region of the province, where snow persists for days, the rescue site remains covered in a thick layer of snow.

US praises outgoing envoy Taranjit Sandhu

Washington: Applauding Taranjit Singh Sandhu for his leadership in strengthening the India-US relationship, senior Biden administration officials have said that the outgoing Indian Ambassador has made the groundwork for a "thousand flowers to bloom" in the garden of bilateral ties. A farewell reception was hosted Monday at the India House in honour of Sandhu, who will retire from the foreign service after more than three decades of a glorious career, later this month. The reception was attended by the Biden administration officials, including Deputy National Security Advisors (NSA) Mike Pyle, Anne Neuberger and Principal Deputy NSA Jon Finer, apart from the think-tank community.

DRONES ARE HIT AND MISS FOR UKRAINIAN SOLDIERS

AGENCIES

Donetsk Region, Ukraine, Jan 23: A Ukrainian soldier near the front line looks into video goggles and clutches a control set in both hands as he guides a drone during the war against Russia.

The soldier, who goes by the call sign "Sam", looks up and complains: "There's no video." Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), or drones, have become vital for Ukraine's military since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. Hundreds can buzz over Russian positions in eastern and southern Ukraine at any one time. But many of them are hastily and cheaply assembled by volunteers, and the lack of quality is affecting Ukraine's ability to survey and attack Russian positions. At an undisclosed location along the eastern front line in the Donetsk



region, soldiers in the "Raroh" squadron said they would rather have 10 well-made devices than 50 less reliable ones.

"Most common problems are problems with the video link and with the control link," Sam said during a recent visit by Reuters. "And most of them are

because of low-quality parts that are used very often to make the drones even cheaper." Some of the drone operators called for UAVs to be tested before they are used in battle. "We must test drones supplied by new producers or made by a civilian," said one who goes by the call

sign "Fest". "In addition to losing the drone itself, we can lose ammunition which is not cheap." Another, who uses the call sign "Pit", said drones should conform to standards so that operators know in advance how the device they are asked to operate will work. "You work a lot and have to do flight after flight while drones differ a lot. One has different controllers, another different settings, and so on," he said. "When under pressure, it happens that you miss a detail and it leads to missing a target." AN INTEGRAL PART OF UKRAINE'S WAR EFFORT Ukraine's defence ministry did not immediately respond to

a Reuters request for comment on the soldiers' remarks.

The use of what are known as First Person View (FPV) drones in battle has been one of the more successful low-cost strategies Ukraine has used on the battlefield.

Russia has expanded its own drone fleet since the start of the war, and has improved its ability to block Ukrainian UAVs

through electronic warfare, but drones are an integral part of Ukraine's war effort.

Drones range from small UAVs controlled remotely to larger devices that can fly hundreds of kilometres deep into Russian territory.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said Kyiv plans to produce one million drones in 2024.

DRONES ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF UKRAINIAN WAR EFFORT MANY ARE CHEAPLY AND HASTILY BUILT BY VOLUNTEERS SOME SOLDIERS PREFER QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

FRESH ATTACK

A complex Russian missile attack targeted Ukrainian cities of Kyiv and Kharkiv Tuesday morning, killing at least six people, wounding dozens and damaging residential buildings, officials said. In the capital of Kyiv, at least one person was killed, according to city administration chief Roman Popko. Mayor Vitalii Klitschko said 18 people were injured, including a 13-year-old boy. Residential infrastructure was damaged in at least four districts. In Kharkiv, the country's second-largest city, five people were killed and 38 were wounded, mayor Ihor Terekhov said. An entire section of a multi-story residential building was destroyed, trapping an unknown number of people there, Terekhov said.



Today ours is the fifth position...And we will be third in the next five years...That is the reason we are developing world-class infrastructure in the country
NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

ONGC GETS GOVT NOD FOR GREEN ENERGY UNIT

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) will set up a new unit to house its gas business and clean energy projects such as green hydrogen, as it looks to fast-track foray into new areas. In a stock exchange filing, the firm said it last month received approval of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for formation of a wholly-owned subsidiary company for gas business and clean energy projects.



of the day quote

India is an important market for us and we want to be part of the success story of India as a country.
CAPTAIN IZHAM ISMAIL | GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR OF MALAYSIA AVIATION GROUP

I am sure you all will agree that for any country aspiring to achieve new heights of development, upholding its heritage is crucial
PAWAN MUNJAL | HERO MOTOCORP CHAIRMAN

During this seasonally strong quarter, we witnessed robust demand for leisure travel across all domestic and international destinations leading to the highest-ever quarterly gross bookings, revenue, and profit for the group
RAJESH MAGOW | MAKEMYTRIP GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Shares slump 1.5% as financials weigh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 23: Equity benchmark Sensex tumbled 1,053 points to close below the 71,000 level Tuesday, dragged down by index heavyweights HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries and SBI amid escalating tensions in the Middle East.

Concerns over subdued quarterly performance by corporates triggered selling pressure in most of the counters, according to traders.

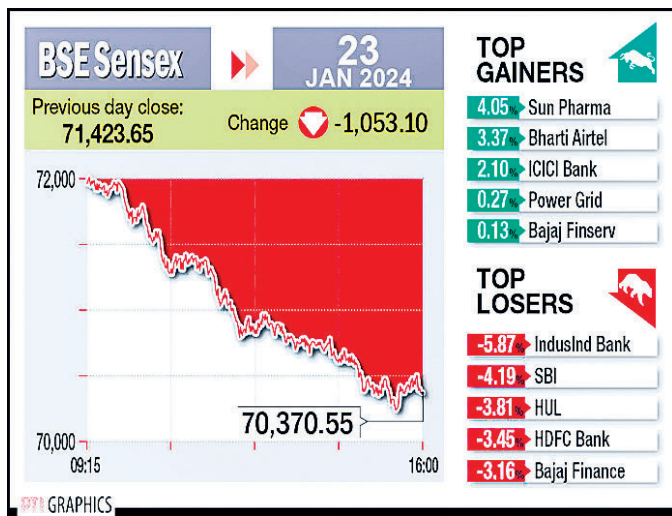
After opening with gains of nearly 450 points, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 1,053.10 points or 1.47 per cent to settle at 70,370.55. The index hit the lowest intraday level of 70,234.55. It also touched an intraday high of 72,039.20.

Broader Nifty also declined 330.15 points or 1.53 per cent to close at 21,241.65.

Among the Sensex firms, IndusInd Bank was the biggest loser and fell 6.13 per cent, followed by SBI (3.99 pc), Hindustan Unilever (3.82 pc), Axis Bank (3.41 pc) and HDFC Bank (3.23 pc).

In contrast, Sun Pharma, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank and PowerGrid defied the trend and closed with gains of up to 3.67 per cent. TCS and Bajaj Finserv were the other gainers.

The S&P BSE MidCap fell 2.95 per cent to close at 37,247.84 and the midcap index settled 2.79 per cent lower at 43,378.40.



All the sectoral indices except healthcare settled with losses.

Realty and services indices fell the most by 5.46 per cent and 4.06 per cent, respectively. While metal declined by 3.97 per cent, oil & gas lowered by 3.96 per cent and energy went down by 3.70 per cent. Commodities, FMCG, financial services and capital goods were other laggards.

On the other hand, the healthcare index rose 1.02 per cent.

In Asia, Hong Kong's Hang Seng closed with a sharp gain of 2.63 per cent, and China's Shanghai Composite increased by 0.52 per cent. Japan's Nikkei 225 fell 0.8 per cent. European markets were trading lower

Zee shares plunge 33 pc

New Delhi: Shares of Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) nosedived up to 33 per cent Tuesday after Sony called off the proposed USD 10 billion merger of its India unit with the media group. The market capitalisation of the company, which witnessed heavy selling pressure since morning, tumbled by ₹7,285.53 crore to ₹14,974.50 crore on the BSE. Shares of ZEEL tanked 32.73 per cent to close at ₹155.90 apiece on the BSE. On the NSE, the company's shares plunged 30.47 per cent to settle at ₹160.90 per share. During the day, the scrip of ZEEL also touched its 52-week low of ₹152.50 apiece on both BSE and NSE.

INVESTORS LOSE ₹8.50 LAKH CR

Mumbai: Equity investors became poorer by ₹8.50 lakh crore Tuesday as markets came under a bear attack, with the benchmark Sensex falling almost 1,053.10 points. Following the decline in the benchmark index, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies eroded by ₹8,50,820.81 crore to ₹3,65,97,915.97 crore. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies stood at ₹3,74,48,736.78 crore January 20. A total of 2,991 stocks declined while 938 advanced and 138 remained unchanged.

Tuesday, with Germany's DAX down 0.09 per cent and the CAC 40 of France losing 0.16 per cent. London's FTSE 100 also declined 0.13 per cent.

In the US markets, the Dow, S&P 500 and Nasdaq closed with gains of up to 0.36 per cent Monday. The domestic equity

market was closed January 22 due to the consecration ceremony in Ayodhya, while NSE and BSE held normal trading sessions Saturday.

Meanwhile, global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.40 per cent to USD 79.74 a barrel Tuesday.

Tinkering with concessional tax regime not ruled out

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 23: We do not expect any major announcements for tax mobilisation and rationalisation, but some tinkering with the new concessional tax regime cannot be fully ruled out, Emkay Global Financial Services said in a report.

Separately, non-tax revenue would still be healthy, led by RBI dividend amid consistent FX sales, but may fall short of last year's bumper surplus. Regarding conventional investment, the windfall gains may face pressure from stake sales of government's large holdings, which are mainly concentrated in commodity companies and the utilities sector.

The upcoming budget, being interim in nature, is likely to be a non-event as far as big-bag announcements, new tax or spending pitches are concerned, the report said.

However, it will still set the stage for policy choices ahead and will be watched for the pace of fiscal consolidation and policy priorities on capex and non-capex spending. We expect the policy direction and prerogatives to remain largely similar to that for the recent budgets, as the trade-offs remain between nurturing growth recovery and the diminishing fiscal space with



challenging debt dynamics.

Dhiraj Relli, MD & CEO, HDFC Securities said although there would be some buildup of expectations ahead of the vote on account, we think that major policy reforms and announcements may get postponed to the regular Budget due in June/July 2024. Capex and fiscal consolidation path followed in the vote on account would be monitored closely given their impact on growth and interest rates. The government will have to maintain a balance between the two as higher capex could postpone the fiscal consolidation journey.

The capital markets may get a little excited by the vote on account but may prefer to wait for the general election outcome and the regular Budget before getting very bullish, he said.

SHORT TAKES

Axis Bank net profit up 4%

New Delhi: Private sector lender Axis Bank Tuesday reported a 4 per cent rise in standalone net profit at ₹6,071 crore in the third quarter ended December 2023. The bank had earned a net profit of ₹5,853 crore in the October-December quarter of 2022. The total income of the bank increased to ₹33,516 crore in the third quarter of the current fiscal compared to ₹26,798 crore in the year-ago period. Axis Bank said in a regulatory filing. In the latest quarter, the bank's interest income rose to ₹27,961 crore from ₹22,226 crore in the same period last fiscal. The gross Non-Performing Asset (NPA) ratio improved to 1.58 per cent as of December 31, 2023. In the year-ago period, it stood at 2.38 per cent. Similarly, the net NPA declined to 0.36 per cent as compared to 0.47 per cent at the end of December 2022.

Direct tax collections leap 160% over 9 years

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 23: The country's net direct tax collections have increased by 160.52 per cent from ₹6,38,596 crore in 2013-14 to ₹16,63,686 crore in 2022-23, according to consolidated time-series data released by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Tuesday.

The gross direct tax collections of ₹19,72,248 crore in 2022-23 have registered an increase of over 173.31 per cent compared to the corresponding figure of ₹7,21,604 crore in 2013-14. The direct taxes include personal income tax and corporate tax. The direct tax to GDP ratio has gone



up from 5.62 per cent in 2013-14 to 6.11 per cent in 2022-23.

Meanwhile, the cost of tax collection has decreased from 0.57 per cent of total collection in 2013-14 to 0.51 per cent of total collection in 2022-23.

The total number of ITRs filed in FY 2022-23 stands at 7.78 crore showing an increase of 104.91 per cent as compared to total number of ITRs of 3.80 crore filed in FY 2013-14.

Govt hikes import duty on gold, silver findings

New Delhi: The government has increased import duty on gold and silver findings and coins to 15 per cent by imposing a 5 per cent Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess (AIDC). An AIDC of 4.35 per cent has also been levied on 'spent catalyst or ash containing precious metals', said a notification of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC). AIDC has been imposed in addition to the basic customs duty of 10 per cent with an aim to bring the incidence of import duty on precious metals at par with bullion. 'Gold or silver findings' means a small component such as hook, clasp, clamp, pin, catch, or screw back, used to hold the whole or a part of a piece of jewellery.

GLOBAL VC INVESTMENTS SINK IN 2023, SAYS REPORT

Macro-economic and other challenges like high interest rates and inflation, a parched exit environment, and ongoing issues related to startup valuations major concerns

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 23: Global VC investment sank to \$344 billion across 37,808 deals in 2023 from \$531.4 billion across 51,894 deals in 2022 amid geopolitical, macro-economic and other challenges like high interest rates and inflation, a parched exit environment, and ongoing concerns related to startup valuations.

The Americas accounted for more than half of VC investment this year (\$183.6 billion), while the Asia-Pacific region attracted \$92.4 billion, and Europe \$62.3 billion, according to the KPMG Private Enterprise's 'Venture Pulse' report.

The fourth quarter (Q4) of 2023 was a particularly soft quarter for the VC market, with global investment falling to \$74.9 billion across 7,572 deals — the lowest levels since Q3 2016, respectively.

The Asia-Pacific region also saw quite a slump, with investment falling to \$18.8 billion in Q4 — the lowest level since Q1 2017, said the report.

"The Indian economy is quite strong — capital markets at an all-time high, favourable demographics, strong GDP and a stable and active central government. However, the VC



investments in the last few quarters have been muted as compared to quarters before," said Nitish Poddar, Partner and National Leader, Private Equity, KPMG in India. "This is not an indication of slow-down but the post Covid-19 euphoria dying down where there was excess money supply in the system. With expected easing of interest rates, I am very confident that there will be a strong bounce back in the VC investments in the country," Poddar added.

As VC investors globally continued to pressure their portfolio companies to reduce costs and enhance their focus on profitability, both VC investment and deal speed slowed significantly. The one major light in an otherwise dim quarter was artificial intelligence (AI) where in-

vestments were incredibly frothy as investor interest accelerated. AI-focused startups accounted for three of the \$1 billion+ funding rounds this quarter. "The exit values in 2021 for VC-backed companies stood at a massive \$1.5 trillion. Since then, exits have faltered — with only \$225 billion in exit value this year," said Conor Moore, Global Head, KPMG Private Enterprise, KPMG International.

In the US, AI-focused companies attracted six of the 10 largest VC deals of the quarter. Europe also saw three very large AI deals. "AI will likely remain one of the most attractive areas of VC investment well into the year, while M&A activity could see some pick-up as opportunistic buyers look for bargains," said the report.

PNB MD & CEO visits Bhubaneswar Zone

Bhubaneswar: Atul Kumar Goel, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Punjab National Bank paid a two-day visit to Bhubaneswar and participated in various programmes organised by the Bank. On this occasion, he visited Puri and donated an ambulance to the Temple Administration. Goel also inaugurated PNB's Holiday Home in Puri. He addressed all the staff members under Bhubaneswar Zonal Office at Town Hall Meeting and emphasised on better customer service and more focus on various government sponsored schemes. Goel met 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman VK Pandian and assured about the growth and development of the Bank in the sector of MSME, Agriculture and various government sponsored schemes in the state. On this occasion, Goel also attended the CSR programme organised at Institute of Medical Science and Sum Hospital. A Uday Bhaskar Reddy, Zonal Head, Bhubaneswar Zone, Punjab National Bank, Laxmikant Mishra, Circle Head, Bhubaneswar Circle, Samarendra Panda, Deputy Zonal Manager along with other senior officials were present on this occasion.



OD and TP insurance: Which is more important?

Motor insurance is one of the best ways to protect your vehicle; it helps manage various risks related to your car and provides financial security against unforeseen situations. In India, typical motor insurance has two components: Third-Party (TP) insurance and Own Damage (OD); both serve distinct purposes and play vital roles in safeguarding against potential liabilities. I have often heard people asking the difference between these two and what is more important. As an insurer, I constantly try to explain insurance terminology in a simplified manner and contribute my bit to demystify insurance. Let us read ahead and find out how these two covers differ.

TP insurance: TP is known as an 'Act Only' or 'Liability Only' cover. You must understand that the Motor Vehicle Act in India mandates TP insurance; if someone is found driving a

vehicle without TP cover, they might be penalised and/or imprisoned. Regarding what the policy covers, TP shields against the third-party liability of the car owner. This includes injuries or death to the third party and third-party property damage. You might think that such liabilities may arise only once in a blue moon and would hardly run into a few thousand, but contrary to popular opinion, this is not true. Such liabilities may range from a few thousand to a couple of crore. TP ensures that in case of an unfortunate incident where you are liable for damages to someone else's property or person, you have your policy to support you. Please note that TP does not cover any damage to your vehicle; OD takes care of that aspect.

OD insurance: As the name suggests, Own Damage insurance provides coverage for damages to your vehicle due to various factors. These can include

OD AND TP INSURANCE SERVE DISTINCT PURPOSES IN VEHICLE INSURANCE AND ARE HELPFUL IN THEIR WAYS

accidents, theft, natural calamities like floods or earthquakes, fire, vandalism, and more. Essentially, OD insurance protects your vehicle from many risks, pro-

viding financial assistance for repairs or replacement as per the policy's terms. The coverage under OD insurance is comprehensive and can be tailored based on specific needs and preferences. Unlike TP, OD is not mandatory by law, yet it is prudent to buy this to ensure comprehensive protection of your vehicle.

Which is more important? Now that we know what both these components cover, we talk about which cover is more important.

Legal obligation: As already mentioned, TP insurance is mandatory to drive a vehicle on Indian roads. Fulfilling this requirement is non-negotiable, ensuring compliance with the law and protecting against potential legal consequences. This relatively

simple cover requires little analysis of features and coverage. However, TP only offers the policyholder a primary or bare minimum protection, but is that sufficient? The answer is no; you require OD for that.

What makes OD important? Your vehicle is an important asset; you would have shelled a fair share of our hard-earned money to buy this prized possession, so why not invest some amount to protect it? OD cover shields your vehicle against previously mentioned risks and helps you build a more wholesome cover. A few people think that OD is more important for new vehicles, but that is not true; one should opt for comprehensive coverage irrespective of the age of the vehicle. OD has become ever more critical with the rise of natural calamities across the length and breadth of the country since it covers various natural disasters. Opting for a comprehensive cover also opens the

options for buying valuable add-ons like engine protection, 24*7 spot assistance cover, vehicle replacement, and no-claim bonus protection, to name a few. You can also opt for 'Pay as you consume' (PAYC), which allows you to select coverage according to vehicle usage. The premium would be subject to the distance covered; you can tailor your coverage according to your specific needs.

To sum it up, OD and TP insurance serve distinct purposes in vehicle insurance and are helpful in their ways. However, it is highly recommended to buy both and build comprehensive coverage for your valuable asset; after all, the cost of purchasing insurance is much lower than the financial burden that may arise in case of an unforeseen incident. Buy a comprehensive cover and enjoy a worry-free ride!

The writer is Head - Motor Distribution, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance.



Subhashish Mazumder

Djoko in Oz Open semis

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Melbourne, Jan 23: Novak Djokovic held off Taylor Fritz 7-6(7-3), 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 in three and half hours to reach the Australian Open semifinals for the 11th time Tuesday. When he gets through the quarterfinals in Australia, Djokovic is unbeaten. The 24-time major champion has won all 10 semifinals he's contested at Melbourne Park and all 10 finals. In his record-extending 48th Grand Slam semifinal, he'll play No.4-seeded Jannik Sinner, who defeated No.5 Andrey Rublev 6-4, 7-6(7-5), 6-3. Fritz saved the first 15 break-points he faced, an unheard-of stat against one of the best returners ever. The first game set the tone for a long, tough match. It lasted 16 minutes and contained 24 points, going to deuce nine times. Fritz fended off three breakpoints before finally holding. The first set lasted 1 hour and 24 minutes — the longest opening set of the



GAUFF SETS UP SABALENKA DATE

Coco Gauff hopes she's got her "bad" match out of the way at the Australian Open before meeting defending champion Aryna Sabalenka in the semifinals. The 19-year-old US Open winner overcame 51 unforced errors, nine double-faults and had just 17 winners to beat Marta Kostyuk 7-6(8-6), 6-7(3-7), 6-2 Tuesday in a quarterfinal match that lasted three

hours, eight minutes. Sabalenka's title defence has been gathering momentum and her 6-2, 6-3 win over No.9-seeded Barbora Krejčíková was her fifth straight-sets victory in a row. The extra-long day session pushed the start of the night session back to after 9 pm local time, with Krejčíková serving to start the first of the two-night quarterfinals at 9:09 pm. It wasn't until after 10:30 pm that men's No.4 Sinner and No.5 Rublev went on the court to start warming up for their match. Gauff has won 12 consecutive matches in Grand Slams and is two victories from winning back-to-back major titles, but she had a close call against first-time quarterfinalist Kostyuk. "Today was definitely a C game," Gauff said. "Didn't play my best tennis, but really proud that I was able to get through. Hopefully, got the bad match out of the way and I can play even better."

BCCI Awards: Shastri, Engineer honoured

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, Jan 23: Breaching Australia's fortress at the Gabba in the iconic Test series of 2021 was the "icing on the cake" in the illustrious career of multi-faceted Ravi Shastri, who was honoured with the Col CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award here Tuesday. In a glittering ceremony, the BCCI awarded a host of top men's and women's performers from the 2019-20 season. Alongside Shastri, former India wicket-keeper Farokh Engineer too was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

LIST OF AWARD WINNERS

Col CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement award: Ravi Shastri, Farokh Engineer (2019-20).
Polly Umrigar Award for Best Men's Cricketer of the Year: Shubman Gill (2022-23), Jasprit Bumrah (2021-22), Ravichandran Ashwin (2020-21), Mohammed Shami (2019-20).
Best International Cricketer, Women: Deepthi Sharma (2019-20, 2022-23), Smriti Mandhana (2020-21, 2021-22).
Best International Debut, Men: Mayank Agarwal (2019-20), Axar Patel (2020-21), Shreyas Iyer (2021-22), Yashasvi Jaiswal (2022-23).
Best International Debut, Women: Priya Punia (2019-20), Shafali Varma (2020-21), S Meghna (2021-22), Amanjot Kaur (2022-23).
Dilip Sardesai Award (2022-23): Highest Runs: Yashasvi Jaiswal; Highest Wickets: R Ashwin.

Most Runs in ODIs - Women: Punam Raut (2019-20), Mithali Raj (2020-21), Harmanpreet Kaur (2021-22), Jemimah Rodrigues (2022-23).
Most Wickets in ODIs - Women: Poonam Yadav (2019-20), Jhulan Goswami (2020-21), Rajeshwari Gayakwad (2021-22), Devika Vaidya (2022-23).
Best Umpire in Domestic Cricket: KN Ananthapadmanabhan (2019-20), Vrinda Rathi (2020-21), J Madangopal (2021-22), Rohan Pandit (2022-23).
Best performance in domestic tournaments: Mumbai (2019-20).
Lala Amarnath Award: Best all-rounder in domestic limited-over competitions: Baba Aparajith (2019-20), Rishi Dhawan (2020-21, 2021-22), Riyan Parag (2022-23).
Lala Amarnath Award: Best all-rounder in Ranji Trophy: Manishankar Mura Singh (2019-20), Shams Mulani (2021-22), Saransh Jain (2022-23).
Madhavrao Scindia Trophy: Highest run-

getter in Ranji Trophy: Rahul Dalal (2019-20), Sarfaraz Khan (2021-22), Mayank Agarwal (2022-23).
Madhavrao Scindia Trophy: Highest wicket-taker in Ranji Trophy: Jaydev Unadkat (2019-20), Shams Mulani (2021-22), Lalaj Saxena (2022-23).
MA Chidambaram Trophy: Highest wicket-taker in U-19 Cooch Behar Trophy: Harsh Dubey (2019-20), AR Nishad (2021-22), Manav Chothani (2022-23).
MA Chidambaram Trophy: Highest run-getter in U-19 Cooch Behar Trophy: P. Kanpillewar (2019-20), Mayank Shandilya (2021-22), Danish Malewar (2022-23).
MA Chidambaram Trophy: Highest wicket-taker in U-23 Col CK Nayudu Trophy: Ankush Tyagi (2019-20), Harsh Dubey (2021-22), Vishal Jayswal (2022-23).
MA Chidambaram Trophy: Highest run-getter in U-23 Col CK Nayudu Trophy: Parth Palawat (2019-20), YV Rathod (2021-22), Kshitij Patel (2022-23).

Consolation win eludes India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Al Khor (Qatar), Jan 23: India's wait for a maiden knockout round berth in the Asian Cup continued as they crashed out of the continental football showpiece after suffering a 0-1 defeat to Syria in their last group match here Tuesday. Substitute Omar Khribin scored the all-important goal in the 76th minute to keep Syria in contention for a round of 16 berth. India finished at the bottom of the four-team Group B after losing all their three matches and without scoring any goal. Tuesday's match will certainly be the swansong Asian Cup game for talisman Sunil Chhetri, who had appeared in the two earlier editions also — in 2011 and 2019. The 39-year-old Chhetri, who is in the twilight of his illustrious career, has scored four goals — two each in 2011 and 2019 — in

nine appearances to be the highest scorer from India in the continental showpiece. India had also failed to make it to the knockout round in 1984, 2011 and 2019 editions of the tournament. The country had finished runner-up in 1964 when the winner was decided after a round-robin league among four participating teams. India, under Igor Stimac, will thus return home after yet another disappointing show in the continental showpiece. The Indians had won one match — against Thailand (4-1) — in the 2019 edition, but this time, they fired a blank, returning home without any point. The Indians had lost to Australia (0-2) and Uzbekistan (0-3) in their earlier two group matches. India suffered a jolt in the first minute of the second half with defensive mainstay Sandesh Jhingan suffering an injury and being substituted by Nikhil Poojary.

Cummins speaks on Maxwell incident

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, Jan 23: They "didn't cross paths" but Australia captain Pat Cummins was at the same venue from where his World Cup-winning teammate Glenn Maxwell was rushed to hospital after a reported late-night drinking session and the star pacer responded to the incident by saying "any decision you make you've got to own it". Both Cummins and Maxwell were attending a concert by 'Six and Out', the band which features former pacer Brett Lee, in Adelaide. Cummins said he left the venue much before his teammate allegedly lost consciousness and had to be taken to the hospital in an ambulance. "Potentially, I think only 'Maxy' can answer that one," Cummins was quoted as saying by 'The Sydney Morning Herald'

"I knew he was in town but I didn't cross paths with Maxy at all. We're all adults and part of being an adult is you make your own decisions. He was over there for a private event, so he wasn't with the cricket team. But absolutely, any decision you make you've got to own it and be comfortable with it"

PAT CUMMINS

when asked whether Maxwell needed to reconsider his choices. "I was there at the Gov for the concert, but I left pretty early — I knew he was in town but I didn't cross paths with Maxy at all," he said. The World Cup-winning captain added, "We're all adults and part of being an adult is you make your own decisions. In

terms of this incident he wasn't on tour with Australia, he was over there for a private event, so he wasn't with the cricket team. So it is a little bit different, but absolutely, any decision you make you've got to own it and be comfortable with it." Cricket Australia (CA) is already investigating the mishap. Maxwell was out drinking and watching a concert by 'Six and Out', the band featuring former Australian fast bowler Brett Lee, when he felt unwell. Last year, Maxwell faced a series of injuries but despite that, he performed admirably in the World Cup. During the ODI World Cup in India, Maxwell suffered concussion when he fell off a golf cart in Ahmedabad. In 2022, he broke his leg when he slipped while running at a friend's birthday party and remained out of action for more than three months.

MUMBAI INDIANS TO TAKE ON DELHI CAPITALS IN WPL OPENER



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 23: Defending champions Mumbai Indians will take on last year's finalists Delhi Capitals in the opening match of the second edition of the Women's Premier League (WPL) at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore, February 23. The entire season will be played in Bangalore and Delhi with the Arun Jaitley Stadium here hosting the Eliminator and final, March 15 and 17 respectively. A total of 22 matches will be held in the WPL this year with the table-toppers directly making the final. The second and third placed will lock horns in the Eliminator:

COMPLETE SCHEDULE

Dates	Matches
Feb 23	MI vs DC
Feb 24	RCB vs UPW
Feb 25	GG vs MI
Feb 26	UPW vs DC
Feb 27	RCB vs GG
Feb 28	MI vs UPW
Feb 29	RCB vs DC
March 1	UPW vs GG
March 2	RCB vs MI
March 3	GG vs DC
March 4	UPW vs RCB
March 5	DC vs MI
March 6	GG vs RCB
March 7	UPW vs MI
March 8	DC vs UPW
March 9	MI vs GG
March 10	DC vs RCB
March 11	GG vs UPW
March 12	MI vs RCB
March 13	DC vs GG
March 15	Eliminator
March 17	Final

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