



Wedding can wait

Actor Taapsee Pannu says getting married is not a priority in her life at the moment

LEISURE | P2



Doomsday Clock

Atomic scientists keep 'Doomsday Clock' as close to midnight as ever before citing wars and climate change as factors driving the risk

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Liquidity deficit widens

Banking system liquidity deficit hits a record high amid outflows towards tax payments and limited government spending

BUSINESS | P11



First Test begins today

India's five-match Test series against England kicks off today as the visitors 'Bazball' goes up against hosts' 'turnball'

SPORTS | P12

SHORT TAKES

Panda new twin city police commissioner

Bhubaneswar: The state government Wednesday made a major reshuffle in the state's police ranks by transferring 18 IPS officers, according to a notification issued by the Home department. Director of Intelligence Sanjeeb Panda, a 1994-batch IPS officer, was made the Commissioner of Police of the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. The incumbent police commissioner Soumendra Priyadarshi, a 1995-batch IPS officer, was appointed the Director of Intelligence. P3

Rahul to be arrested after LS polls: Sarma

Guwahati: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, against whom an FIR has been registered here on the charge of instigating violence, will be arrested after the Lok Sabha elections, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said Wednesday. The Assam Police suo motu registered the FIR against Gandhi and several other leaders for "wanton acts of violence" here during the party's 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' Tuesday. The Congress leader said the BJP-ruled Assam government could file "as many cases as it can", but he cannot be intimidated.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



There's a huge demand from Indian celebs for short-term account which gets deleted with the change in govt

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	71060.31	↑ 689.76
NIFTY	21454.00	↑ 215.20
DOLLAR	83.13	↓ ₹0.03
EURO	90.63	↑ ₹0.20
GOLD	₹62,080	↑ ₹112
SILVER	₹71,567	↑ ₹610

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	21.7°C	20.8°C
Min Temp	16.0°C	15.6°C
Humidity	98%	92%
Rainfall	5.1mm	2.4mm

FORECAST: LIGHT TO MODERATE RAIN



HANDS VS HORNS: People try to take control of a bull as they participate in the 'Jallikattu' event at a newly-inaugurated arena named after former Tamil Nadu CM M Karunanidhi, in Madurai district, Wednesday

CM inaugurates new campus of Odia University

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 24: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the new campus of the Odia University at Satyabadi in Puri district Wednesday. The campus, built at a cost of Rs 30 crore over 9.60 acre near the famous Bana Vidyalaya, will be a centre of excellence for research and development in Odia language, officials said. The campus has a School of Learning with a capacity of 200 students, one hostel each for male and female students with a capacity of 64, another hostel for 16 scholars, a library, a cafeteria and an administration block. The university offers courses in Odia Language and Literature, Linguistics and Natural Language Processing, and Regional, Tribal Language and Heritage Studies. Patnaik laid the foundation stone for the campus in October 2018. Eminent educationist Sabita Pradhan was appointed the first Vice-Chancellor of the varsity in August last year. Inaugurating the campus, the chief minister said that language is the identity of a race. When the use of language increases, it enriches and increases the glory of the nation, he said. Patnaik described Satyabadi as the seat of Odia renaissance. He said Satyabadi was the 'karma bhoomi' of Utkalmani Pandit Gopabandhu Dash.

Twin jolts stun INDIA

MAMATA, MANN SAY NO TIE-UP WITH CONG FOR LS POLLS IN BENGAL, PUNJAB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata/Chandigarh, Jan 24: In a double whammy for the Opposition INDIA bloc, chief ministers of West Bengal and Punjab Wednesday said there will be no alliance with the Congress for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and that their parties TMC and AAP will go it alone in the respective states. The surprise announcement by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee that caught the Congress off guard came on the back of the growing tussle between the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the grand old party over sharing of seats to be contested in the key eastern state. It also came just a day ahead of the scheduled entry of the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Nyay



Yatra into West Bengal.

"I had given them (Congress) a proposal (on seat sharing) but they refused it at the outset. Our party has now decided to go it alone in Bengal," Banerjee told reporters at Dumurjala helipad in Howrah district. According to sources, the TMC had offered only two seats to the Congress based on its 2019 Lok Sabha polls performance. This



was not acceptable to the Congress causing strains between the two parties in West Bengal which accounts for 42 parliamentary seats.

A rattled Congress appeared to underplay the rift with the TMC on the seat-sharing issue in West Bengal, asserting that no one can imagine the existence of the INDIA bloc without Mamata Banerjee and that her party is an

important pillar of the opposition alliance. The BJP also waded into the TMC-Congress tussle, claiming that Banerjee's decision is a sign of her desperation and it will be a "death knell" for the INDIA bloc. Hours later in Chandigarh, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said his party will not enter into an alliance with the Congress in the state, reiterating that the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will win all 13 seats at stake. Mann's reiteration of AAP's stance in Punjab comes at a time when the party and the Congress are in the midst of seat sharing talks in Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Goa and Gujarat. However, the AAP has entered into an alliance with the Congress for the Chandigarh mayoral poll.

'BLACK TIGER' SAFARI ON CARDS

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 24: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday announced that the state would soon set up a melanistic tiger safari, a first of its kind in the world, near the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Mayurbhanj district. "Tourists and visitors can now have a glimpse of the rare and majestic species found only in Odisha," the CM added

while making the announcement taking to 'X'. **FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND** Melanistic tigers, popularly called black tigers, were sighted at the Similipal National Park recently. These rare creatures are characterised by a striking dark stripe pattern against a lighter background of white or golden fur. "The safari will be established near Baripada over a

200 hectare area, adjoining the National Highway 18. About 100 hectare will be display area and the balance area shall be utilised for creation of veterinary care facilities, including rescue center, staff infrastructure and visitor amenities," said the state's Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) Susanta Nanda. The proposed site is about 15 km from the STR, and has a similar landscape, he said.

DWARASUNI GHAT

Jatra truck turns turtle killing six

CM announces ₹3 lakh ex-gratia to victims' kin

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Jan 24: In a tragic road mishap, six persons died and 11 sustained critical injuries after a truck carrying a jatra troupe turned sideways and fell 20 feet into a gorge at Dwarasuni Ghat on National Highway-49 in Bangiriposi area of Mayurbhanj district, Wednesday. The mishap occurred when the driver of the truck carrying the troupe of 'Dhauli Gananatya' lost control of the vehicle while negotiating a sharp turn amid heavy rain. Three of the deceased were identified as Ashok Mallick, 45, of Jaumara in Cuttack district, Jhadeswar Marndi, 50, and Matha Murmu, 35 of Bhudurabani near Rasgobindpur in Mayurbhanj district while three others were yet to be identified. Expressing grief over the tragic mishap, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced an ex-gratia of ₹3 lakh each to the deceased persons' next of kin. He also instructed authorities to provide adequate treatment of the injured persons. As many as 11 persons were se-



riously injured in the accident. They are undergoing treatment at PRM Medical College and Hospital at Baripada while one person who sustained minor injuries is getting treated at a local hospital in Bangiriposi. "The vehicle carrying workers of jatra troupe, Dhauli Gananatya, from Basingi under Bijatala block towards Sulapata under Jaleswar block in Balasore. So far we have come to know that around 16 persons were onboard the truck. The vehicle met with an accident at around 10.45am. So far, six persons have died while two others are in critical condition. We have started investigations to know the actual reason behind the mishap," said Sujit Kumar Pradhan, SDPO, Baripada Sadar.

Global favourite: Who invented butter chicken?

DELHI HC TO SINGLE OUT THE TRUE INVENTORS OF THE ICONIC DELICACY AS RESTAURANT RIVALRY RAGES

- The famed dish was ranked 43rd in a list of world's best dishes by TasteAtlas
- It was the second-ranked Indian food after 'butter garlic naan' bread

REUTERS

New Delhi, Jan 24: Butter chicken - one of India's best-known dishes globally - is delicious and apparently also contentious, with two Indian restaurant chains locking horns in court over claims to its origins. The lawsuit - which has become a hot topic - was brought by the family behind Moti Mahal, a

famed Delhi restaurant brand that has counted late US President Richard Nixon and India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru among its guests. It claims restaurant founder, Kundan Lal Gujral, created the curry in the 1930s when the restaurant first opened in Peshawar before it moved to Delhi. In a 2,752-page court filing it has sued rival chain Daryaganj, accusing it of falsely claiming to have invented the dish as well as 'dal makhani', a popular lentil dish that is also laden with butter and cream. The Gujral family is seeking \$240,000 in damages, also alleging that Daryaganj has copied the layout of Moti Mahal's website and the look and feel of



its restaurants. "You cannot take away somebody's legacy... The dish was invented when our grandfather was in Pakistan," said Monish

Gujral, managing director at Moti Mahal. Daryaganj - which was established relatively recently in 2019 - counters that its late family member, Kundan Lal Jaggi, had partnered with Gujral to open the Delhi restaurant in 1947, and the dish was invented there. That gives it the right to also lay claim to the creation of the dish, it argues. Daryaganj shared with Reuters a faded, hand-written partnership document registered in 1949 to back its argument. The dispute has captured the nation's attention with debates over history of the dish raging on social media. "It's an offbeat, unique case. You really don't know who cre-

ated the first dish of butter chicken. The court will be hard pressed and will need to rely on circumstantial evidence," said Ameet Datta, an intellectual property lawyer at India's Saikrishna & Associates. Testimonies of people who can link the brand to the dish they consumed decades ago could be critical proof, Datta added. Made with tandoor-cooked chicken pieces mixed in a tomato gravy with dollops of cream and butter, the dish was ranked 43rd in a list of world's best dishes by TasteAtlas as rated by nearly 400,000 users. It was the second-ranked Indian food after 'butter garlic naan' bread. The two are often paired together.

leisure



ROBBIE COLLABORATES ON BARBIE FASHION BOOK

In a project with her stylist, Hollywood star Margot Robbie has collaborated on an upcoming *Barbie* fashion book. The 33-year-old, who played the blonde doll in Greta Gerwig's smash *Barbie* film, worked with her stylist Andrew Mukamal on the project, which has been announced on Instagram.

DWAYNE CONFIRMS RETURN TO WWE

Hollywood star and wrestling icon Dwayne Johnson has officially joined the board of directors for TKO, which was formed by parent company Endeavor as part of the UFC and WWE merger in September, 2023.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You can make a difference to others' lives. Considerate and thoughtful, today, you will be treasured more than ever as a boss, colleague, parent or beloved. Utilise this exchange of energy to sort out difficult issues. Ganesh gives a thumbs up to mega projects.

TAURUS
Ganesh sees you taking a day off from your work and immersing your self in domestic activities. A lot of time will be spent blissfully with your family folk chatting away or doing this and that. The idea of getting your interiors redone and give your house a new look will surely occur to you.

GEMINI
There is a likelihood of some household disturbance cropping up today. Your family members could make a lot of demands from you. You may feel angry because of your inability to meet all their needs and wants.

CANCER
Watch out for winds of change and act accordingly. Ganesh warns you of drowning in a strong current. Your task will be easier if you adjust to circumstances. Fun and entertainment are today's password.

LEO
You are advised to be more attentive to your work today. You will try to do the best work possible by putting in your maximum efforts. However, the results might turn out to be lower than your expectations. You need to be wary of excessive expenses or financial loss today.

VIRGO
Family affairs will predominate today. They will even control your thoughts to the exclusion of everything else. Things will look up on the business front. You may spend time relaxing in the evening. Ganesh says a trip to a place of worship is on the cards.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will give more importance to your family and there may be concerns about the health of a family member. There may be news from abroad regarding the health of a close family member, which may disturb you today. Do maintain your mental balance today and remember that this too shall pass.

SCORPIO
A cloud of emotions surrounds you today and you would like to spend the entire day in introspection and self-analysis. You will try to raise your bar at professional level. Your far sightedness and capability to understand human psychology promises a leader in you, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Tough times do not last, but tough people do, remember this fact and move ahead in life. Try to make the complicated life simpler by your optimistic approach. Speak up when it is required and don't get bogged down by unnecessary pressure.

CAPRICORN
You will have heard of many emotional fools who let sentiments rule their lives. Try not to be one of them, and if it's too difficult a task, at least pretend not to be one of them, for Ganesh says going by your feelings can leave you at a low ebb. In other words, your feelings can come in the way of your success.

AQUARIUS
You know how to examine the nuts and bolts of every assignment or project, and it consumes your resources to a great extent. But, like a stitch in time saves nine, your meticulous planning minimises the chances of a loss or a failure, feels Ganesh.

PISCES
You could find yourself re-establishing contact with long lost friends abroad, possibly on matters of business. You will also likely find yourself attending social events. There is a possibility that those who are unmarried, may find their match in these social settings.

'Marriage isn't a priority in my life'

Mumbai: Everyone wants to know when Taapsee Pannu is marrying her beau Mathias Boe.

When asked about her plans to tie the knot, the *Pink* actress quipped, "There is enough tying of the knot happening all around to keep the media happy. Getting married is not right now a huge priority in my life. Nor has it ever been on my bucket list. So, I am not thinking of any wedding date as of now."

What she is thinking about now is film production, said the actress. "There are various productions of mine at different stages. Some are being cast; others are being pitched to co-producers and funders. I am still a new producer; and I don't want to slip up," added Taapsee.

She, however, admits that her journey so far as a producer has not been easy. "It has been a learning experience about how one puts together a film and how one gets advice on production from every direction. I now understand why women are reluctant to get into production. One has to shoulder huge responsibilities," she said.

One major hurdle Taapsee encountered was being able to produce films the way she wanted. "No matter how much keenness your funders show in backing your movie, they still want to add masala, which doesn't always go with the story you want to tell," Tapsee, who recently produced *Dhak Dhak*, further said. AGENCIES



INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL BHUBANESWAR-2024

Follower, It's All in Your Head fascinate viewers on third day

Bhubaneswar: The third day at the ongoing Indian Film Festival Bhubaneswar-2024, organised by Film Society Bhubaneswar, began with *Dhuin*, a Maithili language film by Achal Mishra.

The plot of the movie revolves around Pankaj, a small town theatre actor who wants to pursue a career in Mumbai, but struggles with family obligations. The movie chronicles his struggles as he juggles between his dreams and reality.

The festival moved on with the Mani Kaul Retrospective by screening two of his notable works, *Dwidha* and *Mati Manas*. *Dwidha*, released in 1973, is about a newly married woman's falling in love with a ghost and becoming pregnant after her husband leaves on a business trip. The conflict begins after her husband's return.

Made in 1985, *Mati Manas* examines the art of Indian pottery, documenting the craft



Harshad Nalwade(L) during a conversation with film critic Aditya Krishnan

tradition of rural Indian potters.

The day proceeded with the screening of *It's All in Your Head* by Dhruv Solanki and *Follower* by Harshad Nalwade.

It's All in Your Head focuses on one day in the life of six siblings, rural but Americanized, living in Vadodara. It is an attempt to take an honest look at the inner workings of the mind and lives

of Indian middle-class youth in the internet age.

The Marathi film *Follower* encapsulates the fight between Belgaum's main linguistic groups, Kannada and Marathi, through the lens of Raghu, a radicalised journalist. These two movies were the highlights of the day.

Both the directors were present to interact with the audience. PNN

SLB locks Alia-Ranbir-Vicky for his next Love & War



Mumbai: The next big Hindi film will have star couple Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt as the leads. Sanjay Leela Bhansali (SLB) directorial *Love and War* will also feature

Vicky Kaushal in a key role. To be released during Christmas 2025, the movie marks Ranbir and Alia's second collaboration with SLB. While Ranbir made his debut

with the director's *Saawariya*, Alia teamed up with him in *Gangubai Kathiawadi*. However, this is the first time Vicky is working with the auteur.

The makers took to social media Wednesday and made the announcement.

Vicky also took to his Instagram to share the news with his followers. He wrote in the caption, "An eternal cinema dream has come true."

With this the filmmaker has pulled off a casting coup that has never been seen together before. The announcement comes almost two months after Ranbir's *Animal* and Vicky's *Sam Bahadur* clashed their swords at the box office.

The two have earlier worked together in *Sanju* and the streaming film *Love Per Square Foot*. IANS



Bhumi hopes Feb to be lucky again

Mumbai: Actress Bhumi Pednekar is set to play an underdog journalist who takes on a giant villain exploiting young girls at a women's shelter in *Bhakshak*.

Bhumi says the upcoming film is one of the most important films that she has done in her career.

"The *Badhaai Do* actress said: "For me, the month of February has been most special ever since my debut as an actor. My first film, *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*, was released in February, and it got me so much love, acclaim, and respect that it cemented my position as an envelope-pushing actor in the industry."

She added, "My film *Badhaai Do* also released in Feb. It was a game-changing film for my career and for the film industry as we openly celebrated the LGBTQIA+ community and their rights. "It was also special for me because I stood up for something I truly believed in and was proudly vocal about it. The praise, the countless Best Actress awards, and the opportunities that were unlocked because of *Badhaai Do* is stuff that dreams are made of!"

With *Bhakshak* all set to release February 9, she said, "It is one of the most important films that I have done in my career, and I hope that the project, my director Pulkit, and I get the same amount of love that I had received for *Dum Laga Ke Haisha* and *Badhaai Do*. I hope February is again lucky for me and I manage to deliver a performance that people will remember forever." IANS

PEANUTS



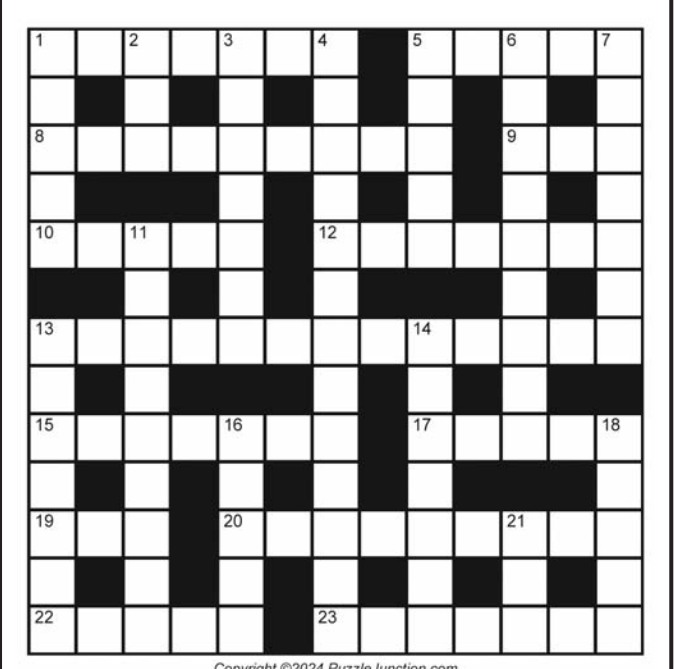
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY

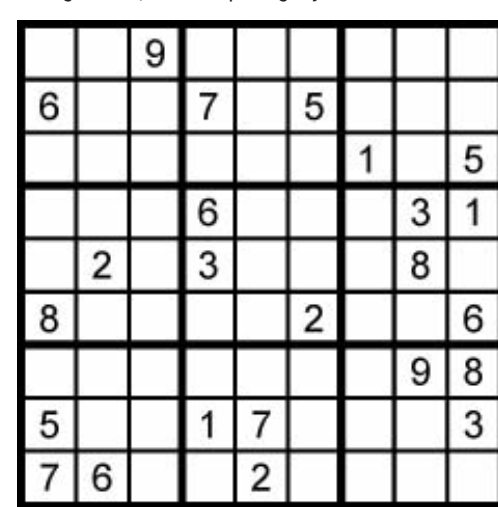


FUN post CROSSWORD

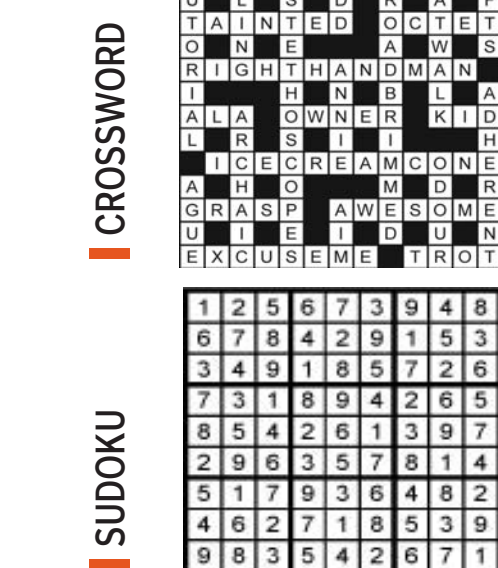


- Across**
- 1 Of or relating to the eye socket
 - 5 Lukewarm
 - 8 Shipping instruction
 - 9 Convent dweller
 - 10 English Channel feeder
 - 12 Rising current of warm air
 - 13 Formal or party gown (8,5)
 - 15 Berth
 - 17 California/ Nevada lake
 - 19 Self
 - 20 Opera glasses
 - 22 Regulator
 - 23 Type of supplement
 - 4 Like a pick-pocket (5-8)
 - 5 Church donation
 - 6 Cambodian capital (5,4)
 - 7 Hangs and sways
 - 11 Natural order of the universe
 - 13 Remark
 - 14 Easement between nations
 - 16 Layabout
 - 18 Hostile force
 - 21 Sri Lanka export
- Down**
- 1 Double-reed instruments
 - 2 Arrivederci
 - 3 Trigonometric function

SUDOKU



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

RICH TRIBUTES

Members of Paika Akhada display traditional martial arts skills on the occasion of freedom fighter Buxi Jagabandhu's 194th death anniversary near Odisha State Museum in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday



CM inaugurates 286 'transformed' schools in 6 dists

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 24: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday inaugurated 286 state-run schools that have been 'transformed' with new amenities.

These schools are spread over six districts – 80 in Khurda, 75 in Nayagarh, 54 in Nabarangpur, 53 in Puri, 14 in Subarnapur and 10 in Boudh, officials said.

Under the initiative, the schools get internet connections, smart classrooms, libraries and laboratories, among others, they said.

The CM said that the state government has taken up 'transformation' of schools, colleges, tourist places, temples, mutts and hospitals as part of its efforts to build a strong and new Odisha.

He said that students will play a key role in building a new Odisha. Maintaining that the schools play an important role in deciding the future of any race, Patnaik said that was why his government was giving importance to their transformation.

These 286 schools were among the 1,794 schools that were taken up in the fourth phase of the project. In the earlier three phases, 6,883 schools underwent developmental changes.

Sanjeeb Panda new police commissioner

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 24: In a major reshuffle among senior police officers, the state government Wednesday appointed Sanjeeb Panda, who was the Intelligence Director with additional charge of the Odisha State Police Housing and Welfare Corporation (OPHC) Limited CMD, as the commissioner of police of twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

Twin city police commissioner Soumendra Kumar Priyadarshi was transferred and posted as Intelligence Director; according to a notification issued by the Home department.

Special Home Secretary Santosh Bala was given the additional charge of the OPHWC CMD.

2003-batch IPS officer Himanshu Lal, who was the Eastern Range IGP, was appointed as the Northern Range IGP.

Northern Range IGP Deepak Kumar was posted as North Central Range IGP with additional charge of the Principal of Angul Police Training College.

Southern Range IGP Satyabrata Bhoi was transferred and posted as Eastern Range IGP.



SANJEEB PANDA

TWIN CITY POLICE COMMISSIONER SOUMENDRA KUMAR PRIYADARSHI WAS TRANSFERRED AND POSTED AS INTELLIGENCE DIRECTOR

PURI SP KANWAR VISHAL SINGH WAS TRANSFERRED AND POSTED AS CUTTACK DCP IN THE RANK OF DIGP

CUTTACK DCP PINAK MISHRA WAS TRANSFERRED AND POSTED AS PURI SP

2005-batch IPS officer JN Pankaj was appointed as Southern Range IGP. Pankaj will have additional charge of the EOW/STF IGP.

Puri SP Kanwar Vishal Singh was transferred and posted as Cuttack DCP in the rank of DIGP. Cuttack DCP Pinak Mishra was transferred and posted as Puri SP.

AIGP (Headquarters) Banoth Jugal Kishore Kumar was posted as Kendrapara SP.

Kendrapara SP Madkar Sandeep Sampat was transferred and posted as Dhenkanal SP.

Rayagada SP Vivekananda Sharma was transferred and posted as AIGP (State Police Headquarters).

Dhenkanal SP Gyana Ranjan Mohapatra was posted as SP Special Branch, Bhubaneswar. Subarnapur SP Amaresh Kumar Panda was transferred and posted as AIGP (State Police Headquarters).

Deogarh SP PK Mishra was appointed as Rourkela SRP.

SP Special Branch Rama Prasad Sahoo was transferred and posted as Deogarh SP.

Jeypore SDPO Harisha BC was posted as Rayagada SP.

Moreover, Baliguda SDPO Yashpatap Shrivastava was transferred and posted as Subarnapur SP, the notification said.

Balabhadra Majhi joins Congress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhawanipatna, Jan 24: Tribal leader from Kalahandi and former minister Balabhadra Majhi joined the Congress, Wednesday.

Majhi, a five-time MLA, had resigned from the BJD recently. He joined the Congress at a public rally along with his supporters in the presence of the party's Odisha in-charge Ajoy Kumar and state president Sarat Pattanayak.

"I am a tribal leader and a founding member of BJD. However, I could not get due respect in the BJD. So, I had to quit the party. Now, I will work for the Congress," he told reporters.



'Justify prescribing antibiotics'

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 24: In a move that would help curb the misuse of antimicrobials, the state government Wednesday made it mandatory for doctors to mention the exact reason or justification for prescribing these medicines.

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) puts many of the gains of modern medicine at risk and threatens the effective prevention and treatment of infections caused by resistant microbes, resulting in prolonged illness and greater risk of death. Treatment failures also lead to longer periods of infectivity and prohibitive high cost of the second-line drugs may result in failure to treat these diseases

in many individuals, Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) Commissioner-cum-Secretary Shalini Pandit said in a letter to directors of the department, superintendents of government-run and private medical colleges and hospitals and CDM and PHOs.

"Misuse and overuse of antimicrobials is one of the main drivers in the emergence of drug-resistant pathogens. With few new antibiotics in the Research and Development pipeline, prudent antibiotic use is the only option to delay the development of resistance," Pandit said.

The H&FW Commissioner-cum-Secretary further said that doctors at medical colleges and peripheral health institutions can set example of judicious use of antimicrobials for the next generation of medical practitioners, who will face the crisis in a much more severe form.

"While pharmacists are being reminded to implement the Schedule II and III of the Drugs and Cosmetic Rules and sell antibiotics only on valid prescriptions, it is important that all doctors mention the exact indication on their prescriptions while prescribing antimicrobials," she said.

The state government's move came a few days after the Union Health Ministry urged all doctors to make it a mandatory practice to write 'indication/reason/justification' while prescribing antibiotics.

HC asks govt to file fresh affidavit

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Jan 24: The Orissa High Court Wednesday directed the state government to file a fresh affidavit by January 30 on whether the state merit list published by Odisha School Education Programme Authority (OSEPA) on selection of junior teachers in primary and upper primary schools had been withdrawn while ordering continuation of the stay on the selection and recruitment of junior teachers. Prior to that, the state government submitted an affidavit on the publication of district wise merit list as per the January 19 direction of the court.

While hearing a petition alleging irregularities in recruitment of junior teachers in primary and upper primary schools, a single-judge bench of Justice Biraja Prasanna Satapathy ordered the continuation of the stay on the recruitment process till the next hearing.

The petition filed by JR Maharana and others claimed that the merit list published by

(OSEPA) violated the rules while the condition laid down in the recruitment notification by School and Mass Education department were given a pass, which denied many meritorious students from participating in the process.

During the earlier hearing January 19, the HC had imposed a stay on the recruitment process. It allowed the process of scrutiny of certificates and documents to continue while barring any final decision on the selection and posting of candidates. The state government and the OSEPA have been made respondents to the case.

The OSEPA had invited online applications for the recruitment of junior teachers September 10 while the last date for receiving applications was fixed October 10. The draft merit list was published by OSEPA January 15. The authorities January 17 had put advertisement for scrutiny of applications and related documents of the applicants featured in the merit list. The notification mentioned about the district wise venues for the scrutiny process.

JR TEACHER RECRUITMENT



R-DAY PREP: Contingents parade during full dress rehearsal ahead of the 75th Republic Day celebrations at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

SNIPPETS

Pat for sand art on Netaji

BHUBANESWAR: Internationally-acclaimed artist Sudarsan Pattanaik's sand art on freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at Red Fort in the national capital has earned appreciation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



"Yesterday, it was a great honour for me. Honble PM Narendra Modi ji visited and appreciated my sand art of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on Parakram Diwas at Red Fort, Delhi," the Odisha-based artist said in a statement Wednesday. Pattanaik, on the occasion of Parakram Diwas, had created the sand art to commemorate the 127th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Around eight tonnes of sand and 500 steel bowls have been used to make the seven-foot tall sand sculpture, he said. "It was a gracious moment to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and be appreciated by him," Pattanaik said. He said, "The PM said 'Jai Jagannath' as we met."

ECOR achieves feat in freight loading



BHUBANESWAR: The East Coast Railway (ECOR) has loaded more than 200 million tonne (MT) of freight and earned ₹20,551.9 crore in this financial year, an official statement said. From April 1, 2023 to January 22, 2024, the ECOR zone loaded 202.111 MT of freight, shattering the earlier record of 191.39 MT loaded in the last fiscal. With this achievement, the ECOR became the first zone in the country to cross the milestone of 200 MT of loading for the fifth time in a row. The three divisions of the ECOR have contributed greatly to the stupendous feat achieved by it, an official said. During the financial year 2023-24, ECOR has loaded 121.747 MT of coal, 10.65 MT of raw materials to steel plants, 16.398 MT of pig iron and finished steel, 24.018 MT of iron ore, 1.192 MT of cement, 2.415 MT of foodgrains, 5.235 MT of fertilizers, 2.425 MT of mineral oil, 3.774 MT of freight in containers and 14.358 MT of other goods.

BDA to host 3rd edition of BhuFesto from Feb 3

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 24: The Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) will host the third edition of the Bhubaneswar Festival of Storytelling (BhuFesto) from February 3 to February 5.

The event will take place simultaneously at four distinct locations within the city -- Indira Gandhi Park, Odisha Crafts Museum Kalabhoomi, APJ Abdul Kalam Park in Kalinga Nagar and Budha Jayanti Park in Niladri Vihar. The festivities will remain open between 2:30pm and 7:30pm each day. Originating in 2018 as part of Dot Fest during the Men's Hockey World Cup, BhuFesto returned for its second edition in January 2023, once again as part of Dot Fest on the sidelines of the Men's Hockey World Cup.

This year, it will be seamlessly integrated into the Ekamra Utsav, coinciding with the 'Biswa Odia Bhasa Sammilani' slated to be held from February 3 to February 5.

The event promises a diverse range of activities, with distinguished storytellers like Biswa Kalyan Rath, Prachi Tara and Meera Das gracing the stage. In addition, attendees can also enjoy stand-up comedy, citizen storytelling, inspirational life stories and folk performances.

Adivasi Mela to begin January 26



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 24: The much-awaited annual Adivasi Mela-2024 will be held in Capital city from January 26 to February 5.

According to an official release, the fair will be organised at its original location, Adivasi Exhibition Ground at Unit-I, after a gap of six years and will remain open from 2:30pm to 9 pm. Stalls in the traditional Adivasi Haat and Tribal Art and Crafts segment will be erected by 22 Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs), 17 Micro Project Areas (MPAs), and various

line departments of the state government.

The annual culture-cum-trade fair is a flagship event of SC/ST Development, Minorities, and Backward Classes Welfare Department, featuring tribal life and anthropology while providing a market for the sale of agricultural products, minor forest produce and craft materials.

The most interesting part of the fair is life-size Adivasi Gaon (tribal huts) showcasing the lifestyle and culture of the different tribal communities and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). This year, huts

of Kutia Kandha, Santhal, Paudi Bhuyan, Hill Khadia and Mankirdia, Juanga Munda, Gadaba, Dongria Kandha, Lanjia Saora, Bonda and Chuktia Bhunjia will be erected at the fair ground.

While 39 cultural groups will stage tribal dances from January 26 to February 1, a Bhajan Sandhya will be organised January 30, and a drama by the SC/ST Development Department Cultural Association February 2. Similarly, multilingual dramas by different tribal communities will be staged between February 3 and 5.

Organisations such as Mission Shakti, ORMAS, Millet Mission, Handloom Textiles and Handicrafts, Planning and Convergence, I&PR, and institutions like SCSTRTI, Academy of Tribal Languages and Culture (ATLC), Tribal Museum and Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences will participate in the fair.

The Adivasi Mela serves as a platform to raise awareness about the tribal development scenario in the state, highlighting how tribal communities integrate themselves with the mainstream while preserving their anthropogenic identity and uniqueness.

Seminar on 5G mechanics at SOA



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 24: A one-day seminar on '5G and Cybersecurity' was organised by the Atal Incubation Centre-Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA). Deemed to be University Foundation and ITER's department of Electronic Communication Engineering and Computer Science Engineering here recently.

Ashutosh Dutta of John Hopkins University, USA, the resource person, spoke on open forums, simulation software, professional societies and initiatives linked with 5G mechanics.

Describing it as a complex landscape, Dutta provided practical suggestions to make sense of the same.

The seminar fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration with the academic community was attended by heads of departments, senior professors and PhD scholars.

Desertions may hurt BJD in Sukinda

Partner of accused firm held in Titilagarh

GUJARAT BOAT TRAGEDY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Jan 24: With the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections around the corner, the political situation in the Sukinda Assembly constituency do not look very bright for the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) which had won the seat both in 2014 and 2019. Large scale desertions have taken place within the BJD with many of its top leaders in this district joining the BJP. Speculation is rife that the Ghadei family which enjoys huge popularity in the constituency for the last three decades may this time face a reverse in Sukinda.

Many have pointed out that the large scale desertions are occurring as the BJD has failed to keep up to its promises made during the 2019 elections. It has been alleged that BJD has failed to fulfil the needs of the common people and is only looking after the interests of the rich including contractors and miners. It has created resentment among the locals. Yes, a few Congress leaders and workers have joined the BJD in the past few months. However, the num-



Many senior leaders of the BJD in Sukinda constituency have joined the BJP in the last few months and they can help in increasing substantially the vote bank of the saffron party

bers are much less in comparison to the desertions.

Despite the anti-incumbency wave, BJD workers are of the opinion that the Ghadei family will continue their dominance in the upcoming Assembly election. Prafulla Ghadei has been winning the Sukinda Assembly seat for a long time and later on his son

Preetiranjana took up the mantle winning in 2014 and 2019.

Preetiranjana and the Ghadei family faced a lot of criticism in 2016 over the malnutrition death of kids at Nagada village under Dhannagar police limits in this district, cops said Wednesday. He added that the body of Kedarnath has been handed over to his family.

Balasamanta by a margin 16,730 votes. It should be stated here that the BJD benefitted in 2019, as senior Congress leader Amalendu Behera and his supporters joined the party just before the elections. However, since then times have changed as Amalendu has quit the BJD and joined the BJP in 2021. Now he and Pradeep are working together to increase the voter base of the saffron party.

It should be stated here that a few days back, BJD's senior youth leaders Prafulla Dhala, Ajay Dhal and Kishore Chandra Jena in Danagadi block have joined the BJP. Some block chairpersons like Lalita Ray and Lopamudra Nayak and their respective husbands have also shifted their allegiance to the BJP. A few months back, hundreds of BJD workers belonging to 16 panchayats of Sukinda block have also joined the saffron party.

Political analysts are of the opinion that this large number of desertions will harm the BJD and the Ghadei family will not be able to maintain their stranglehold on the Sukinda Assembly constituency this time.

PNN & AGENCIES

Bolangir, Jan 24: Gopal Shah, partner of the private firm, Kotia Projects, which had got the contract to operate and maintain a lakefront near Vadodara town where 12 school students and two teachers died in a boat capsizing, has been apprehended from Titilagarh in this district, police said Wednesday. So far, seven of the 19 people named in the FIR are already behind bars. Kotia Projects had been entrusted with the responsibility of running and maintaining the Motnath Lake in the Harni area on the outskirts of Vadodara.

Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), Manoj Ninama said Wednesday that the process to take back Shah to Vadodara has been initiated. A joint team of Vadodara and local police arrested Shah from a house in which he was hiding.

The tragedy which took place January 18 resulted in the death of 12 students and two teachers. Due to the efforts of the rescue



teams, 18 students and two other teachers were safely brought back to the shore. The police have registered a case under Sections 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide) of the IPC against 19 persons in connection with the boat tragedy.

As per the FIR, Kotia Projects was given a contract by the Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC) to operate the Harni Lake Zone in 2017. In its complaint, the VMC had pointed out lapses, including non-maintenance of boats and not keeping adequate number of life-saving equipment and life jackets, on the part

of the contractor. It was also revealed that only a few students enjoying the ride on the boat were given life jackets on the day of the incident. Due to overloading, the boat first started swaying precariously and then capsized following water ingress from the front side, the FIR noted.

Seven persons, including four partners of Kotia Projects – Bhimsingh Yadav, Vedprakash Yadav, Rashmikant Prajapati and Bineet Kotia, manager of the firm Shantilal Solanki, and boat operator – Nayan Gohil and Ankit Vasava – are already in custody in connection with the case.

Man accused of murdering wife still absconding

Family cries foul after youth's mysterious death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, Jan 24: Despite various awareness programmes, dowry continues to haunt the society. A man, identified as Sheikh Mojal Hussain, who allegedly killed his wife Monday over dowry demands, continues to elude the cops, officials of the Rural police station said Wednesday here. The deceased identified as Runu Bibi and the accused are residents of Gujdarada village in this district. The two had been married for 14 years and have two daughters.

Police said that Runu's husband and in-laws used to frequently torture her over dowry demands and her failure to give birth to a boy. Runu's brother, Sheikh Sharafat, a resident of Mirjapur village, in his complaint to the police has said that the demands for dowry were incessant and never ceased. Failure to comply always resulted in the mental and physical abuse of Runu.

The deceased's brother said that he came to know about the latest assault Monday over phone. He rushed to the residence of Mojal and rescued a profusely-bleeding Runu. He rushed her to the district headquarters hospital here but doctors pronounced her dead on arrival.

Police said that earlier also, cases of domestic violence had been lodged against Mojal, his two sisters and parents. Runu was brutally assaulted by Mojal and his family members April 13, 2022, following which a case (No 83/22) was lodged at the Puruna Bazar police station. Sharafat alleged that had the police taken action then, his sister would not have met with such a cruel fate.

During the post-mortem of Runu Tuesday, her family members demanded the immediate arrest of the accused and others involved in the alleged murder. Bhadrak city DSP, Anshuman Dwivedi along with Rural police station IIC, Amitabh Das reached the spot. They assured the agitating family members that all the accused will be arrested soon.



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, Jan 24: A youth undergoing treatment at a de-addiction centre died under mysterious circumstances Tuesday at Chingidipur under Dhannagar police limits in this district, cops said Wednesday. Police are investigating the matter after family members of the deceased lodged a complaint. They alleged that the deceased Kedarnath Parida had injury marks on his body and must have died after being severely beaten by the staff of the de-addiction centre. Parida was a resident of Jajpur district.

Kedarnath's family informed Wednesday that he had been admitted to the centre January 4. His treatment was going on well when all of a sudden they were informed Tuesday that Kedarnath had fallen ill. Even before they could react, a second call from the centre informed that Kedarnath had breathed his last at the district headquarters hospital here.

The victim's family members rushed to the hospital and saw injury marks on Kedarnath's body. Then Kedarnath's elder brother Sudarshan lodged a complaint at the Dhannagar police station alleging that his brother has been beaten to death by the staff of the centre.

Police said Wednesday that they are waiting for the post-mortem report to ascertain the real cause behind Kedarnath's death. Dhannagar SDPO informed that police are questioning the staff of the centre, including the in-charge. He added that the body of Kedarnath has been handed over to his family.

Man kills wife, dies by suicide

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, Jan 24: A man who killed his wife by slitting her throat Tuesday, died Wednesday while undergoing treatment at the district headquarters hospital (DHH) here. Police said that the man, identified as Konda Babu, 38, had tried to die by suicide after killing his wife Benu Padi. Konda had also slit his own throat after the death of Benu.

Since their marriage, Konda and Benu were staying separately with the latter residing with her parents. Konda visited

Tuesday the residence of his in-laws at Padiya village. There he had a huge argument with Benu. In a fit of rage, he picked up a knife and slit Benu's throat, who died on the spot, police informed Wednesday.

Konda then also cut his throat. However, locals rescued him and rushed him to the community health centre. He was shifted to the DHH after his condition deteriorated where he breathed his last Wednesday. Police have sent both the bodies for post-mortem and have initiated an investigation into the matter.



AT KING'S SERVICE: King Kansa enjoying a dance performed by artistes at his royal court at Hatapada in Mathura Nagari on the 10th-day of Bargarh Dhanu Yatra Mahotsav, Wednesday

Cold storage boost for Koraput farmers

24 OF THE 51 PROPOSED FACILITIES READY TO STORE VARIOUS TYPES OF PRODUCE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, Jan 24: In a huge relief for farmers of this district, 24 cold storages have become operational, officials said Wednesday. It means that the farmers will not have to resort to distress sale of their products anymore. All the storage facilities are solar powered. Farmers can store large quantities of fruits and vegetables in these facilities, the officials added.

Earlier farmers were forced into distress sale of their produce due to the lack of storage facilities. The decision of the Odisha government to build 51 cold storages in the district has come as a blessing to them. The remaining 27 will be completed



within a short time, district horticulture officer, Sudam Chandra Biswal informed.

Biswal was attending a function recently for the inauguration of a cold storage built by 'Ecofrost' at Lendirmaliguda locality in the district. He said that the decision to build 51 cold storages in the district was taken during FY 22-23. Each cold storage will have a capacity of 10 metric tonne

and approximately ₹15 lakh will be spent for building each of these facilities, Biswal said.

Among the 24 cold storages that have become operational, six are in Koraput block, three in Lamtaput, two each in Laxmipur Semiliguda, Pottangi, Borigumma, Jeypore and Nandapur blocks, one each in Dashamantapur, Kotpad and Narayanpatna blocks. Officials stated that farmers will now be able to store their produce for a substantial period of time and get the right prices.

The cold storages are being operated under the supervision of local women self-help groups (SHGs). They have been trained by a team from 'Ecofrost' and the district horticulture department, an official stated.

RSP celebrates SAIL Foundation Day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Jan 24: The Foundation Day of SAIL was observed at the Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) here with pomp and gaiety Tuesday. PK Sahoo, Executive Director (ED), Projects, presided over the function at the Ispat Stadium here as chief guest. Former and present employees along with their family members took part in the function. More than 2,200 employees



Red ants helping tribals turn self-reliant

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Jan 24: Red ants available in huge numbers in the jungles of Keonjhar district have become a source of income for the tribals and have helped them in becoming self-reliant. These tribals earlier used to eat red ants as food supplement. However, now ants are being bought in huge quantities by the Forest department to feed birds and other animals. As a result, tribals are also gleefully catching and selling red ants to earn a good sum.

Members of Van Suraksha Samiti (VSS) and women self-help groups (SHGs) have started catching red ants (locally known as Kai) from various trees. They are then selling those to the

Forest department, locals informed here.

Keonjhar is a tribal-dominated district surrounded by hills and forest cover. The tribals consume the red ants residing on Sal, Jamun and Kusum trees. They also prepare chutney from these red ants. At times they also eat the ants raw with puffed rice.

Tribals are selling the red ants in packets of various sizes. The minimum amount is ₹20 per packet. The local VSSs at Betakhali, Akula, Patakhal, Raisua, Bhaliadala villages under Telkoi forest range are procuring ants from the tribals. The business has been going on since October last year. Officials informed that till date the Forest department has



bought five quintals of red ants from the tribals. Gamahari Munda, a tribal woman, informed that they

used to procure red ants for their own consumption earlier. However, now it has become lucrative for her to sell the ants and make some money. She uses the money to buy other necessary items for the family.

Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) Ashok Das said the department is sending most of the ants to Nandankanan Zoological Park in Bhubaneswar. The ants are used to feed birds, pangolins and other wild animals.

Notably, officials of Keonjhar Forest division had earlier taught hundreds of tribal women to prepare vermi-compost. It helped them earn a livelihood. Now, red ants are helping these tribals become more and more self-reliant.

and their family members participated in the five kilometres run and walking events. Many of the family members of the employees belonged to various educational institutions here. At the end of the events, everyone took the pledge, 'I shall keep myself in good health to serve better.'

Roshan Khadia from Nilashaila College emerged the best runner in the men's category. He completed the distance in 18:04:33 seconds. Purnima Sandil from Ispat Vidyamandir emerged winner in the women's event finishing the race in 21:36:21 seconds. The Raw Material Handling Plant department won an award as it had the highest number of participants in the various competitions. Deepika Ispat Siksha Sadan, Sector - 18 won the 'Best Participating School' award.

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“
With Her divine blessings, I was lucky enough to have darshan of the Goddess. It's a pleasure to see the new look of the temple precincts following the transformation. The developmental measures will not only benefit the devotees, but provide additional income to priests, servitors, businessmen and result in overall economic development of the area. I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Chief Minister and the 5T Chairman for the initiative.



DEBADATTA TRIPATHY | DEVOTEE, CUTTACK

I feel happy. I never came here before. I longed for a darshan of Maa Samalei ever since I heard of the shrine makeover. I have come here with my entire family. The various projects on the temple premises look great though work at some places is nearing completion. With Thy divine blessings, I will have the opportunity to take part in the grand inaugural ceremony January 27.



ADHIKARI BANCHOR | DEVOTEE, BARGARH

My family has been performing Puja of Goddess Samalei for generations as servitors. We were shifted from the temple premises to make way for the project with double the value of our house and an additional ₹20 lakh for construction of new house as compensation. I have now constructed my own house on a 2.5 acre plot in the vicinity of the temple which was allotted to me by the government. I'm thankful to the Chief Minister and Chairman 5T.



AMBIKA PRASAD RAY | PRIEST

Two days to go for the divine moment

People in western Odisha are waiting with bated breath to witness the divine moment when the historic SAMALEI project at the abode of Maa Samaleswari, the presiding deity of Sambalpur, will be dedicated to people in a grand ceremony January 27. Artisans too are fully geared up to give final touches to the transformative initiative which started in July 2022. The ambitious project is nearing completion in record one and half years' time for which people of Sambalpur are showering praises on Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and 5T chairman Kartik Pandian. The work is progressing in rapid precision. The use of red Khandolite stones - which has also been used in various other temple transformative projects - in the Maa Samaleswari temple projects, with extensive carvings, perfectly blends modernity with touch of ancient

architectural tradition. The project not only offers a range of facilities for the convenience of priests, pilgrims and tourists but boasts of developed pond and green zone for their recreation. Special foot over bridge and platform has been constructed for devotees participating in the Mahanadi

Aarati on the riverfront. The other facilities include rest rooms for pilgrims and priests, parking area, shoe stand and vending zone, among others.

WATER TANK AS CLOCK TOWER

Keeping in mind the daily congregation of large number of devotees at Maa Samaleswari shrine, the state government had earlier decided to construct a massive 40-feet high water tank. Now, it has been decided to install four large size clocks on four directions of the tank to enable devotees check time while standing at any corner of the shrine precincts. Platforms have been constructed at 30 ft height on the clock tower to help as many as 150 visitors enjoy the beauty of the Mahanadi river.



BLISSFUL MAHANADI ARATI

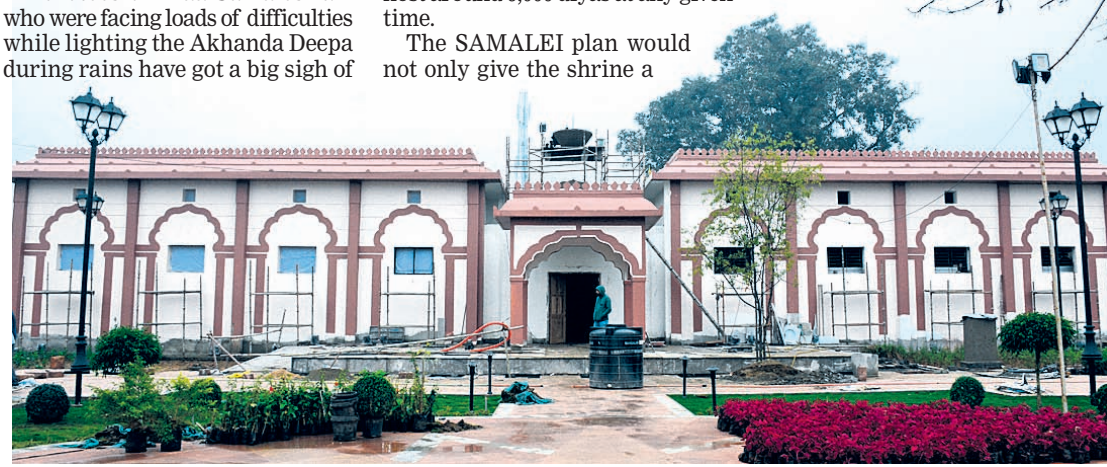
expression 'Thaugirindra soota se bishnupadi, todatta upadhire mu Mahanadi'. Realising the unfading significance of Mahanadi, as mentioned in 'Puranas', Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik took the historic decision to construct the Arati Ghat on the banks of the largest river of Odisha. 5T Chairman Kartik Pandian has been focusing on successful completion of the project by laying special emphasis on it. The 5T Chairman is scheduled to offer special Arati to Maa Samaleswari and Mahanadi January 27 evening. A permanent mandap which can accommodate around 2,000 people has been built. The mandap is divided into three zones. Moreover, a 20-metre long, 9-metre wide and 7-metre high foot overbridge

has been constructed to connect the Mahanadi Arati Ghat with the shrine. This would ensure easy access for vehicles plying on the ring road to the temple and ease traffic congestion. There will also be provision of elevators and wheelchairs for differently-abled devotees.

Grand lamp house

As the ritual of lighting Akahnda Deepa (ever-burning lamp) is inherent to the worship of goddesses, scores of devotees from far-off places throng Maa Samaleswari shrine to light diyas. It is believed that offering diya with dedicated mind helps fulfill wishes. Devotees of Maa Samaleswari who were facing loads of difficulties while lighting the Akhanda Deepa during rains have got a big sigh of relief as the newly built lamp house at the shrine can host around 6,000 diyas at any given time. The SAMALEI plan would not only give the shrine a

grand look but also provide divine feelings to the devotees. The historic decision of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to transform the shrine was executed under the direct supervision of 5T Chairman Kartik Pandian and was completed in record time, despite Covid-19 pandemic impediments.



FOCUS INEQUALITY

THE GROWING GULF



This ever-widening gulf between the rich and the rest isn't accidental, nor is it inevitable. Governments worldwide are making deliberate political choices that enable and encourage this distorted concentration of wealth, while millions live in poverty

In its report 'Inequality Inc' published on January 15, 2024, Oxfam has warned of a growing gulf of inequality fuelled by corporate power. According to the report, the richest five men in the world have doubled their fortunes. Their wealth has increased 114% from \$405 billion to \$869 billion since 2020—at a rate of \$14 million per hour. At the same time, the world's poorest 477 crore people—making up 60% of the world population—have been further impoverished. Their wealth has declined by 0.2% in real terms (taking inflation into account) in a period what is called "decade of division."

Hardship and hunger are a daily reality for many people worldwide. Oxfam predicts, the gap between rich and poor is likely to increase, and will lead to the world crowning its first trillionaire within a decade. At the same time, it warns, if current trends continue, it will take 229 (almost 230) years to ensure the number of people living under the World Bank poverty line of \$6.85 to be reduced to zero.

Oxfam's report also shows how a "war on taxation" by corporations has seen the effective corporate tax rate fall by roughly a third in recent decades, while corporations have relentlessly privatised the public sector and segregated services like education and water.

Mirroring the fortunes of the super-rich, it also says business profits have risen sharply despite pressure on households amid the cost-of-living crisis. It finds 148 top corporations made \$1.8 trillion in profits, 52% up on 3-year average, and dished out huge payouts to rich shareholders while hundreds of millions faced cuts in real-term pay.

At the time of writing this article, Oxfam has not published its Indian supplement for 2024. However, the World Inequality Report 2022 released by Paris-

based World Inequality Lab, a global research initiative, pegged India to be among the most unequal countries in the world. The Oxfam's report, "Survival of the Richest: The India story," published in January 2023 also says that between 2012 and 2021, 40% of the wealth created in India has gone to just 1% of the population and only a mere 3% of the wealth has gone to the bottom 50%.

Marcellus Investment Managers has estimated that the 20 most profitable firms in India generated 14% of total corporate profits in 1990, 30% in 2010, and 70% in 2019. Most evidence suggests that increased profits were due to market power rather than innovation or large productivity gains, while some commentators consider this corporate inequality to be a factor underlying the disconnect between the Indian stock market and the real economy.

Widening economic, gender, and racial inequalities—as well as the inequality that exists between countries—are tearing our world apart. Nobel laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz says

that the main problem is that money talks, gets to make all rules. Inequality "creates a fertile field for populists," he said.

"And that's especially true when the inequality is created by political processes—where there are people who aren't paying their fair share of taxes, where people feel that they're exploited in one way or another by the system." Stiglitz in his book "The Price of Inequality (2012)" argues that inequality is self-perpetuating, that it is produced by the vast amount of political power the wealthy hold to control legislative and regulatory activity.

The growing gulf between rich and poor inflicts biological damage on bodies and brains. The link between socioeconomic inequality and poor health goes beyond simple access to care and living with more dangers. According to Robert Morris Sapolsky, an American professor of biology, neurology and researcher and author, "Life in societies with wide gaps between rich and poor creates ongoing social and psychological stresses. These grind down the

body in a host of unhealthy ways, affecting our brains, our immune systems and our DNA."

Resources are not scarce in India, or in the rest of the world. Instead, it is the inequitable distribution of resources that creates scarcity in the first place. The theories of trickle-down economics have been tested time and time again, and they have not succeeded. It is merely a myth, repeated over and over again hoping to be the truth. No corporation or individual should have this much power over our economies and our lives—to be clear, nobody should have a billion dollars.

This ever-widening gulf between the rich and the rest isn't accidental, nor is it inevitable. Governments worldwide are making deliberate political choices that enable and encourage this distorted concentration of wealth, while millions of people live in poverty.

Oxfam urges a new era of public action, including public services, corporate regulation, reining in runaway corporate power, breaking up monopolies and enacting permanent wealth and excess profit taxes. Governments must empower workers, tax these massive corporate profits and, crucially, invest in a new era of public goods and services.

To end extreme inequality, governments must radically redistribute the power of billions and corporations back to ordinary people and end extreme inequality. What are needed are concerted policies that deliver fairer taxation and support for everyone, not just the privileged. A fairer economy is possible, one that works for us all. A more equal world is possible if governments effectively regulate the private sector.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist.



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

A MORE EQUAL WORLD IS POSSIBLE IF GOVERNMENTS EFFECTIVELY REGULATE THE PRIVATE SECTOR



Daron Acemoglu

Attempts to impose extremist policies (of the left or right) on voters are doomed to fail – and are likely to reduce trust in democratic institutions even further

Always do what you know to be the best even if it is the most difficult thing to do.

THE MOTHER



Building Institutions

There are plenty of good models around to help both developing and industrialized countries build better democratic institutions. But with its abortive attempts to draft a new constitution, Chile is offering a lesson in what to avoid.

Though it is one of the richest countries in Latin America, Chile is still suffering from the legacy of General Augusto Pinochet's brutal dictatorship and historic inequalities. The country has made some progress in building democratic institutions since the 1988 plebiscite that began the transition from authoritarianism, and education and social programmes have reduced income inequality. But major problems remain. There are deep inequalities not just in income, but also in access to government services, high-quality educational resources, and labour-market opportunities. Moreover, Chile still has the constitution that Pinochet imposed in 1980.

Yet while it seems natural to start anew, Chile has gone about it the wrong way. Following a 2020 referendum that showed overwhelming support for drafting a new constitution, it entrusted the process to a convention of elected delegates. But only 43 per cent of voters turned out for the 2021 election to fill the convention, and many of the candidates were from far-left circles with strong ideological commitments to draft a constitution that would crack down on business and establish myriad new rights for different communities. When the resulting document was put to a vote, 62 per cent of Chileans rejected it.

A second attempt repeated the same failings, only from the other direction. A right-wing convention majority, emboldened by the public's reaction to the first version, drafted a constitution that also was rejected as a step too far. This experience should sound familiar, because Chile is hardly the only country where an activist body has pushed for measures that a majority of voters oppose. Similar episodes are occurring around the world – not least in the United States – and trust in institutions is suffering as a result.

Can support for democracy be rebuilt? My own recent work with Nicolás Ajzenman, Cevat Aksoy, Martin Fiszbein, and Carlos Molina may provide some clues. We find that people who have experience with democratic institutions tend to support them, but only if they deem democracies to be successful in delivering the kinds of economic performance, public services, and other outcomes that they expect.

What people appear to want from democracies is telling. Support for democracy wanes during economic crises, wars, or other periods of instability, and improves when the public enjoys the benefits of good public services, low inequality, and limited to no corruption. The lessons seem clear. If we want to build a better democracy, we must start with democratic institutions' ability to deliver what people want.

With inequality rising in many countries and global corporations becoming more powerful, it is reasonable for democracies to offer more redistribution and stronger protections for disadvantaged groups. But, again, the right and the left will go about this in different ways.

In Chile's case, the left's hardline anti-business agenda seems ill-advised. A better alternative is the model pioneered by Scandinavia's social democratic parties, which rose to power after the 1929 stock-market crash and the Great Depression, when there was a palpable need for major institutional changes and policies to restore the economy to health and curb inequality.

There are many misperceptions about the origins of Nordic social democracy. While some commentators seem to believe that these countries were always predisposed toward equality and cooperation, others view them as "democratic socialist" role models. Neither perception seems to be true. Both Sweden and Norway were highly unequal at the beginning of the twentieth century. Norway's pre-tax income Gini coefficient (a measure of inequality on a scale of zero to one) was 0.57 in 1930, which means that it was more unequal than anywhere in Latin America today.

Both countries also experienced frequent industrial conflict. The workers' parties that later became social-democratic parties were rooted in Marxism. But by the time they came to power, they had started moving away from their earlier commitments to revolution and rigid ideology. Instead, they campaigned under a broad umbrella, promising sound macroeconomic management and egalitarian reform of the labour market and education.

For its part, the Norwegian Labour Party made its U-turn from a hardline Marxist agenda after its poor showing in Norway's 1930 election. Like Danish and Swedish workers' parties at the time, it redirected its focus to more practical matters, implementing policies that people wanted. The party also promised a major educational reform to improve the quality of schooling in rural areas that were falling behind. After coming to power again in 1935, the party moved quickly to implement its "Folk School Law" the following year.

In recent work with Tuomas Pekkarinen, Kjell Salvanes, and Matti Sarvimäki, we show that Norway's school reform did more than improve the quality of rural schooling. It also had a profound effect on Norwegian politics, because many of those who benefited from the reform (starting with parents) shifted their allegiances to the Labour Party, thus helping to create the coalition that would sustain Norway's now-famous model of social democracy. Simply put, the party provided the services voters wanted, and voters rewarded it with electoral support.

The Swedish case is broadly similar. After its first election victory in 1932, the Swedish Social Democratic Party delivered on its promise of higher wages, industrial peace, and a stable macroeconomic environment. It was then rewarded at the polls for the next several decades.

There are lessons here for those who want to strengthen democracy and build new institutions to combat inequality and protect the disadvantaged. The first step must be to show that democracy works by forging a reformist agenda that will succeed in delivering services to the population. Attempts to impose extremist policies (of the left or right) on voters are doomed to fail – and are likely to reduce trust in democratic institutions even further.

The writer is Institute Professor of Economics at MIT.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

The season of failure is the best time for sowing the seeds of success.

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

The free soul is rare, but you know it when you see it - basically because you feel good, very good, when you are near or with them.

CHARLES BUKOWSKI

If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world.

JRR TOLKIEN

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

When devotion is live-streamed

Once upon a time, devotion used to be a private affair for devotees. It was an unbreakable spiritual bond and a personal religious experience between gods, goddesses, and their followers. It was neither televised nor live-streamed to project propaganda, power, and dominance of one religious practice over another. The private and public practice of religious customs and traditions used to be solitary affairs for individuals and communities. The celebration of religious festivals used to be communitarian events based on the collective sharing of food, fun, and friendships beyond the narrow silos of religious boundaries. The celebration was part of understanding each other's sufferings. Those days are over now in the age of social media, digital technology, and the public display of devotion.

Religion and religious practices serve as an escape for individuals and communities from the harsh material and spiritual realities of capitalist exploitations, inequalities, and marginalisation. These unforgiving capitalist conditions are perpetuated daily, where the hardworking masses bear the brunt, while a privileged few leisurely dominate and exploit both human beings and nature to expand their empire of profit. People behave

like orderly objects in a consumerist and religious society of continuous marginalisation.

People persist in enduring both material and spiritual marginalisation within the alienated capitalist society. In the 19th century, Karl Marx observed that "religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people." This observation remains relevant in the 21st century. Working people continue to follow and practice religion as a spiritual and metaphysical balm for the material sufferings they experience in their everyday lives under capitalism.

For working people, religion serves as a private spiritual experience—an illusory escape through communitarian practice. These individuals often lack both the financial means and the medium to express their real sufferings. Instead, they externalise their pain to their fate, as dictated by their gods and goddesses. The illusory happiness derived from religious practices aids people in surviving and confronting the everyday challenges posed by capitalism in its various forms. All forms of alienation are inherent and integral to capitalism, and religions and religious practices function as a form of therapy for the suffering masses within capitalist society.

Modern, secular, liberal, democratic, and constitutional states and governments are expected to be free from all religious affiliations and practices. However, right-wing parties and reactionary leadership often employ religion as a mobilising force in politics to gain access to power. The sustainability of this power and dominance relies on the mass domestication of people with the aid of religion.

Religious masses tend to be submissive and subservient to power, opposing revolutionary transformations of their conditions of marginalisation. Religious practices teach the masses to patiently await heavenly rewards or hope for salvation after death while enduring suffering here on earth.

The ruling and non-ruling elites, corporate class, and their crony celebrities in different fields of life live stream and celebrate their devotion, presenting themselves as televised devotees to convey messages of mass domestication and submissiveness in the name of religious practice. This practice ultimately benefits the ruling elites and their crony capitalist associates, who amass their empire of profit at the expense of domesticated labour.

Radical labour consciousness, characterised by secular and scientific ethos, poses a signifi-

cant challenge to both ruling and non-ruling elites within capitalism. In contrast, labour embedded with religion tends to surrender before the power of all-mighty gods and goddesses, aligning with the requirements of capitalism.

The proliferation of religions and religious practices among the masses aids capitalism in surviving its crises by outsourcing blame to individual fate and attributing community sufferings to the destiny of communities. Religions act as shock absorbers for human sufferings under capitalism.

The time is always ripe for a revolution that can transform individuals, families, communities, states, governments, and societies under capitalism. When will an inclusive, secular, progressive, democratic and radical revolution be televised as an alternative to the harsh realities of capitalism? When will the masses awaken from their religious slumbers and reclaim their citizenship rights? When will science and secularism become gateways to peace and prosperity, prompting people to reject the deceptive promises of various forms of capitalism and religion?

The writer is a political economist and Professor of Business Management at London Metropolitan University. Views are personal.



Bhabani Shankar Nayak

RELIGIONS ACT AS SHOCK ABSORBERS FOR HUMAN SUFFERINGS UNDER CAPITALISM

Korean concern

Sir, The recent escalation of tensions on the Korean Peninsula has sparked global concerns, raising questions about North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, and the possibility of a shift from mere posturing to military action. On January 5, North Korea fired artillery shells near South Korean border islands, concurrently declaring the South a "hostile state" it plans to subjugate through nuclear war. This has occurred against the backdrop of international distractions with ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East. Seasoned observers, such as Robert L. Carlin and Siegfried S. Hecker, have expressed alarm, suggesting that Kim Jong-un may have strategically decided to go to war. The evolving dynamics are complex, with internal issues like a stagnant economy and external frustrations, such as failed diplomacy with the West, influencing North Korea's posture. A significant development is North Korea's alignment with Russia, supplying artillery shells and missiles for use in Russia's war in Ukraine. While analysts broadly agree on this shift, there is stark disagreement on Kim's ultimate goals. Some argue that it's about achieving acceptance as a nuclear power and prompting arms-reduction talks, while others believe North Korea won't initiate a war unless pushed to the brink. The timing of North Korea's actions is noteworthy, coinciding with elections in the United States and South Korea this year. In this uncertain landscape, there are differing opinions on North Korea's trajectory, with some suggesting tensions will persist until after the US elections. Others argue that, at the height of tensions, North Korea might seek engagement with a Republican administration, aiming for sanctions relief, acceptance of its nuclear programme, and a reduction of US troops on the Korean Peninsula.

Amarjeet Kumar; HAZARIBAGH

Spy vessel

Sir, The Chinese research vessel Xiang Yang Hong 03 gliding into the Indian Ocean is worrying. Considering the ongoing tension between India and Maldives, the ship heading towards Male holds significance. There has been an increasing deployment of Chinese research vessels in the Indian Ocean region. The vessels have state-of-the-art technology to collect a diverse range of data undetected. The development also comes days after the Foreign Ministers of India and Maldives met in Uganda during the Non-Alignment Movement summit.

NJ Ravi Chander; BANGALORE

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, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010



'File as many cases as you can': Rahul to Sarma

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, Jan 24: A day after the Guwahati Police registered a case against him and other Congress leaders for allegedly provoking a mob, Rahul Gandhi Wednesday challenged the BJP-led Assam government to file "as many cases as they can" against him.

Gandhi claimed that despite this, he would not be scared. The Congress leader attacked Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at his first public address on the seventh day of Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in the Barpeta district. He called Sarma the "most corrupt CM" of the nation and brought up a number of accusations pertaining to land and betel nut business. "I have no idea where Himanta Biswa Sarma got the notion that he could scare me by registering police complaints. As many cases as you can, file them. I am not intimidated by you; file 25 cases more. I am not intimidated by BJP-RSS," Gandhi said.



I have no idea where Himanta Biswa Sarma got the notion that he could scare me by registering police complaints. As many cases as you can, file them. I am not intimidated by you; file 25 cases more. I am not intimidated by BJP-RSS

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

Guwahati Police Tuesday filed a suo-motu complaint against Rahul Gandhi and other Congress leaders for wanton acts of violence in the state capital. "The goal of the BJP-RSS is to eradicate Assamese history, culture, and language. We will not allow them to govern Assam out of Nagpur. Assam

will be run from Assam only," Rahul Gandhi said. "He (Sarma) takes your land while he is speaking to you. He corners the superi business while you're chewing betel nuts. He has also taken land in Kaziranga National Park," Gandhi claimed. He also took a potshot at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, saying that they have enough hatred in their heart.

Poll manifesto: DMK to seek civil society views

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Jan 24: The DMK Election Manifesto Committee headed by party deputy general secretary and Member of Parliament from Thoothukudi constituency Kanimozhi Karunanidhi will meet various civil society members to finalise their elections manifesto. The committee members will travel across the state from February 5 to February 23 to get the suggestions from members of civil society, NGOs, social activists, professionals and all strata of society. DMK has formed three committees with senior party leaders as mem-

bers to decentralise the preparations for upcoming election polls. The three teams have been given different responsibilities with one team to coordinate and oversee the entire election operations. The second team will be in charge of seat sharing and coordination with allies while the third team will prepare the election manifesto. The election manifesto committee headed by Kanimozhi has TKS Elangovan, AKS Vijayan, Palanivel Thiaga Rajan, TRB Raaja, Govi Chezhian, KRN Rajeshkumar, CVMP Ezhilarasan, MM Abdullah, Ezhilan Naganathan and Chennai Mayor R Priya as members. The DMK team which will over-

see the entire election process includes ministers KN Nehru, RS Bharathi, EV Velu, Thangam Thennarasu and Udhayanidhi Stalin. DMK General Secretary and Tamil Nadu Minister for Water works, S Duraimurugan has announced another team to hold seat-sharing talks with alliance partners. This team will be headed by TR Baalu while senior leaders, KN Nehru, I Periyasamy, K Ponnudiy, A Raja, MRK Panneerselvam and Tiruchi N Siva will be members of this team. The DMK-led alliance won 38 out of 39 seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and is trying to win all the seats again.

Stalin flags arrest of Indian fishermen

TAMIL NADU CM WRITES TO EAM S JAISHANKAR SEEKING DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE SITUATION



Chennai, Jan 24: Expressing concern over the 'disturbing trend' of arrest of Indian fishermen from his state, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin Wednesday urged the Centre to revive a joint working group as there was a 'pressing need' for diplomatic efforts to address the situation.

In a letter to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, released by the state government here Wednesday, the CM flagged the latest arrest of six fishermen from Ramanathapuram district in the state by Sri Lankan Navy along with two fishing boats. The fishermen were arrested January 22. "In recent times, there has

been a disturbing trend of arrests involving Tamil fishermen by the Sri Lankan authorities, creating an alarming situation that demands immediate attention. These arrests not only undermine the traditional fishing rights of the Tamil community but also contribute to a climate of fear and uncertainty among the fishing population," he said.

Such arrests jeopardise these rights, threatening the cultural and economic fabric of the Tamil fishing communities, the CM said. "In light of these concerns, there is a pressing need for diplomatic efforts to address the situation. A revival of the Joint Working Group between India and Sri Lanka focused on fisheries-related issues, could provide a constructive platform for dialogue." "I request you to take the necessary steps through appropriate diplomatic channels to convene the Joint Working Group to sort out the long pending issues between the Indian fishermen and the Sri Lankan Navy so that the arrests of innocent fishermen are avoided," Stalin added.

Bank of India POSSESSION NOTICE

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

(Rule-8(1)) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002

Whereas, the undersigned being the **Authorised Officer of the Bank of India, Jayadev Vihar Branch** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred upon section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the Borrower in the loan account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest & expenses thereon within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the entire amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Symbolic Possession** of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the **Bank of India, Jayadev Vihar Branch** for an amount mentioned below with interest & expenses thereon. **The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets. Amount paid if any after issuance of Demand Notice under SARFAESI Act, would be reckoned for ascertaining the dues payable at the time of realization/settlement.**

JAYADEV VIHAR BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower	Liabilities due as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice/ Date of Possession	Description of the Immovable Properties
Borrower: Mrs. Gayatri Pani, At: Flat No.: 621, 6 th Floor, Rajendra Vihar Apartment, Forest Park, Mouza: Bhimpur, P.S.: New Capital, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, PIN-751001	₹ 35,44,341.89 + interest & expenses thereon	05.10.2023 / 23.01.2024	Equitable mortgage of Flat No.: 621, 6 th Floor, Block-B, SBA-942 sqft. in "RAJENDRA VIHAR" apartment together with proportionate undivided interest in the Land measuring an Area: Ac.0.005.652 Dec. along with Garage Space on the ground floor situated at Mouza: Bhimpur, Thana: Bhubaneswar, P.S. No.: 64, SRO: Bhubaneswar, Tahasil: Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurda, bearing Hal Khata No.: 590, Hal Plot No.: 881, Area: Ac.0.053 Dec., Hal Khata No.: 196, Hal Plot No.: 804(P), Area: Ac.0.560 Dec., Hal Plot No.: 830, Area: Ac.0.878 Dec., Hal Plot No.: 829, Area: Ac.0.056 Dec., Hal Plot No.: 827, Area: Ac.0.011 Dec., Hal Khata No.: 473, Hal Plot No.: 816, Area: Ac.0.086 Dec., Hal Plot No.: 817, Area: Ac.0.027 Dec., Hal Plot No.: 818, Area: Ac.0.136 Dec., Hal Khata No.: 367, Hal Plot No.: 876, Area: Ac.0.280 Dec., Hal Khata No.: 646, Hal Plot No.: 879(P), Area: Ac.0.140 Dec., Hal Khata No.: 669, Hal Plot No.: 815(P), Area: Ac.0.089 Dec., Hal Khata No.: 648, Hal Plot No.: 880, Area: Ac.0.030 Dec., Kissam: Gharabari, Plot is Bounded by North: Plot No.: 804(P), South: Plot No.: 804(P) & 384 (P), East: Block-A, West: Plot No.: 804 (P), Flat is Bounded by North: Flat No.: 623, South: Flat No.: 619, East: Corridor, West: Open Space

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 25.01.2024

Authorised Officer, Bank of India

PACT WITH GOVT ULFA disbanded 44 yrs after formation



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Jan 24: The pro-talk ULFA, which had signed a tripartite agreement December 29 last year, has been formally disbanded 44 years after it was formed, a senior leader of the outfit said. According to a clause of the pact, ULFA shall abjure the path of violence, give up all arms and ammunition and disband the organisation within one month. The tripartite agreement was signed by the central and state governments and the ULFA. The decision to disband the organisation was taken at a meeting of the organisation held in Assam's Darrang district Tuesday, the outfit's General Secretary Anup Chetia told PTI. It was also decided at the meeting to form a seven-member monitoring committee to ensure the implementation of the various clauses of the tripartite agreement, he said. Chetia will be the convenor of the committee. A socio-cultural organisation named 'Asom Jatiya Bikash Mancha' will be formed, which will work towards protecting the cultural and linguistic identity of the society, he said. The members will also soon meet Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to inform him about the outfit being disbanded and also to take forward the implementation of the agreement, Chetia added. A possible organisational set-up for

the rehabilitation of the cadres and to involve them in productive economic activity was also discussed at the meeting, another senior leader Mrinal Hazarika said. The outfit will also have to vacate all the nine designated camps where ULFA cadres and their families were staying after coming for talks in 2011. The arms/ammunition will be handed over to the state government at a formal ceremony later this month. The agreement, signed in New Delhi in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, also included an ex-gratia payment to the cadres, funding of their economic, vocational training and government jobs depending on eligibility along with withdrawal of criminal cases registered against the cadres for non-heinous crimes. The ULFA was formed April 7, 1979, in Sivasagar by a group of 20 youths from Upper Assam districts to establish a sovereign Assam through an armed struggle. The outfit had split in 2011 with the top leadership, including Chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa, returning to Assam from a neighbouring country and agreed to talk without the sovereignty clause and submitted a 12-point charter of demands to the central government. Another faction ULFA (Independent), led by Paresh Barua, remained firm on the demand for sovereignty and is yet to come for talks.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No. eT-M-AMC-ETP-PUI-20-2024

NAME OF WORK : OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF EFFLUENT TREATMENT PLANT AT COACHING DEPOT PURI FOR A PERIOD OF FOUR YEARS.

Advised Value (₹) : 35,61,127.28, EMD (₹) : 71,200.00, Tender Document Cost (₹) : 3,540/-, Period of Completion : 48 Months.

Bidding Start Date : 17.01.2024

Closing Date & Time : At 1300 hrs. of 31.01.2024.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer, (TR), PR-1021/0/23-24, Khurda Road

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No. ELS-ANGL-OT-23-24-09

NAME OF WORK : CLEANING ACTIVITIES AT ELECTRIC LOCO SHED, ANGUL.

Advised Value (₹) : 45,62,314.32, EMD (₹) : 91,300.00, Tender Document Cost (₹) : 3,540/-, Period of Completion : 24 Months.

Bidding Start Date : 01.02.2024.

Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 15.02.2024.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Complete information including e-Tender documents of the above e-Tenders is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRS), PR-1020/0/23-24, Angul

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring the notice of the general public one ID Card of Mr. Tusharkanti Nayak issued by ICICI Bank Ltd. having ID card no.2341596 has been found missing and/or lost on 10.01.2024. Anyone, who finds that said ID card, is requested to return the said ID card to the Manager Debt Services & Management Group, ICICI Bank Limited, Bhubaneswar. Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Limited are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorised person holding the said ID card no. 2341596. Please take further notice that anybody making payment to any person holding the said ID card shall do so at his/her own costs, risk and peril and ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any payment. Date : 16.10.2024 Place : Kendrapada Sd/- For ICICI Bank Limited

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CBC 22201/11/0154/2324



Children carrying Indian flags run near a mustard field ahead of the Republic Day 2024 in Nadia district, West Bengal

PTI



Students take holy bath during a ceremony organised to mark the annual month-long Hindu religious festival of Magh Mela in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

PTI



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during the 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' in Bongaigaon district, Assam

PTI



Devotees participate in the flag hoisting ceremony for the Thaipusam Jyoti Darshan festival at Sathya Jnana Sabhai in Vadalur, Tamil Nadu

PTI



Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump, right, and Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., left, greet young supporters at a campaign stop in Londonderry, Northern Ireland

AP



Border Security Force (BSF) personnel patrol near the India-Bangladesh fencing border ahead of Republic Day celebrations, at Lankamura village in Agartala, Tripura

PTI



A model wears a creation for Franck Sorbier as part of the Haute Couture

AP

national

of the day quote

The state government is positive about the Maratha quota demand. We will take a decision. I appeal to the Maratha community to refrain themselves from staging agitations

The number of AIIMS in the country has increased from six to 23 in the country

The northeast's newfound emotional ties to the rest of the nation, have inspired residents to make even more contributions to the development of the country

SHORT TAKES

Engineer held for 'funding ISIS'

Mumbai: Maharashtra's Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) Wednesday arrested a 32-year-old engineer from Nashik city for allegedly supporting and funding proscribed terror organisation ISIS, an official said.

ED summons Sanjay Raut's brother

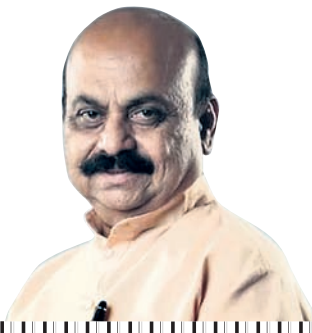
Mumbai: The Enforcement Directorate has summoned Sandeep Raut, the younger brother of Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut, for questioning in a money laundering case linked to the alleged 'khichdi' scam during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Fresh raid at TMC leader's house

Kolkata: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) searched the residence of absconding TMC leader Shahjahan Sheikh in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali Wednesday, 19 days after officials of the central agency were assaulted by a mob there.

SC gets new judge

New Delhi: Karnataka High Court Chief Justice Prasanna B Varale was Wednesday appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court, according to a government notification.



There is a pro-BJP and pro-Modi wave from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. This time the unexpected result is expected from South India in the upcoming parliamentary polls. In Karnataka, BJP will win more than 25 seats

MAMATA SUFFERS INJURY

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee injured her forehead Wednesday, after her car had to suddenly stop to avoid a collision with another vehicle here, a senior official said



Political war to claim Thakur's legacy heats up

Centre's move to name former Bihar Chief Minister, the late Karpoori Thakur, for Bharat Ratna has started a race to claim credit. While Opposition leaders in Bihar have welcomed the announcement, saying their long-standing demand has been fulfilled, the BJP has accused them of selling the legendary leader's legacy for votes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Patna, Jan 24: A day after the government decided to confer Bharat Ratna on Karpoori Thakur, the political fight to claim the socialist stalwart's legacy heated up Wednesday as the BJP lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi for following his ideals while opposition leaders flaunted their work on his agenda and made a fresh pitch for a caste census.

On Thakur's birth centenary, Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and other BJP bigwigs paid rich tributes to the former Bihar chief minister who came from the Extremely Backward Classes, a politically decisive group in his home state, with the Prime Minister calling him an "inspiration" for his government's pro-poor programmes.

The BJP accused opposition parties of not acknowledging Thakur's contribution when they were in power.

Alarmed by the BJP's concerted push to stake claim to the legacy of the leader whom socialist satraps of Bihar have always considered to be a member of their ideological pantheon, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Lalu Prasad-led RJD high-



lighted his influence on their politics and their demand for Bharat Ranta for him while targeting the central government.

The Congress, which was locked in a political rivalry with Thakur at a time when it called the shots in the state's politics and has begun championing the cause of caste census, welcomed the highest civilian honour for him but its leader Rahul Gandhi added that a caste census will be a true tribute to him as the country now needs "real justice" and not "politics of symbolism".

Kumar, who sees himself as a follower of Thakur's legacy, taunted Modi for not informing him about the Bharat Ratna decision even though his government had long demanded it. "I was told by my

brother Ramnath Thakur that the PM called him up. However, he did not bother to call me. I would like to extend my thanks to him, nonetheless, through the media persons present here. I would like to say to him, you may say that you took the step just like that, without taking into account what we did," said Kumar said at an event in Patna to mark Thakur's birth centenary.

Addressing a group of NCC cadets and NSS volunteers in the national capital, Modi was effusive in his praise for Thakur. Lauding the backward leader, Modi said it is necessary for the young generation to know about him and learn lessons from his life. Thakur was born amid extreme poverty and social inequality but rose to become

DGCA slaps AI with ₹1.10 crore penalty

THIS IS THE SECOND TIME IN A WEEK THAT THE REGULATOR HAS PENALISED AIR INDIA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 24: Aviation watchdog DGCA has imposed a penalty of ₹1.10 crore on Air India for safety violations with respect to operations of its leased Boeing 777 planes to the US while the airline said it plans to appeal against the regulator's decision.

The regulator had received a complaint from a former Air India pilot alleging that the airline operated Boeing 777 planes to the US without having the required system of emergency oxygen supply.

A comprehensive investigation into the matter was carried out by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), which also issued a show-cause notice to the airline.

"Since the said operations of the leased aircraft were not in line with regulatory/ OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) performance limits, DGCA has initiated enforcement action and imposed a penalty of ₹1.10 crore on Air India," DGCA said in a release Wednesday.

An Air India spokesperson said, "We disagree with the order issued by the DGCA".

"The issues raised were thoroughly examined by Air India along with external experts concluding that there was no compromise on safety, whatsoever. We are studying the order in detail and will review the op-

According to the release issued by the DGCA, it carried out a detailed probe after receiving a voluntary safety report from an airline employee alleging safety violations of flights operated by Air India on certain long-range terrain critical routes

Since the investigation prima facie revealed non-compliance by the airline, DGCA said a show cause notice was issued to Air India, it added

tions available to us, including our right to appeal as well as taking it up with the regulator," the spokesperson said.

DGCA analysed the airline's response to the show cause notice with respect to the laid down stipulations under the relevant statutory provisions and the performance limits stipulated in critical documentation laid down by the OEM before taking the enforcement action, the release said. On October 29, 2023, the pilot, who had served as a B777 commander, complained about the airline's practice of not carrying the required system of emergency oxygen supply.

At that time, sources had said the complaint was that Air India had been operating flights with leased B777 aircraft that carry a chemically-generated oxygen system which lasts around 12 minutes, and hence should not be used for the airline's direct flights to and from San Francisco.

Govt okays ₹8,500cr for coal, lignite gasification projects

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 24: The government Wednesday approved an outlay of ₹8,500 crore as financial assistance for promoting coal, lignite gasification projects.

The government has also approved setting up of coal-to-SNG (Synthetic Natural Gas) project through a joint venture between Coal India and GAIL at an investment of ₹13,052.81 crore and coal-to-ammonium nitrate project through a joint venture between CIL and BHEL for Rs 11,782.05 crore.

The decision is a significant step as it helps reduce import of chemicals, which can be derived through coal gasification. The Cabinet under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi "approved the scheme for promotion of coal/lignite gasification projects of government PSUs and the private sector with an outlay of ₹8,500 crore towards incentive for coal gasification projects under three categories", the coal ministry said in a statement.

Gyanvapi survey report to be given to both sides: Court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Varanasi, Jan 24: A Varanasi court Wednesday ruled that the ASI report on the Gyanvapi mosque complex survey will be given to both sides while making it clear that the report should not be made public, the counsel for the Hindu litigants said.

District Judge A K Vishvesh said both the Hindu and Muslim parties shall give an affidavit to keep



the report with them and not make it public, said Madan Mohan Yadav, the counsel for Hindu side. Following a July 21 order of the district court, the ASI carried out the scientific survey of the Gyanvapi premises, located next to the Kashi Vishwanath temple here, to determine whether the mosque was constructed over a pre-existing structure of a Hindu temple. The court passed the order on a petition filed by Rakhi Singh and others.



Maratha leader Manoj Jarange Patil leads the Maratha Reservation Front's march at Viman Nagar in Pune, Maharashtra

SNIPPETS

New three-drug regimen for leprosy

New Delhi: The Union Health Ministry has decided to implement a new treatment regimen for leprosy aimed at stopping its transmission at the sub-national level by 2027, three years ahead of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Ministry of Health has decided to introduce a three-drug regimen for Pauci-Bacillary (PB) cases in place of a two-drug regimen for six months, according to the latest globally accepted scientific research studies and evidence-based practices.

Chandigarh mayoral polls Jan 30

Chandigarh: The Punjab and Haryana High Court Wednesday set aside the Chandigarh administration's order postponing the mayoral polls and said the election will be held January 30. The decision came on a petition challenging an order of the Chandigarh deputy commissioner, who is the authority for holding the mayoral polls, postponing the election from January 18 to February 6. As the matter came up for hearing, the division bench of Justice Sudhir Singh and Justice Harsh Banger set aside the Chandigarh administration order, said petitioner's counsel Gurminder Singh.

PM Modi, Macron to hold talks today

New Delhi: Shoring up cooperation in areas of defence and security, trade, climate change, clean energy and mobility of students and professionals is set to be the focus of talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron in Jaipur Thursday. Macron, who will grace the Republic Day celebrations at the Kartavya Path, will kick-start his two-day trip to India from Jaipur where he will visit the Pink City's stunning hilltop fort of Amber, the iconic Hawa Mahal and the astronomical observation site of Jantar Mantar. The French president's visit is taking place as top negotiators from the two sides are looking at finalising two mega defence deals for India's procurement of 26 Rafale-M (marine version) fighter jets and three French-designed Scorpene submarines.

Court disposes of FIR plea against Rahul

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court Wednesday disposed of a petition seeking registration of an FIR against Rahul Gandhi for revealing the identity of an alleged rape victim, after taking note of the submissions by the Congress leader, the city police and social media platform X that the post has been taken down. Advocate Tarannum Cheema, representing Gandhi, told a bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet PS Arora that the tweet was withheld in India and has been taken down internationally. The counsel for social media platform X (formerly known as Twitter), where the tweet was posted, also confirmed that Gandhi deleted the tweet which revealed the identity of the minor Dalit girl who was allegedly raped and murdered before being cremated in haste.

AMU MINORITY STATUS

Education is very important source of cultural power: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 24: The Supreme Court observed Wednesday education is a very important source of cultural power and it cannot be said that a pre-Constitution institution is not entitled to claim right under Article 30 of the Constitution.

Article 30 deals with the right of religious and linguistic minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.

A seven-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud is hearing arguments on the vexed question of the minority status of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU).

The bench observed any institution which fulfils the requirements of Article 30 is entitled to claim the right irrespective of whether it has been established prior to the adoption of the Constitution or after that.

"We cannot say that a pre-Constitution institution is not entitled to claim the right under Article 30 of the Constitution. Obviously they are, so long as they satisfy two yards (yardsticks) namely, established by a minority and two, being administered by a minority," the CJI told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who was arguing for the Centre. Mehta urged the bench to not read the AMU Act, 1920 in the context of Article 30.

"Please do not read the 1920 Act in the context of Article 30. It is at a period of time in history where Article 30 was not there.



The Indian Constitution was not there. There was no concept of minority, there was no concept of fundamental rights..." he argued during the fifth-day of hearing in the matter.

"Really speaking, what your contention boils down to is this, that this is not a denominational institution when the university is established in 1920. Therefore, the subsequent development namely the adoption of the Constitution on January 26, 1950 cannot confer upon it a denominational character for the reason that you had surrendered that denominational character. That is your submission," the CJI told Mehta.

The bench, also comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, Surya Kant, J B Pardiwala, Dipankar

The CJI observed that the government did not want any one institution in India to become so powerful so as to affect the imperial dominion's power

Datta, Manoj Misra and Satish Chandra Sharma, observed that one has to also understand that it (1920) was a period when absolute control vested in the imperial power (the British). "Education is a very important source of cultural power and we have seen it pre-independence and we have seen it post-independence," Justice Chandrachud said. The CJI said the law is not that one can claim the right under Article 30 only if an institution has been established after 1950. During the hearing, the bench also asked whether non-Muslims were appointed as vice-chancellor or pro-vice chancellor of AMU since 1920. Mehta said he is being told that four non-Muslims were appointed.

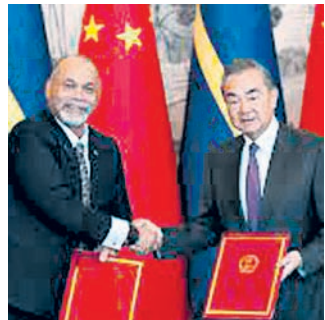
international



Trump represents uncertainty. We don't know exactly what he is going to do JUSTIN TRUDEAU | PM, CANADA

CHINA, NAURU RESTORE TIES

China and Nauru formally restored diplomatic relations Wednesday after the tiny Pacific island nation cut its ties with Taiwan earlier this month, in a further move by Beijing to isolate Taipei's democratic government



of the day quote

The right of the Palestinian people to build their own fully independent state must be recognised by all, and a refusal to accept the two-state solution by any party must be firmly rejected

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES | SECRETARY-GENERAL, UN

The ongoing conflict is also impacting the safety of maritime commercial traffic in the Indian Ocean, including some attacks in the vicinity of India

R RAVINDRA | DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA TO THE UN

China calls for a halt to the harassment and attacks on civilian ships and urges all relevant parties to avoid fanning flames in the area and jointly ensure the safety and security of the route in the Red Sea

WANG WENBIN | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, CHINA

SHORT TAKES

China fires kill 39

Beijing: At least 39 people were killed in a building fire in east China's Jiangxi province Wednesday. The fire broke out at approximately 3 pm from a street shop in the Yushui district of Xinyu, the local fire response emergency headquarters was quoted as saying by the state-run Xinhua news agency. Rescue efforts have ended, it said. Chinese President Xi Jinping has ordered steps to curb repeated occurrence of safety accidents, the report said.

PIO couple convicted

Washington: An Indian-origin Sikh couple has been found guilty of exploiting their cousin by compelling him to work extended hours at their store, subjecting him to physical abuse, threats, and confiscating his immigration documents, a US attorney has said. Harmanpreet Singh, 30, and Kulbir Kaur, 43, were found guilty of conspiracy to commit forced labour and other charges after the pair forced the victim, Singh's cousin, to work at Singh's North Chesterfield convenience store for little pay, the Department of Justice said in a statement Monday. According to court documents, the victim — who was a minor at the time — came to the US in 2018 after the couple promised to help him enrol in school. After arriving, Singh and Kaur took the boy's immigration documents and immediately put him to work, prosecutors said.

Trains at standstill

Berlin: Germany's train drivers brought rail traffic to a standstill again early Wednesday when they began a six-day strike to push their demands in a rancorous dispute with the country's main railway operator over working hours and pay. The strike by the GDJ union will affect passenger services and freight trains operated by state-owned Deutsche Bahn until 6 pm Monday. The union held a three-day strike earlier this month and two walkouts last year which lasted up to 24 hours.

Reunification arch

Seoul: North Korea appears to have torn down a huge arch in its capital that symbolized reconciliation with South Korea, a week after leader Kim Jong Un dismissed decades of hopes for peaceful reunification with the war-divided peninsula's south, according to satellite photos analyzed by The Associated Press Wednesday. South Korea's military also said Wednesday that North Korea fired several cruise missiles into waters off its western coast.

IN RUSSIA, A MUTINY ARISES

ANTI-WAR CANDIDATE TRIES TO HARNESS PROTEST VOTE AGAINST PUTIN

REUTERS

Moscow, Jan 24: Boris Nadezhdin, a 60-year-old former opposition lawmaker, is running a long-shot campaign to challenge Vladimir Putin for the Russian presidency and says his call to end Russia's war in Ukraine has put rocket boosters under his bid.

Nadezhdin, who sometimes appears on state TV where he criticises the authorities before being swiftly drowned out by TV anchors, must collect 100,000 signatures across Russia by the end of January to be registered as a candidate.

His supporters say he has already passed the 100,000 mark, garnering considerable support in Moscow and St Petersburg, but still needs more from other parts of Russia as the signatures need to be spread across at least 40 regions of the world's largest country.

Nadezhdin said he was confident of being registered and had been surprised by how his call to end Russia's war in Ukraine had prompted people to queue up in the depths of the Russian winter and abroad to give their signature in his support.

"It (opposition to the war) is huge. People are tired of all this. They want to live a normal life in a normal country, they don't want what is happening," he told Reuters in an interview.

"People are putting their signature not because they really like me but simply because it's a chance to do something for peace, for this whole story to end, and for people to stop dying," said Nadezhdin, who seemed remarkably relaxed for a man challenging the Kremlin's formidable political machine.

TIGHT CONTROL



I want to change the country. I want Russia to be a peaceful, free country

BORIS NADEZHDIR | FORMER OPPOSITION LAWMAKER, RUSSIA

In Russia's tightly controlled political system, people have run against Putin in the past and portrayed themselves as genuine opponents, only to disclose years later that they were doing so as part of an agreement with the authorities to make up the numbers.

The Kremlin says the March 15-17 election is a bona fide political contest and that Putin, who enjoys an approval rating of around 80%, is genuinely popular.

Putin, who has chosen to run as an independent rather than as the candidate of the ruling United Russia party, has already collected over three million signatures, more than 10 times the 300,000 he needs, say his supporters.

The Kremlin also says that most Russians support what it calls Moscow's "special military operation" in Ukraine.

State TV has worked around the clock for nearly two years telling voters that the conflict is an existential struggle with the West for a new world order.

The outcome of the election is not in doubt. Putin, in power as either president or prime minister for more than two decades and in control of all the state's levers, is set to win another six-year term in a contest critics say is a crude imitation of democracy.

There are currently 11 presidential candidates. Critics say the Kremlin needs people like Nadezhdin to provide a semblance of competition even if the outcome is a foregone conclusion.

Asked Wednesday if Nadezhdin posed a political threat to Putin, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "Not at all, we don't see him as a rival. Any citizen has the right to run for president if they meet a number of conditions."

If Nadezhdin is allowed to run and garners a small percentage of the vote, the Kremlin will be able to point to how weak opposition to the Ukraine war is. He is also a useful focal point to allow war critics - including

RUSSIA TO HOLD PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION MARCH 15-17
PUTIN, IN POWER SINCE 1999, SET TO WIN ANOTHER SIX-YEAR TERM
CANDIDATE NADEZHDIR WINNING SUPPORT OF RUSSIANS OPPOSED TO WAR
NADEZHDIR SAYS RUSSIANS ARE 'TIRED' OF WAR, WANT 'NORMAL LIFE'
SOME CRITICS SAY HIS CANDIDACY SUITS KREMLIN FOR PR REASONS

some of the wives of mobilised soldiers - to let off steam, those same critics say.

Many opponents of the war have fled Russia or have been fined or imprisoned under tough laws which mandate long jail terms for anyone convicted of spreading "fake news" about the Russian army.

Nadezhdin said he was careful.

"I'm not trying to break the law or calling for unrest. I'm acting in accordance with the law. I can't see how they can't register me," he said.

He said his only funding came from grassroots supporters and joked about how he'd taken some modest measures to safeguard his personal security. But he also spoke about his electoral chances in a way that few in modern Russia would dare.

"Did you see queues outside the Putin HQ, did you see crowds standing in the frost saying they wanted to give their signature for Putin? It didn't happen," he said. "It seems to me, after we got this campaign going, that Putin himself isn't very sure about that (victory)."

Turkey Parl approves Sweden's NATO bid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ankara, Jan 24: Turkish legislators Tuesday endorsed Sweden's membership in NATO, lifting a major hurdle on the previously nonaligned country's entry into the military alliance.

The legislators ratified Sweden's accession protocol by 287 votes to 55, with four abstentions. The ratification will come into effect after its publication in the Official Gazette, which is expected to be swift.

"Today we are one step closer to becoming a full member of NATO," Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson wrote on X.

Hungary becomes the only NATO ally not to have ratified Sweden's accession.

'Dior bag scandal' hits SK's Prez

Ruling party in disarray ahead of polls

REUTERS

Seoul, Jan 24: Hidden camera footage appearing to show South Korea's First Lady accepting a Dior bag as a gift has plunged President Yoon Suk Yeol and his party into a controversy that may threaten their bid to reclaim a parliamentary majority in April's election.

Some members of Yoon's conservative People Power Party (PPP) have urged the president and his wife, Kim Keon Hee, to apologise for the incident dubbed by local media "Dior bag scandal" and admit receiving the purse was, at least, inappropriate, in the hope of putting the



matter to rest. Yoon's office said it had no information to share.

By opting to remain silent and, at the weekend, pushing for the party leader to resign due to a disagreement over some members' stance, Yoon risks creating a flash point that could end up costing PPP the April 10 election, analysts say.

"It is a political bombshell," said Rhee Jong-hoon, a political analyst. "The Kim Keon Hee risks are only going to get bigger."

'Doomsday Clock' kept as close to midnight as ever

AMID HIGH RISK OF GLOBAL CATASTROPHES, ATOMIC SCIENTISTS KEEP THE DOOMSDAY CLOCK AT 90 SECONDS TO MIDNIGHT

REUTERS

Washington, Jan 24: Atomic scientists Tuesday kept their "Doomsday Clock" set as close to midnight as ever before, citing Russia's actions on nuclear weapons amid its invasion of Ukraine, nuclear-armed Israel's Gaza war and worsening climate change as factors driving the risk of global catastrophe.

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, as they did last year, set the clock at 90 seconds to midnight - the theoretical point of annihilation. Scientists set the clock based on "existential" risks to Earth and its people: nuclear threats, climate change and disruptive technologies such as artificial intelligence and new biotechnology.

"Conflict hot spots around the world carry the threat of nuclear escalation, climate change is already causing death and destruction, and disruptive technologies like AI and biological

research advance faster than their safeguards," Rachel Bronson, the Bulletin's president and CEO, told Reuters, adding that keeping the clock unchanged from the prior year is "not an indication that the world is stable."

The Chicago-based nonprofit created the clock in 1947 during the Cold War tensions that followed World War Two to warn the public about how close humankind was to destroying the world. It said on Tuesday that ominous trends continue to point toward catastrophe, including the fact that China, Russia and the United States all are spending large amounts of money to expand or modernize their nuclear arsenals, boosting the risk of nuclear war through mistake or miscalculation.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine, set to reach its second anniversary next month, has escalated tensions with the



West to their most dangerous levels since the Cold War.

"A durable end to Russia's war in Ukraine seems distant, and the use of nuclear weapons by Russia in that conflict remains a serious possibility. In the past year Russia has sent numerous worrying nuclear signals," Bronson said.

Bronson cited Russian President Vladimir Putin's February 2023 decision to suspend Russian participation in

the new START treaty with the United States that limited the strategic nuclear arsenals of the two countries. The United States and Russia together hold nearly 90% of the world's nuclear warheads, enough to destroy the planet many times over.

Bronson additionally cited Putin's March 2023 announcement of Russia's deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus and the Russian parliament's October

US PREZ POLLS

Trump closer to fight Biden



TRUMP CRUISES TO NEW HAMPSHIRE WIN, HALEY VOWS TO FIGHT ON TO SOUTH CAROLINA

REUTERS

Manchester, Jan 24: Donald Trump cruised to victory in New Hampshire's Republican presidential contest Tuesday, marching closer to a November rematch with Democratic President Joe Biden even as his sole remaining rival for the nomination, Nikki Haley, vowed to soldier on.

"This race is far from over," Haley, a former UN ambassador, told supporters at a post-election party in Concord, challenging Trump to debate her.

"I'm a fighter. And I'm scrappy. And now we're the last one standing next to Donald Trump."

At his own party in Nashua, Trump, 77, opened his speech by mocking Haley, 52, calling her an "imposter" and saying: "She's doing, like, a speech like she won. She didn't win. She lost ... She had a very bad night."

The former president's remarks followed a series of angry posts on his Truth Social app, denouncing her as "DELU-SIONAL."

The next competitive contest is scheduled for February 24 in South Carolina, where Haley was born and served two terms as governor.

Trump has racked up endorsements from most of the state's Republican figures, and opinion polls show him with a wide lead there.

In New Hampshire, with 86% of the expected vote tallied, according to Edison Research, Trump held a comfortable 54.4%

to 43.5% lead. Haley had hoped the northeastern state's sizable cadre of independent voters would carry her to an upset win that might loosen Trump's iron grip on the Republican Party.

Instead, Trump became the first Republican to sweep competitive votes in both Iowa and New Hampshire since 1976, when the two states cemented their status as the first nominating contests.

The result will likely bolster some Republicans' calls for Haley to drop out so the party can coalesce behind Trump.

Her campaign vowed in a memo earlier Tuesday to push forward until "Super Tuesday" March 5, when Republicans in 15 states and one territory vote.

ONE-ON-ONE

Tuesday's vote was the first one-on-one matchup between Trump and Haley, after Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, once seen as Trump's most formidable challenger, dropped out Sunday and endorsed Trump.

Meanwhile, Edison projected Biden, 81, the winner of the New Hampshire Democratic primary, brushing aside challenger, US Representative Dean Phillips.

Despite Trump's win Tuesday, exit polls hinted at his potential vulnerabilities in a general election campaign.

Trump faces 91 criminal charges for a range of offenses, including his efforts to overturn his 2020 defeat and his retention of classified documents after leaving the White House in 2021. He has denied any wrongdoing and claimed to be a victim of political persecution.

About 42% of voters who participated in the Republican primary said he would not be fit to serve if convicted in court, according to exit polling by Edison.

Traditional nuclear arms control has come to an end for now even as a three-way nuclear arms race is shaping up among China, Russia and the United States. The picture is quite bleak on the nuclear side this year

ALEXANDER GLASER | MEMBER, DOOMSDAY CLOCK BOARD OF EXPERTS

2023 passage of a law withdrawing ratification of the global treaty banning nuclear weapons tests. Russian analyst Sergei Karaganov last year also spoke of the need to threaten nuclear strikes in Europe in order to intimidate and "sober up" Moscow's enemies.

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

Israel has been at war with Hamas since the Palestinian Islamist group, based in Gaza, launched attacks in southern Israel in October 2023.

"As a nuclear state, Israel's actions are clearly relevant to the Doomsday Clock discussion. Of particular worry is that the conflict might escalate more broadly in the region creating a larger

conventional war and drawing in more nuclear powers or near-nuclear powers," Bronson said.

CLIMATE CATASTROPHE

Climate change was added as a factor in setting the clock in 2007.

"The world in 2023 entered into uncharted territory as it suffered its hottest year on record and global greenhouse gas emissions continued to rise," Bronson said. "Both global and North Atlantic sea-surface temperatures broke records, and Antarctic sea ice reached its lowest daily extent since the advent of satellite data."

Bronson said that while 2023 was a record-breaking year for clean energy with \$1.7 trillion in new investments, fossil fuel investments totaled nearly \$1 trillion. Bronson called current efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions "grossly insufficient to avoid dangerous human and economic impacts from climate change, which disproportionately affect the poorest people in the world."

The Bulletin was founded in 1945 by scientists including Albert Einstein and J Robert Oppenheimer.

business

of the day quote

As per our ministry's vision 2047 document, in the next 25 years, the percentage of scrap will be 50 per cent along with the balance 50 per cent as iron ore



JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | UNION MINISTER

Our expectation is for enabling a more liberal FDI (foreign direct investment) policy in the space sector. As of now, even one per cent of FDI has to go through the government approval route and that takes months and months



AWAIS AHMED | FOUNDER AND CEO, PIXCEL

France, as India's eighth largest trading partner, aims to strengthen trade and investment ties. Both countries are negotiating an FTA (India-EU FTA) to further expand the relationship



AJAY SRIVASTAVA | CO-FOUNDER, GTRI

Q3 RESULTS

IOC profit soars

New Delhi: Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) Wednesday reported a massive jump in its third quarter net profit as compared to the year-ago period when it was financially struggling as input raw material crude oil prices spiked but retail finished product prices remained on freeze. Standalone net profit of Rs 8,063.39 crore in October-December 2023-24 was higher than Rs 448.01 crore profit in the same period a year ago but lower than Rs 12,967.32 crore earnings in the preceding three months ended September 30, 2023.

Hitachi rises 400%

New Delhi: Hitachi Energy India posted a multi-fold jump in its net profit at Rs 23 crore for the quarter ended December 31, 2023 on higher revenues. "Profit after tax (net profit) was at Rs 23 crore (in October-December 2023), clocking a recovery of 400 per cent year-on-year on a low base," a company statement said.

Indian Bank shines

New Delhi: The public sector Indian Bank Wednesday reported a 52 per cent jump in net profit at Rs 2,119 crore in the December quarter, on the back of improvements in core income and a reduction in bad loans. The Chennai-based lender had earned a net profit of Rs 1,396 crore in the same quarter a year ago.

Canara net jumps

Mumbai: State-owned Canara Bank Wednesday reported a healthy set of numbers with net income rising nearly 27 per cent to Rs 3,659 crore in the December 2023 quarter, boosted by lower credit cost and higher interest income. The Bangalore-based lender's net interest income exceeded the target and rose by 9.50 per cent to Rs 9,417 crore.

Tech Mahindra falls

Mumbai: Tech Mahindra Wednesday reported a 60 per cent decline in net profit at Rs 510.4 crore in the three months ended December 2023. The Mahindra group company had reported a net profit of Rs 1,296.6 crore in the year-ago period while the same was at Rs 493.9 crore in the quarter-ago period.

UCO profit plunges

Kolkata: UCO Bank Wednesday reported 23 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 505 crore for December quarter 2023-24, attributable to higher provisions for wage revision.



Agriculture and rural segments should be a key priority to drive inclusive growth in the interim Budget
CHANDRAJIT BANERJEE | DIRECTOR GENERAL, CII

FORBES GLOBAL ENTERS INDIA

US-based Forbes Global Properties Wednesday announced its foray into the Indian real estate market to offer brokerage services for luxury homes and also build two projects covering 10 million square feet in Mumbai and Delhi in tie-up with landowners



Firms get nod to list directly on GIFT IFSC

International stock exchanges at GIFT-IFSC - India International Exchange and NSE International Exchange - have been prescribed as permitted stock exchanges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 24: In a significant move, the government Wednesday permitted the direct listing of securities by Indian companies on international exchanges of GIFT IFSC to boost foreign investments.

The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) in the Ministry of Finance has amended Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) Rules and notified the 'Direct Listing of Equity Shares of Companies Incorporated in India on International Exchanges Scheme'.

Also, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has issued Companies (Listing of Equity Shares in Permissible Jurisdictions) Rules, 2024.

On July 28 last year, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made an announcement regarding the direct listing of Indian Companies at GIFT-IFSC exchanges in the first phase.

"These, together, provide an overarching regulatory framework to enable public Indian companies to issue and list their shares in permitted international exchanges," the finance ministry said in a statement.

At present, the framework allows unlisted public Indian companies to list their shares on an international exchange.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) is in the process of issuing operational guidelines for listed public Indian companies.

International stock exchanges at GIFT-IFSC - India International Exchange and NSE International Exchange - have been prescribed



THE INITIATIVE WILL BOOST FOREIGN INVESTMENT FLOWS, UNLOCK GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES AND BROADEN THE INVESTOR BASE FOR INDIAN COMPANIES

as permitted stock exchanges.

These exchanges are under the regulatory supervision of the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA).

This policy initiative to enable the listing of Indian companies in GIFT IFSC will reshape the Indian capital market landscape and offers Indian companies, especially start-ups and firms in the sunrise and technology sectors, an alternative avenue to access global capital beyond the domestic exchanges, the statement said.

"This is expected to lead to better valuation of Indian companies in line with global standards of scale and performance, boost foreign investment flows, unlock growth opportunities and broaden the investor base," it added.

The public Indian companies will have the flexibility to access both markets - the domestic market for raising capital in INR and the international market at IFSC for raising capital in foreign currency from global investors, it noted.

This initiative will particu-

larly benefit Indian companies going global and having ambitions to look at opportunities for expanding their presence in other markets, it said, adding that it is also expected to provide a boost to the capital market ecosystem at GIFT IFSC by provision of new investment opportunities for investors, diversification of financial products and by enhancing liquidity.

The enabling provisions of the Companies (Amendment) Act, 2020, were accordingly brought into force with effect from October 30, 2023.

The government November 1 permitted Indian companies to list on foreign exchanges, subject to certain conditions. Subsequently, the corporate affairs ministry notified the relevant section under the company's law in this regard.

Currently, overseas listings by local listed entities are carried out through American Depository Receipts (ADRs) and Global Depository Receipts (GDRs).

The rules for direct overseas listing of Indian companies are yet to be notified.

Zee moves NCLT against Sony for calling off merger

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 24: Two days after the termination of the merger agreement by Sony Group, Zee Entertainment Wednesday hit back by filing a petition before the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), seeking a direction to implement the merger scheme.

Besides, it has also initiated appropriate legal actions to contest the claims of USD 90 million (Rs 748.5 crore) filed by Sony Group before the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC), according to a regulatory update by Zee Entertainment Enterprise Ltd (ZEEL).

It asserted that Sony Group firm Culver Max and BEPL (Bangla Entertainment Pvt Ltd), which were to be merged with ZEEL, "are in default of their obligations to give effect to" and implement the scheme of merger that was sanctioned by the NCLT.

"The Company approached the NCLT, Mumbai bench, inter alia seeking directions to implement the merger scheme," ZEEL said.

The NCLT August 10, 2023, approved the scheme of merger of ZEEL with Sony group entities Culver Max Entertainment (earlier known as Sony Pictures Networks India) and BEPL.

"The Company has called upon Culver Max and BEPL to immediately withdraw the termination and confirm that they will perform their obligations to give effect to and implement the Merger Scheme, sanctioned by the NCLT," it noted.

Moreover, the Chandra family-promoted media entity has refuted all allegations of Sony Group of breach of the merger agreement and said the termination fee claimed by the Japanese firm is "legally untenable" and has no basis whatsoever.

It is "evaluating all available options" and basis the guidance received from its board, said a regulatory filing from Zee Entertainment Enterprise.

Markets rebound 1%; Sensex reclaims 71k

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 24: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded sharply by 1 per cent Wednesday after sliding for the past two sessions, propelled by bargain hunting in metal, commodity and telecom stocks.

Trading through a patchy track in the opening session, the 30-share BSE Sensex gradually gained ground and jumped 689.76 points, or 0.98 per cent, to settle at 71,060.31. The benchmark moved between an intra-day high of 71,149.61 and a low of 70,001.60.

The broader NSE Nifty also closed 215.15 points or 1.01 per cent higher at 21,453.95.

Among the Sensex firms, major winners included Tata Steel, rising 3.77 per cent, followed by HCL Tech, which gained 3.62 per cent.

IndusInd Bank and PowerGrid closed with a gain of 3.60 and 3.34 per cent, respectively. Other gainers were Tech Mahindra, Hindustan Unilever, Bajaj Finserv and Bharti Airtel, among others.

On the other hand, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, Asian Paints, Bajaj Finance and TCS were the only laggards, sliding up to 2.94 per cent.

A total of 25 stocks of the 30-share benchmark settled in green, while 43 constituents of the NSE Nifty witnessed gains.

"The market rebounded from yesterday's sell-off taking cues from global peers. The sentiment was reinforced by the PBOC's 0.5 per cent cut in reserve ratio to boost growth and financial liquidity. However, overall sentiment is muted as concerns persist on FIIs selling due to premium valuations in India and below expectation Q3 earnings so far," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

The BSE Midcap rose 1.71 per cent to settle at 37,884.28, while the smallcap index rose 1.72 per cent to 44,124.36.



Among sectoral indices, telecommunications and metal rose by 3.57 per cent and 3.21 per cent, respectively. While commodities rose 2.06 per cent, oil & gas went up 2.17 per cent and energy increased by 1.95 per cent. The banking sector index was the only laggard, falling marginally by 0.18 per cent.

Meanwhile, Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, were trading higher by 0.58 per cent to \$80.01 per barrel Wednesday.

On Tuesday, Sensex fell 1,053.10 points or 1.47 per cent to settle at 70,370.55. Nifty also declined 330.15 points or 1.53 per cent to close at 21,241.65.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets Tuesday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 3,115.39 crore, according to exchange data.

NEW DISCLOSURE NORMS
As per sources, market regulator Sebi does not expect a large number of foreign portfolio investors to be impacted by the new beneficial ownership disclosure norms.

Norms are set to come into effect from February 1, and against this backdrop, the equity market has witnessed significant volatility, with the benchmark Sensex crashing over 1,000 points Tuesday.

In the past four trading days alone, FPIs have sold shares worth over Rs 27,000 crore after pumping huge money that had also pushed the market indices to record highs.

SBI Foundation flags off 'SBI Sanjeevani'



BIZ BUZZ

BHUBANESWAR: Managing Director of SBI Foundation, Sanjay Prakash, flagged off 'SBI Sanjeevani', a mobile medical unit in Bhubaneswar today. The initiative is part of the CSR activities under the Foundation's flagship program 'Gram Seva', being implemented in partnership with 'Gram Vikas', a non-profit organization. The Sanjeevani initiative aims to provide primary healthcare services at the doorsteps of rural communities in the Kalahandi district. The mobile medical unit will have a dedicated medical team comprising of qualified nurse and support staff. The unit will reach the remote villages on a regular basis and organise camps for providing primary healthcare services. Speaking at the event, Prakash said "SBI Foundation has always strived to contribute towards building a strong and developed rural India. Gram Seva is our key program in this direction, which is aimed towards bringing holistic development in the remote villages across the country. Today, I am much delighted to flag off the mobile medical unit that is set to cater the primary healthcare needs of the rural communities in Kalahandi District". Liby Johnson, Executive Director of Gram Vikas, highlighted, "This initiative will significantly benefit rural communities residing in the distant and remote areas of the district by addressing their primary healthcare needs regularly."

Firms to submit bank details to GST officers within 30 days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 24: Businesses will be required to submit valid bank account details to GST authorities within 30 days of grant of GST registration to avoid suspension, the GST Network has said.

In an advisory to GST-registered businesses, GSTN said all registered taxpayers are required under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) law to furnish details of their bank account/s within 30 days of the grant of registration or before the due date of filing GSTR-1/IFF, whichever is earlier.

GSTR-1 filed by a company contains statement of outward supplies, while Invoice Furnishing Facility (IFF) can be availed by businesses opting for Quarterly Returns with Monthly Payment (QRMP) scheme under GST.

Bank liquidity deficit at record high

The deficit widened to ₹3.34 trillion as January 23, nearly tripling from the start of the month

REUTERS

Mumbai, Jan 24: India's banking system liquidity deficit hit a record high, data showed Wednesday, amid outflows towards tax payments and limited government spending, with traders anticipating that the central bank will infuse more cash to address the shortfall.

The deficit widened to Rs 3.34 trillion as January 23, nearly tripling from the start of the month, data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed.

"The widening in deficit is a combination of rise in tax collections and a slowdown in government spending, which has been seen in the last few months," said A Prasanna, head of research at ICICI Securities



We think the RBI will keep liquidity in deficit mode in the near term, but keep reducing the size of deficit steadily going forward. We believe that easing liquidity conditions towards neutral would be interpreted as a precursor to rate cuts
PARUL MITTAL SINHA | HEAD OF FINANCIAL MARKETS, STANDARD CHARTERED BANK

Primary Dealership. Indian lenders have urged the RBI to ease liquidity conditions as overnight cash rates have

India to become main driver of incremental oil use by '30

AFTER CHINA, INDIA IS ALREADY THE SECOND-MOST IMPORTANT DRIVER OF INCREMENTAL CONSUMPTION IN THE WORLD

REUTERS

Mumbai, Jan 24: India's petroleum consumption climbed to a new record last year and the country is on course to overtake China as the primary driver of incremental oil consumption before 2030.

Urbanisation, industrialisation and the growth of the middle class are driving a rapid increase in consumption of petroleum products for heating, lighting, cooking, transportation and petrochemicals.

China's demand for transportation is increasingly satisfied by electric vehicles, but India's is still mostly met by internal combustion engines owing

to their greater affordability. While China's oil consumption is expected to peak before the end of the decade and start to fall, India's will continue increasing throughout the 2030s.

India is already the second-most important driver of incremental consumption in the world and is on course to take the top spot before 2030.

The country's economic growth will become a primary driver of global consumption and prices and a focus for analysis and forecasts.

India's petroleum consumption increased to 231 million tonne in 2023, up from 219 million tonne in 2022, according to the Ministry of Petroleum and



Natural Gas.

Consumption was severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic but has mostly recovered.

It was only 6 million tonne below the pre-pandemic trend for 2015-2019 last year.

India and China both experi-

enced compound annual growth in consumption of around 3.5% between 2012 and 2022, compared with just 0.5% per year in the rest of the world ("Statistical review of world energy", Energy Institute, 2023).

China's consumption started the 2010s almost three times larger than India's, so similar percentage growth rates have translated into much larger absolute increases in the number of tonne used.

As China's rapid deployment of electric vehicles curbs further consumption growth, India's absolute increases will draw level and then take the lead later this decade.

India's share of global oil con-

sumption already rose to more than 5% in 2022, up from 4% in 2021 and 3% in 2020.

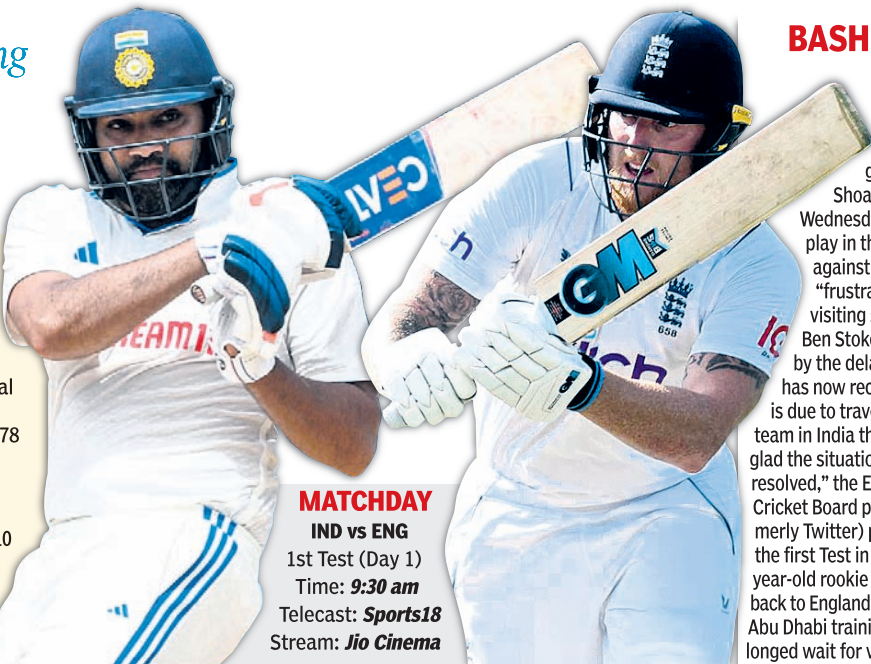
By 2030, India's crude oil imports and fuel consumption will command almost as much attention from analysts as China's did a decade ago.

India's petroleum consumption increased by more than 5% last year, above the average for the previous decade. But rapid growth in the first nine months of the year faded during the fourth quarter, which is one reason why oil prices slumped towards the end of 2023.

India's impact on the oil market last year is a foretaste of the much bigger effect it will have before the current decade is over.

Spinball vs Bazball

India look for winning start when they face England in five-Test series starting today



BASHIR FINALLY GETS VISA

England's Pakistan-origin off-spinner Shoab Bashir was Wednesday granted visa to play in the Test series against India, ending a "frustrating" wait for the visiting side whose captain Ben Stokes felt "devastated" by the delay. "Shoab Bashir has now received his visa, and is due to travel to join up with the team in India this weekend. We're glad the situation has now been resolved," the England and Wales Cricket Board posted on its X (formerly Twitter) page on the eve of the first Test in Hyderabad. The 20-year-old rookie was forced to head back to England from the team's Abu Dhabi training base after a prolonged wait for visa. His family is of Pakistani heritage but Bashir was born in Surrey. The delay snowballed into a major controversy with a British government spokesperson demanding "fair" treatment for the youngster and Stokes hardly mincing words in expressing his outrage.

MATCHDAY

IND vs ENG
1st Test (Day 1)
Time: 9:30 am
Telecast: Sports18
Stream: Jio Cinema

HEAD TO HEAD IN INDIA
64 Tests played between India and England, with the hosts winning 22 compared to the visitors' 14, while 28 ending in draws
759/7d Highest innings total for India (Chennai, 2016), while England's highest being 578 (Chennai, 2021)
81 Lowest innings total for England (Ahmedabad, 2021), while India's lowest being 142 (Mumbai, 2012) since 2010

India will miss the services of Virat Kohli for the first two Tests owing to personal reasons. Rajat Patidar has replaced Kohli in the squad

You need to be very clear in your mind, you need to have a game plan when you're playing in these conditions, and then back that plan. Then you need to understand your own strengths because all of us have grown up playing in these types of conditions. It's just about handling that pressure of playing a Test match. You stick to your own strengths, stick to your plan, and then go out and do that fearlessly

ROHIT SHARMA

I think any team that comes to India, it's always a tough challenge. We respect that as a team as well. But that presents us with an opportunity. This team loves opportunities. We sort of take every opportunity head on and we run towards it. We don't back away from anything. But yeah, India is an incredibly hard place to come and win a game cricket

BEN STOKES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, Jan 24: India's unalloyed dominance at home over the last 12 years will be put through its most unique examination till date when Rohit Sharma's side faces a trend-defying England in the first match of what promises to be a stirring five-Test series from Thursday.
No team have been as invincible as India at home since their 1-2 defeat against the Three Lions led by Alastair Cook in 2012, stitching together a bull run of 16 successive series wins, including seven series sweeps.
If one further breaks down the stats, India have lost just three Tests out of 44 they played in their own backyard in this phase, and this is a power walk even beyond the all-conquering West Indies in the '80s or Australia of the turn of the century.
Several factors have contributed to this astonishing run over the

last decade, including favourable pitches, bowlers who knew how to exploit those tracks and batters who churned out runs like popcorn from a vending machine.
But two players have stood head and shoulders above the rest in these conquests - off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin and left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja. From Thursday, the Ash-Jaddu duet will be on show here at the RGI Stadium, where the pitch is expected to turn and grip as the match moves towards its conclusion.
England already have a taste of what these two can do from their past visits here, and they will be worried, particularly about Ashwin.
The 37-year-old still retains the burning zest of a 17-year-old to keep improving his craft and since 2012, Ashwin has grabbed 283 wickets from 46 Tests averaging a shade over 19. Jadeja might often get viewed

as a supporting act to Ashwin, but in his own right, the Saurashtra man is a potent threat, and his deliveries that dart on straight could confuse the batters on a turner.
Jadeja has taken 191 wickets from 39 Tests in the period where Ashwin kicked up a bedlam in opposition ranks to ensure that they don't get breathing space from both the ends. Together, they have bagged 500 wickets at an average of 21.
In all likelihood, India will also include a third spinner to the combination in the form of either Axar Patel or Kuldeep Yadav, with the former having a better chance at the moment.
England will be aware that no amount of preparation involving scuffing up pitches some 1600 miles away in Abu Dhabi will be enough to tackle this real menace, and in that sense, they will also need to tame the demons inside their own minds.

India is a tall hurdle for the 'Bazball-ing' England to cross over. Of course, they have won a Test series in Pakistan 3-0 in late 2022 but a set of proven match-winners offer the visitors a far tougher challenge here.
But this is not to say that England are totally incapable of pulling off a miracle. Under Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum, they have been able to dish out a really fascinating brand of cricket.
England, perhaps showing respect to the conditions, opted for three spinners led by left-arm Jack Leach. Another left-arm in Tom Hartley will make his debut with Rehan Ahmed providing the leg-spin option.
But Test cricket is a strange and unpredictable beast and it has a history of producing some truly extraordinary spectacles. Will Hyderabad offer one or will it be an all too familiar Indian romp? The wait is on.

Mixed fortunes for Indian shuttlers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jakarta, Jan 24: Lakshya Sen and Kiran George advanced to the second round but HS Prannoy and Kidambi Srikanth made early exits after suffering narrow losses in their respective opening matches at the Indonesia Masters Super 500 badminton tournament here Wednesday.
World No.19 Sen, who is looking to qualify for the Paris Olympics, avenged his Malaysia Open first-round loss to China's Weng Hong Yang with a 24-22, 21-15 win in his opening round match here.
The 23-year-old George, who had won Super 100 titles at 2022

Odisha Open and 2023 Denmark Masters, bounced back from an opening game reversal to eke out a 18-21, 21-16, 21-19 win over France's Toma Junior Popov in another opening round match. George had qualified for the main draw after registering twin wins Tuesday.
Sen will now face either Malaysia Open champion Anders Antonsen of Denmark or Indonesia's Chico Aura Dwi Wardoyo in the next round, while George will be pitted against China's Lu Guang Zu.
However, World No.8 Prannoy, who had reached the semifinals at India Open Super 750 last week, lost to former World

Champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore 18-21, 21-19, 10-21 in his opening round match. The 31-year-old Indian had lost in the first round at the Malaysia Open Super 1000 tournament as well.
For former World No.1 Srikanth, it was yet another day when he had to return empty handed despite putting up a brave effort against Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia, ranked 10th. Srikanth, who is racing against time to qualify for Paris, squandered an opening game advantage to lose 21-19, 14-21, 11-21 to Lee in a 54-minute clash to bow out of tournament. It was his second successive first-round loss of the season.

Zverev ousts Alcaraz to march into semis, Medvedev up next

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Melbourne, Jan 24: Alexander Zverev made no mistake with his second chance to close out a win over No.2-ranked Carlos Alcaraz Wednesday night and moved into an Australian Open semifinal against two-time finalist Daniil Medvedev.
The sixth-seeded Zverev was a up a break in the third set and missed a chance to serve it out but the Olympic champion didn't blink when he got another chance in the fourth, finishing off a 6-1, 6-3, 6-7(2-7), 6-4 victory.
Medvedev outlasted ninth-seeded Hubert Hurkacz 7-6(7-4), 2-6, 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 to make it to the semifinals at Melbourne Park for the third time in four years. Djokovic will play Jannik Sinner in the other semifinal.
No.12-seeded Zheng Qinwen and Ukrainian qualifier Dayana Yastremska won women's quarterfinals and will play their first Grand Slam semifinal when they meet after a night sleep.
The women's last 4 lineup was completed when Zheng fended off Anna Kalinskaya 6-7(4-7), 6-3, 6-1 and Yastremska beat Linda Noskova 6-3, 6-4. Defending champion Aryna Sabalenka and Coco Gauff will meet in the other semifinal.

Deepika, Mumtaz help India beat Poland in Hockey5s WC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Muscat, Jan 24: Deepika Soreng and Mumtaz Khan scored a brace each as the Indian women's hockey team eked out a narrow 5-4 win over Poland in its opening Pool C match of the FIH Hockey5s Women's World Cup here Wednesday.
Mumtaz (fourth, 23th minutes) and Deepika (sixth, 29th) struck twice, while Mariana Kujur (23rd) was the other goal scorer for India. Poland's goals were scored by Julia Kucharska (8th), captain Marlena Rybacha (10th), Paula Slawinska (27th) and Monika Polewczak (29th). India will next play the USA.
The Indians were quick to get off the blocks as they took the lead in the fourth minute through Mumtaz's field goal. Two minutes later, Deepika doubled India's lead with another field strike.
Poland struck back minutes later through Kucharska and skipper Rybacha's field goals to level the scores at 2-2 with five minutes left in the first half. Four minutes later, Mumtaz scored her second goal as India had their noses in front by the end of the first half with the scoreline reading 3-2.
The second half of the game was off to a quiet start with both

Disappointing draw

CAPE TOWN: The Indian men's hockey team failed to live up to its expectations after a bright start to draw 2-2 against France in their second game of the Four-Nation Tournament here Wednesday. Mandeep Singh (eighth minute) and Amit Rohidas (19th) scored for India, while France came back in the contest with goals from Timothee Clement and B Gaspard in the 37th and 59th minutes respectively. The Indians had earlier defeated France 4-0 in their tournament opener Monday. India will take on South Africa Friday, followed by a game against World No.1 the Netherlands Sunday.

the teams preventing each other from scoring any goals. But as India kept up the pressure on Poland with some top-quality passing, Kujur extended India's lead with a brilliant finish.
With three minutes left on the clock, Slawinska intercepted an Indian pass and scored to reduce the deficit to one. However, Deepika soon scored as India again had a two-goal lead. Polewczak scored within no time as the score read 5-4 in favour of India with just about a minute left.



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