



LIVING THE CHARACTERS
Actor Bhumi Pednekar says her upcoming film choices and characters she plays in them are a reflection of her belief
LEISURE P2



IRAN EXECUTES PROTESTER
Iran executes a prisoner convicted for attacking a policeman during the ongoing nationwide protests
INTERNATIONAL P9



INDIA FACE AUSSIES
India eyes will be keen to give a tough time to Australia in the five-match T20I series beginning today
SPORTS P12

THUMPING VICTORY FOR BJD

Naveen magic works as Barsha logs 37,508 more votes than her late father to achieve a landslide victory over her BJP rival Purohit



BJD's Barsha Singh Barhiha poses with supporters after her victory in Padampur, Thursday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 8: The BJD steamrolled to victory in the Padampur bypoll, after Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik unleashed his charisma on the tribal-dominated constituency by personally going down to campaign for his party's rookie candidate Barsha Singh Barhiha, who won the electoral battle Thursday against BJP's Pradip Purohit by a margin of 42,679 votes. A total of 10 candidates were in fray for the bypoll.

Though Patnaik had refrained from physical campaigning in bypolls since 2019, he made an exception this time after opposition BJP emerged victorious in the recent byelection to the Dhamnagar constituency.

After the end of the 23rd rounds of counting, Barsha polled a total of 1,20,807 votes (58%), while Purohit secured 78,128 votes (37.15%), state Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), SK Lohani said. Congress candidate Satya Bhusan Sahu was a poor third with 3,594 votes. Incidentally Barsha is the daughter of late BJD MLA Bijay Ranjan Singh Barhiha, whose death in October necessitated the bypoll.

BYPOLL: OTHER STATES

STATE	CONSTITUENCY	WINNER
Bihar	Kurhani	Kedar Prasad Gupta (BJP)
Uttar Pradesh	Mainpuri (LS)	Dimple Yadav (SP)
	Rampur Sadar	Akash Saxena (BJP)
	Khatauli	Madan Bhaiyya (RLD)
Rajasthan	Sandarshahar	Anil Sharma (Cong)
Chhattisgarh	Bhanupratappur	Savitri Mandavi (Cong)

Patnaik spoke to Barsha over telephone and congratulated her for the 'spectacular' victory, a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said.

This was the second consecutive time that the BJD emerged triumphant in Padampur. Bijay Ranjan had won the seat in 2019. An overwhelmed Barsha thanked Patnaik, who is also the BJD president, for campaigning for her, asserting that it proved to be a 'game changer'.

"Thanks to our CM and the people of Padampur for choosing me. My late father's goodwill was also a factor that worked in favour of the BJD in the by-poll," the 29-year-old law graduate said.

The BJP said it will introspect on the reasons behind its defeat in Padampur. "Her (Barsha's) victory

is unexpected. A large chunk of Congress votes shifted to the BJD. I accept the verdict of the people with humility," Purohit told reporters. "I never imagined that I would be defeated in this manner," he added.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan also took to Twitter to congratulate Barsha. "We respect the people's mandate. My heartiest thanks to all who voted for the BJP. We will try to further strengthen the party in the coming days through welfare initiatives and public relations," Pradhan said.

Barsha secured 37,508 more votes than her late father Bijay Ranjan got in the 2019 Assembly elections. Similarly, Purohit, who fought the on a BJP ticket, got 563 more votes this time. However, Sahu's votes came down drastically. **P3 & P5**

Cong wrests HP; BJP 7.0 in Gujarat

AS SAFFRON SURGE CONTINUES IN GUJARAT, ANTI-INCUMBENCY HURTS IT IN NORTHERN STATE

AGENCIES

Ahmedabad/Shimla, Dec 8: Riding high on the charisma of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP retained Thursday power in Gujarat for a record seventh straight term pulverising the opposition to secure the biggest majority ever in the state. This was the seventh successive time, the BJP retained its hold on the state equalling the Left Front's rule in West Bengal from 1977 to 2011.

However, the saffron party lost Himachal Pradesh to the Congress after a close fight and the hill state continued with the tradition of nearly four decades of voting out the incumbent party. Congress leaders credited its general secretary Priyanka Gandhi for the win which came as a boost for the grand old party in the home state of BJP president JP Nadda.

For the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) which had exuded confidence before the Gujarat polls, there was some consolation. It opened its account in Gujarat by winning five seats after its 'blank' debacle in 2017.

As Modi continued to hold sway over voters and addressed 31 election rallies in Gujarat, the BJP crossed the three-fourths majority and in the process checkmated AAP in triangular contests and also pushed the Congress down to its all time low.

Gujarat state BJP president CR Patil said Bhupendra Patel, the party's 60-year-old soft-spoken face, would continue as the chief minister and his swearing-in ceremony would be held December 12. Patel won the Ghatlodia seat in Ahmedabad by a huge margin of 1.92 lakh votes. The BJP, which



Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel flashes the victory sign in Ahmedabad; Congress supporters rejoice at Kullu

MAJOR WINNERS AND LOSERS

GUJARAT		
Bhupendra Patel	BJP	Won
Jignesh Mevani	Cong	Won
Hardik Patel	BJP	Won
Alpesh Thakor	BJP	Won
Isudhan Gadhvi	AAP	Lost

HIMACHAL PRADESH		
Rohit Thakur	Cong	Won
Vikramaditya Singh	Cong	Won
Jairam Thakur	BJP	Won
Anil Sharma	BJP	Won
Suresh Bharadwaj	BJP	Lost
Asha Kumari	Cong	Lost

whelming," Modi said. Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Patel credited Modi for the party's 'historic victory'. "The biggest credit for this victory goes to public's trust in the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his popularity and credibility," Rajnath said.

Meanwhile in Shimla, HP Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, who won for the sixth time from Seraj Assembly seat in Mandi district, said he respects the mandate of the people and submitted his resignation to Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar Thursday evening.

The vote share difference for the Congress and the BJP was less than one per cent. While the Congress polled 43.9 per cent votes, the vote share for the BJP was 43 per cent. Anti-incumbency against the ruling BJP government coupled with the issue of price rise with Congress promising restoration of the old pension scheme and providing ₹1,500 to every adult woman in the state seemed to be the main factors that worked in favour of the grand old party. **P10**

GUJARAT (Total seats 182)

PARTY	SEATS	G/L	% OF VOTES
BJP	156	+57	52.50
Congress	17	-61	27.29
AAP	5	+5	12.91
Others	4	-1	7.08

HIMACHAL PRADESH (Total seats 68)

PARTY	SEATS	G/L	% OF VOTES
Congress	40	+19	43.90
BJP	25	-19	43.00
Others	3	0	10.39
AAP	0	0	1.10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Himachal stopped me. Otherwise after Bharat Jodo, I was about to go on a tirth yatra

Top court slams Centre over Collegium appointments

In the recent past, Law Minister Kiren Rijiju and VP Jagdeep Dhankar have both been critical of the Collegium system of appointments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 8: The Supreme Court said Thursday the Collegium system of appointment of judges is the law of the land and comments against it are 'not well taken'. The apex court observed that any law declared by it is 'binding' on all stakeholders and the Collegium system must be followed.

The observations of the Supreme Court coming just a day after comments made by Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankar in the Rajya Sabha, assumes significance. Dhankar during his maiden speech in the Upper House had criticised the Supreme Court for scrapping the National Judicial Appointment Commission (NJAC) which was established by an Act of Parliament. He had

said the Supreme Court severely compromised parliamentary sovereignty and disregarded the mandate of the people.

The top court was hearing Thursday a matter relating to alleged delay by the Centre in clearing the names recommended by the Collegium for appointment as judges to constitutional courts.

Observing that comments made on the Supreme Court Collegium by the government functionaries are 'not well taken', a bench headed by Justice SK Kaul asked Attorney General R Venkataramani to advise the government about it. The bench, also comprising Justices AS Oka and Vikram Nath, said it expects the Attorney General to advise the government so the legal principles laid down by the apex court are followed.

The Collegium system has become a major flashpoint between the Supreme Court and the Centre, with the mechanism of appointing judges drawing criticism from different quarters. The Supreme Court noted that 19 names recommended by the Collegium were recently sent back by the government. **Continued on P4**



FEARLESS ACT: A motorcyclist performs a stunt through a fire-wheel during the 11th Reunion and 262nd Corps Day of ASC, at ASC Centre & College in Bangalore

Students design shoe to prevent eve-teasing

AGENCIES

Gorakhpur (UP), Dec 8: Eve-teasing is a problem that is constantly faced by girls all over India. It is rampant in urban as well as rural areas. Eve-teasing, sexual assaults and rapes seem to have become a part of life for women in all spectrums of society across India. In spite of stringent laws, there seems to be no end to these maladies.

However, there has been no let up in the efforts to control eve-teasers and apprehend the culprits. Innovative methods are being thought of and are being implemented to prevent girls from falling prey to eve-teasers. The latest effort to prevent eve-



teasing is a specially-designed shoe. They are not Cinderella's shoes, but footwear that are very valuable for women when they have to deal with miscreants. Three final-year students of Electronics and Computer

Engineering at the Institute of Technology and Management (ITM) here have designed shoes for women that have an electronic device connected to them. It sends an alert to the nearest police station and the relatives of the woman wearing them whenever it senses any threat of abduction. Women can also give an electric shock to miscreant(s) through the specially designed shoes if they feel threatened, by

kicking them. The shoe has been designed by Aditya Singh, Shubham Lal and Sandeep Kumar Yadav. It was displayed during the 'Inception Day' programme of Gorakhpur Industrial Development Authority (GIDA). Aditya, one of the persons behind the development of the shoe described how it works. "The electronic device fitted into the bottom of the shoe has a 3.7 volt-age battery and a generator system with direct current. At the press of a button, a sharp pin comes out from the bottom of the shoe. This pin, when in contact with an offender, triggers an electric shock," Aditya informed. **Continued on P4**

Tabla maestro Umesh no more



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 8: Noted tabla maestro Umesh Chandra Kar breathed his last Thursday at his residence here. He was 70.

Born on January 7, 1950 Kar was a renowned figure in the Hindustani classical music fraternity. Kar had been conferred with many awards in his lifetime including the *Sangeet Natak Akademi Award* and *Ila Panda Sangeet Samman*. He was also the former principal of 'Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya'.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik condoled the demise of the noted tabla player. Expressing his grief in a condolence message, Naveen said Kar was a gifted artiste and his demise is a huge loss to the music industry in Odisha. Patnaik also announced that Kar's last rites will be conducted with full State honours. He expressed condolences to the bereaved family and prayed for the departed soul to rest in peace.

"Saddened to learn about the demise of tabla maestro Umesh Chandra Kar. It is an irreparable loss to the state," Patnaik tweeted. Sources said, Kar had been ill for some time now. He breathed his last in the early hours of Thursday. **P2**

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	62570.68	↑ 160.00
NIFTY	18609.35	↑ 48.85
DOLLAR	82.30	↑ ₹0.62
EURO	86.69	↑ ₹0.34
GOLD	₹54,071	↑ ₹84
SILVER	₹66,989	↑ ₹722

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX TEMP	28.2°C	27.4°C
MIN TEMP	15.2°C	14.6°C
Humidity	62%	63%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Mainly clear sky	

leisure



MARGOT PUSHING FOR HARLEY QUINN-POISON IVY ROMANCE

Actress Margot Robbie's next appearance as Harley Quinn in the DC Universe is undetermined at this point, but the Oscar nominee already knows what she wants for whenever her anti-hero does return- A Harley Quinn-Poison Ivy romance. Robbie told that she's been trying to get the queer romance off the ground for years.

JLAW DISSSED FOR HER CLAIMS ON NO FEMALE ACTION LEAD

Hollywood star Jennifer Lawrence has been dissed after claiming that there's no female action movie lead before her. She said, "Nobody had ever put a woman in the lead because we were told girls and boys can both identify with a male lead, but boys cannot identify with a female lead."



FORTUNE FORECAST

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

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

TAURUS
You can expect a pleasant, comfortable day at the office, today, so says Ganesh. You will be carrying out your work cheerfully and effortlessly. You could, later in the evening, have a strong urge to go out for dinner with your family and friends. If that does happen, you're certain to go for an after dinner movie, or an ice cream treat.

GEMINI
You know where you are headed, and will redouble your efforts to reach your goals today. You are full of energy and enthusiasm, which helps you to achieve all your targets. You will receive unexpected gains owing to your hard work.

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

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

VIRGO
There will be dirt on your shoulder today, so dust it off, says Ganesh, because every time you fall you will get up stronger than before. Your logic and analytical skills will help you find the necessary precision to accomplish tasks at work. You may spend the evening with a close friend or your beloved, engrossed in a stimulating conversation.

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

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

SAGITTARIUS
You are caught in a whirlpool of emotions, predicts Ganesh. You may come across many ups and downs today. However, nothing seems to deter you from your determination and dedication towards work.

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

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

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

No regrets on my journey: Bhumi



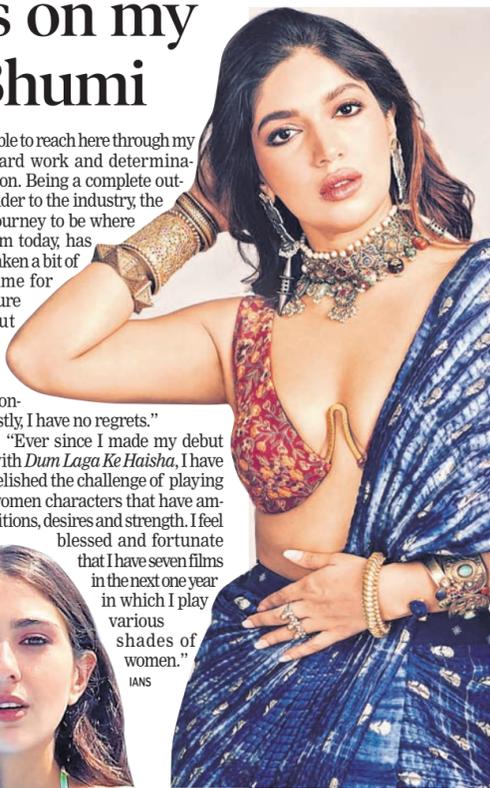
Mumbai: Actress Bhumi Pednekar, who is awaiting the release of *Govinda Naam Mera*, said, "My upcoming film choices and the characters I play in them are a reflection of my belief system and goal as an artiste to portray women well on screen. I enjoy choosing scripts that let me disrupt the content landscape. I will continue to do the same in the near future."

Sharing her excitement, the actress said, "It feels amazing to be one of the most prolific actors in the Hindi film industry today and I'm proud that I have been

able to reach here through my hard work and determination. Being a complete outsider to the industry, the journey to where I'm today, has taken a bit of time for sure but

honestly, I have no regrets." "Ever since I made my debut with *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*, I have relished the challenge of playing women characters that have ambitions, desires and strength. I feel blessed and fortunate that I have seven films in the next one year in which I play various shades of women."

— IANS



Deepika to play lady Singham

Mumbai: Filmmaker Rohit Shetty during the song launch of his upcoming film *Cirkus* revealed that actress Deepika Padukone will be donning the khaki uniform for his cop universe as they are all set to work together.

Rohit, who was at the launch of *Current Laga Re* along with Ranveer Singh and Deepika, made the news on stage.

He said, "Log poochte rehte hai Singham ka agla part kab aayega? Today let me take his opportunity to say that Deepika and I will work together next year."

Rohit and Deepika have previously worked together in *Chennai Express* which stars Shah Rukh Khan and released in 2013. It would be after a decade that the actress and filmmaker would be working together.



SARA REVEALS HER ASPIRATION

Mumbai: Actress Sara Ali Khan recently revealed about her aspiration in her acting career. She took to Instagram, where she shared a collage of pictures as Sharmila Tagore turns 78. The first is a throwback picture of Sharmila's younger days while she holds little Sara. The second image has a grown up Sara hugging her "badi amma". For the caption, Sara penned:

"Happiest birthday my dearest badi amma. Thank you for being our rock solid pillar of support. I love you so much and I truly aspire to be 1/10th of the woman you are. #grace #beauty #intelligence."

Sharmila made her acting debut at age 14 with Satyajit Ray's acclaimed Bengali drama *The World of Apu* in 1959. She went on to collaborate with Ray on numerous other films, including: *Devi* (1960), *Nayak* (1966) and *Aranyer Din Ratri*

among many others. She ventured into Hindi films with *Kashmir Ki Kali* (1964), *Aamne Saamne* (1967), *Satyakam* (1969), *Aradhana* (1969), *Safar* (1970), *Amar Prem* (1972), *Daag* (1973), *Avishkaar* (1974), *Mausam* (1975), *Chupke Chupke* (1975), and *Namkeen* (1982).

Sara will be seen in *Gaslight* and Anurag Basu's recently announced *Metro...Inn Dino* among many others.

— IANS

Music fraternity mourns Kar's demise



With Pandit Birju Maharaj in a file photo

Bhubaneswar: Members of the classical music fraternity of Odisha were in deep shock over the sudden demise of eminent Tabla player Pandit Umesh Chandra Kar.

Odissi vocalist Guru Nimakanta Routray said that Kar was a unique and irreplaceable artiste who will be remembered forever. He had collaborated with legends like Pandit Ravi Shankar, Pt. Hari Prasad Chaurasia, Pt. Shiv Kumar Sharma, Pt. Jasraj, Pt. Bhimsen Joshi and others and made the state proud. He had carried forward the legacy of his father who was also an eminent table player, added Routray.

Vocalist Guru Sukanta Kumar Kundu said, "It's a sad day for us as we lost a legend. We had learnt a lot from him. He has performed as accompanist in hundreds of events. Despite his ill

health, he continued to perform and had attended a seminar just a few hours before his death. It's unfortunate to lose him this way."

Odissi dance Guru Snehaprava Samantray said she had known Umesh Kar for 50 years from the days of Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya. He was not only a great artist but also a great human being. As the principal of Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya, he had set quite a few trends and worked for the development of the institution. He will always be remembered by the music fraternity, added Samantray.

Odissi Dancer and teacher Guru Ganeswar Swain said, "During Umesh sir's stint as the principal of Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya, I was working as dance teacher. He had always encouraged me to strive for excellence. It's an irreparable loss for the art and culture field."

— PNN

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

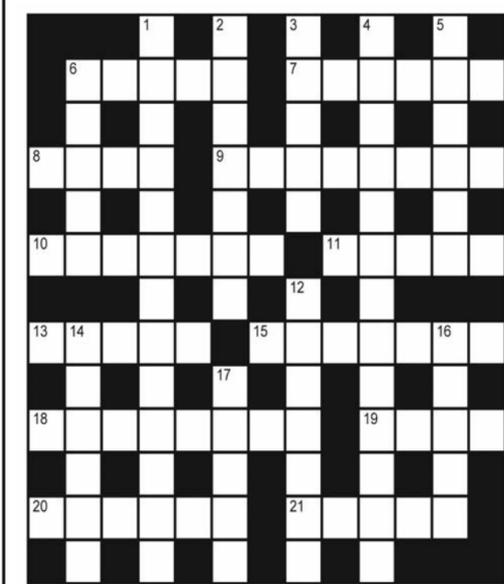


BREVITY



FUN post

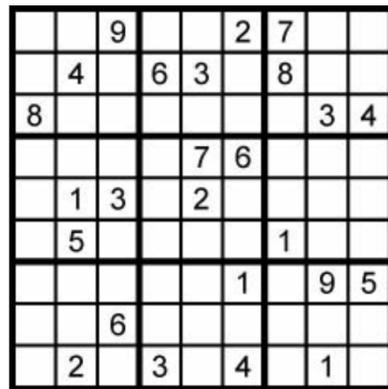
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 6 Man of morals
 - 7 Sanity
 - 8 Traffic marker
 - 9 French pastry
 - 10 Trounce
 - 11 Take forcibly
 - 13 Gambits
 - 15 Dissect
 - 18 Nut cracker?
- Down**
- 19 Influence
 - 20 Packing a wallop
 - 21 Annuls
 - 3 Battercake
 - 4 Emperor of Ethiopia, once (5,8)
 - 5 Respect
 - 6 Reef ring
 - 12 Subjugate
 - 14 Hard stuff
 - 16 Hose woes
 - 17 Shopworn

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

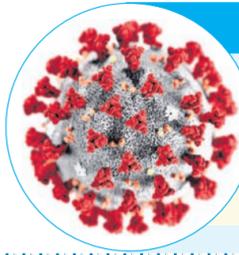
SUDOKU

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



CITY SHOW

Artistes of Serious Zone Cultural Wing, Nayagarh staged a play 'Banjha' at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Thursday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	65,18,04,394	62,79,59,414	66,52,733
India	4,46,74,190	4,41,39,299	5,30,647
Odisha	13,36,304	13,36,304	9,204

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Naveen slams BJP for personal jibe at Barsha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 8: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday slammed the BJP leaders for making disrespectful remarks on elected party candidate Barsha Singh Bariha during campaigning for Padampur byelection.

Patnaik said he personally went down to Padampur to campaign for his party candidate Barsha ahead of the bypoll, as he was hurt by the "disrespect" shown by the BJP towards the rookie nominee.

Patnaik's comments came shortly after Barsha scored an emphatic win against BJP's Pradip Purohit by 42,679 votes.

"People often ask me why I preferred to campaign in Padampur while refraining from doing so in the panchayat election and other by-polls. I was really hurt over the manner in which the state BJP leadership offended a young, educated and grief-stricken girl like Barsha, who recently lost her father," the CM said in a video message.

"BJP's treatment towards her

The Chief Minister assured the people of Padampur that all the promises made by him will be fulfilled

He assured the people of Padampur that all the promises made by him will be fulfilled.

Notably, during the election campaign, former Union minister and Sundargarh MP Jual Oram had courted controversy by questioning Bariha's tribal status following her marriage to a non-tribal man.

Barsha's father-in-law and senior BJP leader Rama Ranjan Baliarsingh echoed Patnaik, saying he and his family members were pained when a few BJP leaders launched a personal attack on her.

was disrespect to all women. So, I went and stood by Barsha like a father, a brother and a friend," he said.

The people of Odisha have never tolerated insult to women, nor will they ever do so, he asserted.

5,296 clear OCS Prelim Exams



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 8: Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC) Thursday published the results of Odisha Civil Services (OCS) Preliminary Examination, 2021.

As per OPSC sources, altogether 5,296 candidates, including 1,749 women, Unreserved (UR)- 2,802 (944-W), SEBC-475 (144-W), SC-877 (294-W) and ST-1,142 (367-W) were selected for the Main Exam.

The Odisha Civil Services Examination is conducted in three phases - Prelims, Main and Personality Test. A recruitment notification was published with respect to vacancies of 433(142-W) posts - UR-230 (77-W), SEBC-39 (12-W), SC-71 (23-W) and ST- 93 (30-W) in 2021.

The OPSC received 58,241 (20,930-W) applications for OCS, 2021, out of which 29,295 (10,284-W) appeared for the Preliminary Exam held October 16.

The roll numbers of selected candidate are available on OPSC website www.opsc.gov.in.

The Main Written Exam is tentatively scheduled for February, 2023, said the OPSC release.

The candidates have been marked qualified on the basis of OCS Preliminary Examination-2021 conducted by OPSC, said the authorities.

Strict penal provision soon for trafficking of antiquities

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 8: The Union Minister of State for Culture Meenakshi Lekhi Thursday informed the Rajya Sabha that the Union government will amend the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 to enhance the jail term for anyone trafficking antiquity or art treasure.

The minister, in response to a query posed by Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Sujeet Kumar during the Question Hour, said that the government is already working on the amendments to this act.

Set up Rayagada Rail Division: Ulaka

New Delhi: Congress MP from Koraput Saptagiri Ulaka Thursday requested the Centre to set up Rayagada Rail Division, which has been promised long ago, at the earliest as the project is vital for southern Odisha.

Ulaka said, "When the East Coast Railway Zone was divided, the government had promised that Rayagada Rail Division will come up, but due to politics this division is yet to come up."

The Congress MP, while raising the issue of railway connectivity during Zero Hour in the Lok Sabha, also requested the government to complete the extension of Naupada-Gunupur railway line which was announced in 2017-18.

He said the rate of return (RoR) was very less, so the project was not approved. The Railways had demanded that the state government should share 50 per cent of the cost and provide land free of cost. That has already been done and the DPR has been submitted, he added.

"But unfortunately, the government is sitting on this project and approval of DPR by the Cabinet is only pending. It is a very tribal dominated area. Southern Odisha is the most important region. I would request the government to approve the project immediately," the MP said. Ulaka also demanded that the trains should stop at Ambodala and Therubali railway station in Sambalpur division. He said the trains used to stop at these stations before Covid-19. But after Covid, Express trains have not been stopping at these stations, he said.



ODISHA IN PARLIAMENT

As far as data management and block chain technology are concerned, this work is also being undertaken. On other aspects, I would like to submit that we are in touch with IIT Delhi, and this project is being worked on," the minister said.

Earlier, the BJD MP called the three years penal provision for people trying to export any antiquity or art treasures inadequate. He asked the minister whether the government is mulling to amend the act to increase the penal pro-

vision and make it very stringent.

"We can enhance the penalty from the present three years up to 10 years which will deter the anti-social and criminal elements who are stealing and exporting our antiquities to other countries," Kumar said.

He also asked the minister whether there is any proposal to formulate a National Heritage Protection Policy, because the country does not have any such policy as on date and whether the government will consider creating a database to document all the ancient treasures of art.

Rly staffer in CBI net for taking bribe from farmer



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 8: Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) officials have caught a senior official of Indian Railways red-handed while accepting bribe of Rs 8,000 from a farmer for allowing him to cultivate paddy on Railway land.

The accused was identified as Benu Charan Sahoo, who works as the permanent way inspector (PWI) at Raghunathpur railway station of East Coast Railway in Jagatsinghpur district.

CBI arrested Sahoo after registering a case on the basis of a

The accused was identified as Benu Charan Sahoo, a permanent way inspector employed at Raghunathpur railway station under ECoR

complaint lodged by Benudhara Khuntia of Bada Khandaita village, under Biridi police limits in Jagatsinghpur December 5, 2022. As per the complaint, Khuntia

along with a few others were engaged in paddy farming on Railway lands adjacent to Cuttack-Paradip railway line near Bada Khandaita passenger halt for the last 40 years. Khuntia alleged that Sahoo sent a message to him through a Railway staffer asking him to meet him at his office December 2, 2022.

Accordingly, Khuntia went to the office where Sahoo demanded Rs 8,000 from the former to allow him do cultivation on the railway land. The accused also threatened Khuntia that he would cut and destroy the paddy using Railway Protection Force (RPF) if he refuses to pay the bribe amount.

Finding no other way, a poor Khuntia lodged a complaint at the CBI office in Bhubaneswar.

"The complaint was verified by a team of CBI, ACB, Bhubaneswar, in presence of independent witness on 06.12.2022. Verification of the said complaint confirmed that the said public servant had demanded undue advantage of Rs 8,000 from the complainant towards above said purpose," said the CBI.

ASHOK SWAIN'S OCI CARD CANCELLATION

Delhi HC seeks Centre's response in four weeks

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 8: The Delhi High Court Thursday sought the Union government's response on a petition filed by Sweden-based Prof Ashok Swain against the cancellation of his Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) card.

A single-judge bench of Justice Prathiba M Singh issued notice to the Ministry of Home Affairs, External Affairs Ministry and Indian Embassy in Sweden and Latvia, and granted four weeks' time to file the response. The HC posted the matter to February next year.

Swain, a native of Puri, is the head of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, Sweden. He is also a Unesco Chair on International Water Cooperation since 2007. Swain, who has been living in Sweden for the past 32 years, was granted an OCI card January 14,

2020 by the Centre.

In the petition filed in Delhi High Court, Swain contended that his OCI card was cancelled in February 2022 because of his statements criticising the policies of the incumbent Indian government. He submitted that he has never engaged in anti-India activities.

"It is submitted that the petitioner has never engaged in any inflammatory speeches or anti-India activities. As a scholar, it is his role in the society to discuss and criticise the policies of the government," the petition reads.

It was further contended that being an academician, Swain analyses and criticises certain policies of the present government. However, mere criticism of the policies of the current ruling dispensation shall not tantamount to anti-India activities under Section 7D(e) of the Citizenship Act, 1955," Swain's petition argued.



MISCONDUCT CHARGE: Corporators of Cuttack Municipal Corporation staged a dharna by locking the main gate of the CMC office, Thursday, opposing the alleged 'misconduct' by the commissioner of the civic body

OP PHOTO

6 lakh Indians' data sold on bot markets

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 8: As data-harvesting malware or bots flourish, data of at least 6 lakh Indians have been stolen and sold on bot markets and the average price for the digital identity of one Indian is about Rs 490, cyber-security researchers revealed Thursday.

India was the most affected country in the world, with 12 per cent of all the data on bot markets being Indian, according to research by cybersecurity company NordVPN.

Bot markets are online marketplaces hackers use to sell data they steal from their victims' devices with bot malware.

The data is sold in packets, which include logins, cookies, dig-



BOT MARKETS ARE ONLINE MARKETPLACES HACKERS USE TO SELL DATA THEY STEAL FROM THEIR VICTIMS' DEVICES WITH BOT MALWARE

AT LEAST 26.6 MILLION STOLEN LOGINS WERE FOUND ON THE ANALYSED MARKETS. AMONG THEM WERE 7,20,000 GOOGLE LOGINS, 6,54,000 MICROSOFT LOGINS AND 6,47,000 FACEBOOK LOGINS

This growing threat has already affected 5 million people globally, with hackers selling webcam snaps, screenshots, up-to-date logins, cookies and digital fingerprints.

"At least 5 million people have had their online identities stolen and sold on bot markets for Rs 490 on average. Out of all the affected people, 6,00,000 are from India, making the country the most affected by this threat in the world," said the researchers.

At least 26.6 million stolen logins were found on the analysed markets. Among them were 7,20,000 Google logins, 6,54,000 Microsoft logins and 6,47,000 Facebook logins. In addition, researchers found 667 million cookies, 81 thousand digital fingerprints, 538 thousand auto-fill forms, numerous device

screenshots, and webcam snaps.

"Digital bots are becoming increasingly common. They operate in fields such as customer service, search engine optimisation and entertainment. Yet not all bots may serve good intentions - many of them can be malicious," said security researchers.

The most popular types of malware that steal and gather data include RedLine, Vidar, Raccoon, Taurus, and AZORult. RedLine is the most prevalent of them all.

"The Zeasy marketplace was launched in 2018. At first, it was considered to be smaller compared to other markets. Yet the situation has dramatically changed since then. Now, Zeasy sells more than 6,00,000 stolen data logs from 269 countries," said the report.



UNIQUE PROTEST: Members of All Odisha Anganwadi Ladies Workers' Association staged a stir by performing 'Mana Osa Gurubar Puja' at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, to press for fulfillment of their demands including ₹18,000 minimum wage per month

OP PHOTO

AI to make agriculture more predictable: Padhee



Sharmistha Dasgupta, DDC & Head, Artificial Intelligence Resource Division, New Delhi highlighted initiatives of the division on model building in the fields of image and video analytics, speech synthesis & recognition, and natural language processing. Earlier, Ashok Kumar Hota, Deputy Director General (Training), informed that National Informatics Centre (NIC) established the Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Artificial Intelligence in 2019 to explore more opportunities for AI applications in governance. The guests joined to release the AI Brochure on the occasion.

NIC established the Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence to explore more opportunities for AI applications in governance

Bhubaneswar, Dec 8: Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the simulation of human cognitive processes by machines. It automates processes and aims to ape Human Intelligence by applying Cognitive Computing to IT Systems.

Inaugurating the Tech-Bootcamp on AI-Principles and Practices at National Informatics Centre (NIC), Thursday, Arabinda Kumar Padhee, principal secretary, department of Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment, informed that AI can be used to search for patterns, discover new insights, extract meaning from raw data, make predictions, and interact with people, machines and the physical environment. He told how AI can be used in agriculture for field harvesting, health monitoring, weed and pest control, detection of nutrient deficiencies in soil, and other tasks. Guest of honour, Dasarathy Satpathy, secretary, Odisha

Legislative Assembly, said that AI involves programming for knowledge, reasoning, problem solving, perception, learning, planning & automating processes. He highlighted how AI can be used for Assistance services to Members of Legislative Assembly such as chatbot based on conversational interface technology as well as natural language processing, to automate legislative drafting, making assembly videos searchable using the latest speech recognition techniques. Participating in the Bootcamp,

More than 60 officers from various departments participated in this workshop, interacted with the experts. The brainstorming session was organized to identify various domains where Artificial Intelligence can be integrated. Participants were from Agriculture, Higher Education, Forest, Home, Industry, Health and BSNL. Experts from NIC New Delhi presented various solutions available like Swachhata-AI Mobile App, Sangyatmak Sahayak API for assisting lower judiciary with motor accident claim precedents, face verification services for contactless attendance, life certificate mobile app-based verification, fuzzy logic based phonetic & text search for farmer name across soil health, PM Kisan & Land Records.



RAZING DOWN: An excavator deployed by BDA demolishing an illegally built structure on government land at Ganganagar in Bhubaneswar, Thursday OP PHOTO

Stir for slum dwellers' rights Dec 16

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 8: The Basti Suraksha Mancha Thursday announced to launch a massive protest at Mahatma Gandhi Marg here December 16 seeking a complete ban on forceful demolition of slums.

Outfit's president Hena, advisor Biswapriya Kanungo and general secretary Parmila held a press conference at Lohia Academy here Thursday where Kanungo called for a massive protest along with a rally seeking residential rights of slum dwellers.

Addressing the presser, Kanungo said government's housing schemes like 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana' and others are a kind of propaganda being run by the govern-



ment and these are only on paper. "Nothing is found in ground zero. All these schemes are to hoodwink people before elections," he said. He also urged the Union and state governments to grant rights to residents of the slums in their current location, citing the fact that slum dwellers are from the poorest socioeconomic groups. December 17, the outfit will hold

its third conference in Bhubaneswar at Lohia Academy. This will be its third conference on land acquisition and reclaiming rights for slum dwellers in the state. While the mancha is organising a convention December 18, various delegations from across the country will join the forum for a discussion on the slum dwellers' residential rights.

Govt to recruit 7k nursing officers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 8: To provide better healthcare services by augmenting technical capabilities and increasing manpower, the state government has created 11,292 additional posts of nursing officers, and has decided to fill them up in phases.

The government Thursday instructed the director of Nursing for filing of requisition with OSSSC (Odisha Sub-Ordinate Staff Selection Commission) for recruitment of 7,413 nursing officers against the newly created posts.

It is expected that thousands of aspiring candidates with degree or diploma in nursing will benefit greatly from these newly created posts. With the addition of this man power, healthcare service in institutions like district headquarters hospitals and medical colleges and hospitals in the state will improve to a great extent, the Health department stated.

KIIT urged to start 'tribal knowledge digital library'

Bhubaneswar: The principal scientific advisor to government of India AK Sood said Thursday that KIIT is well placed to launch a digital library for the purpose of disseminating the rich tribal knowledge that is passed from generation to generation in the communities but is not known widely outside of them. Addressing KIIT's R&D Conclave, he said, "It should leverage its strengths to focus and support engaging ideas for research in the fields of e-waste management and deep-tech startups." Sood said KIIT-TBI should launch a 'tribal knowledge digital library', much like the 'traditional knowledge digital library' recently launched under CSIR. "Make it specific to your case. There is so much of tribal knowledge that has been passed from generation to generation but is not really known outside," he said.

Top court slams...

Continued from P1

"How will this ping-pong battle settle?" the bench asked. "Till the Collegium system is there, till it is upheld, we have to enforce it. You want to bring another law, nobody stops you from bringing another law," the bench stated.

"We may at the end say only this that the scheme of the Constitution stipulates the court to be the final arbiter of the position of law. The power to enact a law is with the Parliament. However, that is subject to scrutiny by the courts," it asserted. "Any law declared by this court is binding on all stakeholders. That is the only signal I want to send," Justice Kaul observed.

The apex court said if a section of the society starts deciding which law to follow and which not to follow, then there will be a breakdown. "When you lay down a law, you expect the courts to enforce it unless the law is set aside," the bench said.

Students design...

Continued from P1

"The shoe also comes with a GPS which is connected to the mobile phone of the person wearing it through Bluetooth. In uneasy situations, our feet release sweat. This activates the automatic sensor panel to send an alert to the police and the woman's relatives," added Aditya.

However, all the three stated that the person wearing the shoe should have contact numbers of police stations situated in localities frequently visited. Then only the warning beep will be received by the law-enforcers.

The shoe has been designed under the guidance of Diptee Ojha, Head of Department of the Electronics and Computer Engineering department, and Vineet Rai, one of the teachers of the three young innovators.

Electricity in elementary schools still a dream

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 8: A study report on the state of elementary education in Odisha was published Thursday. Several civil society organisations (CSOs) of the state, including the Atmashakti Trust, Shramajeebee Mancha and Mahila Shramajeebee Mancha, jointly conducted the fact-finding study using online forms collecting data from all the stakeholders part of programmes such as the learning recovery programme (LRP), Right to Education (RTE) campaign, and others who experienced dropout and migration.

The study was conducted between November and December, covering 1,404 villages of 74 blocks of 13 districts. Data was collected from 5,543 respondents on LRP, from 1,912 respondents on RTE norms, 244 respondents on dropouts, and 152 on migration.

As per the study report, the state government had directed the learning recovery programme (LRP) to be conducted in 54,446 government and government aided schools, among 37,97,830 students of class 3 to 9, with involvement of 2,29,799 teachers in the 30 Districts of the state. As per the fact-finding re-



44.71 PER CENT OF STUDENTS SURVEYED FELT COMPLETELY LOST IN EDUCATION WHILE 49.58 PER CENT SAID THEY WERE FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO COPE WITH THEIR STUDIES

THE SURVEY REVEALED THAT 28.35 PER CENT OF SCHOOLS DO NOT HAVE ELECTRICAL CONNECTIONS. 88.13 PER CENT OF THEM ARE IN NEED OF REPAIR

11.66 PER CENT OF SCHOOLS DON'T HAVE DRINKING WATER FACILITIES WHILE 15.01 PER CENT OF SCHOOLS ARE USING NON-DRINKABLE WATER SOURCES

port, 14.45 per cent of students do not know about LRP though it was started in September.

According to the study 8.93 per cent of students interviewed said that no assessment was done in

their school. 11.26 per cent of students have not attended the baseline assessment for LRP in their schools. 8.84 per cent of students said that no learning recovery classes have started in their school.

6.69 per cent of students claimed to have not received any LRP education materials. 22.89 per cent of students rate the LRP teaching methodology as average and 21.78 per cent reported the absence of an activity calendar based on the Learning Outcomes (LO) in their school. 44.71 per cent of students surveyed felt completely lost in education. 49.58 per cent are finding difficulty in coping with their studies. 37 per cent found the LRP learning unfriendly and said they found it difficult to read the LRP books provided by the school.

Similarly, as per the report, on RTE campaign status, 23.80 per cent of schools are short of 1 teacher compared to the number of sanctioned posts in their school. 28.19 per cent, 16.32 per cent, and 6.64 per cent of schools are short of 2, 3, and 4 teachers, respectively. 17 per cent of schools are short of 1 classroom compared to the number of classes in the school. Similarly, 26.26 per cent, 24.95 per cent, 11.09 per cent, and 5.54 per cent, of schools are short of 2, 3, 4, and 5 classrooms respectively.

The study found that 11.66 per cent of schools don't have drinking water facilities. 15.01 per cent of schools are using non-drink-

able water sources. 11.24 per cent of schools do not have separate kitchen sheds. 14.70 per cent of schools don't have toilet facilities. 20.61 per cent of schools do not have separate toilets for boys and girls. 44.04 per cent of toilets in schools lack water facilities. The students do not use 30.07 per cent of toilets in schools, leaving them useless. 75.63 per cent of schools don't have playgrounds. 41.32 per cent of schools don't have a boundary wall. The survey revealed that 28.35 per cent of schools do not have electrical connections. 88.13 per cent of schools need repairing. And 13.44 per cent of School Management Committee (SMC) members never participate in monitoring the school work.

The fact-finding on dropout, which covered 1,921 schools, found that 244 students (Class-III-VIII) had dropped out of school. Out of the total dropout cases, 61.7 per cent of students belonged to ST, 10 per cent, 24.2 per cent, and 10 per cent are from SC, OBC, and general categories, respectively.

Lastly, as per the fact-finding on migration, 152 students were found to have migrated multiple times, because of which they were out of school.

Yes, constant notifications really do tax your brain

A ping from the pizza company. A couple of pings from your socials. Ping, ping, ping from your family WhatsApp group trying to organise a weekend barbecue.

With all those smartphone notifications, it's no wonder you lose focus on what you're trying to do. Your phone doesn't even need to ping to distract you. There's pretty good evidence the mere presence of your phone, silent or not, is enough to divert your attention.

So what's going on? More importantly, how can you reclaim your focus, without missing the important stuff?

When you look at the big picture, those pings can really add up.

Although estimates vary, the average person checks their phone around 85 times a day, roughly once every 15 minutes.

In other words, every 15 minutes or so, your attention is likely to wander from what you're doing. The trouble is, it can take several

minutes to regain your concentration fully after being interrupted by your phone.

If you're just watching TV, distractions (and refocusing) are no big deal. But if you're driving a car, trying to study, at work, or spending time with your loved ones, it could lead to some fairly substantial problems.

The pings from your phone are "exogenous interruptions". In other words, something external, around you, has caused the interruption. We can become conditioned to feeling excited when we hear our phones ping. This is the same pleasurable feeling people who gamble can quickly become conditioned to at the sight or sound of a poker machine.

What if your phone is on silent? Doesn't that solve the ping problem? Well, no. That's another type of interruption, an internal (or endogenous) interruption.

Think of every time you were working on a task but your attention drifted to your phone. You



may have fought the urge to pick it up and see what was happening online, but you probably checked anyway. In this situation, we can become so strongly conditioned to expect a reward each time we look at our phone we don't need to wait for a ping to trigger the effect.

These impulses are powerful. Just reading this article about checking your phone may make you feel like... checking your phone.

What do all these interruptions mean for cognition and wellbeing? There's increasing evidence push

notifications are associated with decreased productivity, poorer concentration and increased distraction at work and school.

But is there any evidence our brain is working harder to manage the frequent switches in attention?

One study of people's brain waves found those who describe themselves as heavy smartphone users were more sensitive to push notifications than ones who said they were light users.

After hearing a push notification, heavy users were significantly

worse at recovering their concentration on a task than lighter users. Although push notification interrupted concentration for both groups, the heavy users took much longer to regain focus.

Frequent interruptions from your phone can also leave you feeling stressed by a need to respond. Frequent smartphone interruptions are also associated with increased FOMO (fear of missing out)

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PADAMPUR BYPOLL: (1) Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik waves at party leaders and workers at Naveen Niwas in Padampur after BJD's victory in Padampur Assembly bypoll (2) BJD's newly-elected MLA Barsha Singh Bariha pays tributes at her late father Bijay Ranjan Singh Bariha's memorial in Padampur (3) Congress Bhawan in Bhubaneswar wears an abandoned look (4) BJP state party office in Bhubaneswar wears a deserted look (5) BJD's women workers celebrate the party's victory



2 jumbos stuck in dug-well rescued

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada/Kuliana, Dec 8: Two elephants which had fallen into an abandoned dug-well were rescued in an operation spanning over eight long hours at Dehurisahi, Katharuma village under Dehurisahi block in Mayurbhanj district, late Wednesday night.

The animals after their rescue were reunited with their herd. The incident occurred when a herd of 35 elephants strayed into farmlands to eat paddy crops. The village is close to Similipal wildlife sanctuary under Baripada forest range.

Six elephants of the herd fell into an abandoned dug-well. While four of the animals managed to escape, a tusker and a calf failed to climb out of the muddy well for long hours.

Locals spotted the pachyderms in the water-filled pit this morning and informed the forest officials. On being informed, Chandua fire personnel and Baripada forest ranger Lakshmidhar Behera rushed to the spot and sought the help of villagers in rescuing the two elephants.

The fire and forest personnel as well as the villagers put up timbers and tree branches on the wall of the dug-well following which the animals could climb on it and come out of the well.



Farmers allege scam in crop loan disbursement

COOPERATIVE BANKS SANCTION RABI LOANS TO FARMERS TO MAKE THEM PAY FOR PREVIOUS KHARIF LOANS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Dec 8: Cooperative banks have been caught on the wrong foot after farmers of this district alleged large scale irregularities in sanctioning of crop loans in the name of fake farmers.

The matter came to the fore after farmers alleging irregularities demanded a high-level inquiry to unravel the wrongdoings.

Reports said that farmers here have borrowed from the cooperative societies as well as central cooperative banks to raise their Rabi crops but the loan amounts, instead of being handed over to them, are being used to repay previous loans. The loans sanctioned for Rabi crops are adjusted against the previous Kharif loans.

This is being done in violation of the directives issued by the Registrar of Cooperative Societies in June, this year.

Notably, the Registrar of Cooperative Societies (RCS) had issued a direction to all the Deputy Registrars of Cooperative Societies (DRCS), Assistant Registrars of Cooperative Societies (ARCS) and



the heads of all central cooperative banks in June, this year.

In the letter, he had said that the secretaries or managing directors of Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies (PACS) or Large Area Multipurpose Societies (LAMPS) shall not keep the loan passbooks or the Kishan Credit Card (KCC) cheque books of farmers with them or use them for any means under any circumstances.

It is alleged that the loan books of farmers who had taken loans for 2022-23 Kharif season are only being renewed. As many as 1,01,739 farmers had taken ₹54,115.59 lakh as loan during the last Kharif season. The amount farmers had taken in previous loans is now being

paid as Rabi loan. According to available reports, so far only 30,244 farmers have been sanctioned with ₹14,959.37 lakh Rabi loan.

The loan is only being recovered in pen and paper as the amount each farmer had taken in previous loan is being sanctioned as loan for Rabi crops. Fearing that the cooperative banks might charge them more interest, the farmers keep their mouth shut and agree to this wrongdoing.

In reality, not a single penny is being paid to the farmers as loan for Rabi crops. While the pockets of farmers remain empty, the burden of additional Rabi loan and the accruing interest has shaken the farmers to the hilt.

Moreover, if the satellite report is taken into consideration, 10,158 acres of farmlands have gone uncultivated in the district during this period. The shrinking of farmlands is also indicative of a decline in the number of farmers.

This ultimately gives rise to doubts on large scale irregularities in sanctioning of loans in the name of fake farmers. Farmers claimed that a

clear picture could emerge if a high-level inquiry is undertaken to unravel the corruption.

Reports said over 122 PACS affiliated 10 cooperative banks operate in Jajpur district. The farmers are sanctioned loans for cultivation in Kharif and Rabi seasons through the cooperative banks.

Farmers alleged that it is nothing but a bait or allurements for the farmers. The banks are not directly recovering the Kharif loan but collecting it on the pretext of sanctioning Rabi loan.

Farmers alleged that they had suffered crop loss during the last Kharif season due to floods and cyclonic storms. They were planning to make good of the loss and waiting for the disbursement of Rabi loan. However, the manipulative practice by the cooperative banks has hit them hard.

A farmer Gopinath Biswal alleged that he is now repaying his due for Kharif loan by taking the Rabi loan. He is forced to do this as he will have to pay 13 per cent more interest for the Kharif loan. He is not receiving a pie towards the Rabi loan. Left with no option, he has to borrow from the local money lenders.

Salandi bridge project to be expedited

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, Dec 8: More than a year has passed, but construction of a bridge across Salandi river, which will facilitate communication from Kuansa to Bhadrak town, has been left halfway through. People of several riparian panchayats have been facing perennial commuting woes in the absence of a bridge. Delay of the project has left locals fuming.

During monsoon months, they go through a lot of difficulties as they have to remain confined to their villages due to floods. The villages remain cut off from the rest of the world for days together.

After media reports, the district administration has underscored the need for hastening its work. Collector Siddeshwar Baliram Bondar has directed the construction agency concerned to hasten its work and complete the bridge in five months.

Woman drowns in Rushikulya

POST NEWS NETWORK

Purushottampur: A woman drowned while bathing in Rushikulya river near Sholaghara village under this police limits in Ganjam district, Thursday. The deceased was identified as Bhashi Das, 48, of the village. The incident occurred when she slipped while entering the river for bath. Locals present there feared to get inside the river and informed the villagers. On being informed, fire personnel rescued her and rushed her to the Purushottampur community health centre (CHC) where doctors pronounced her brought dead. Purushottampur police have registered a case.

Umerkote youth makes cheap drone at ₹4 lakh for agri works

POST NEWS NETWORK

Umerkote, Dec 8: A youth in Nabarangpur district has built a drone for agricultural works at a minimal expense of ₹4 lakh. It was on display at the Make in Odisha (MiO) conclave and is cheaper than the drones available in the market.

The youth was identified as Subhashis Sahu, son of Sujata and Rabindra Kumar Sahu of Gulipatna Sahi in Umerkote of Nabarangpur district and a B.Tech student in agriculture science at Centurion University.

His work has brought him glory and made the state proud as the drones used in agricultural works cost around ₹12 lakh in the market. Earlier, he had become the talk of the town by constructing a small ship.

His work did not go unnoticed as the Chief Minister awarded him for his invention at the Make in Odisha (MiO) conclave. He received ₹1 lakh in cash, a certificate and a memento as recognition for his unique innovation.

Notably, over 1,300 projects were on display at the Odisha start-up programme in MiO conclave out of which experts selected only 300 projects for the second phase. Later, 300 entrepreneurs made a presentation of their projects in PDF format through online



mode, November 26.

Out of those, the experts selected 22 projects where the entrepreneurs made a detailed presentation highlighting the attributes of their projects. The experts finally selected 10 projects including the drone constructed by Subhashis of Umerkote.

Subhashis has been a meritorious student from his childhood. His pursuit has always been to do something new. According to Subhashis, the drones available in the market for agricultural work cost around ₹12 lakh and need skilled labourers to operate them.

Moreover, these drones can only spray pesticides on around 15 hectare of land at a time and will not be able to fly during rain and heavy wind.

However, the drone constructed by him costs only ₹4 lakh and can fly even in adverse weather conditions. The drone can identify the location where the pests have attacked the crops on the farmland with the help of a camera and inform the farmers.

The drone can fly even in adverse weather conditions like rain and heavy wind and spray pesticides over 25 hectare of land at a time. It can fly for long hours with a load of 10 kg of pesticides. Moreover, anyone can operate it and no skilled hand is required.

When contacted, Subhashis credited his success to his Professor Dr Sekhar Kumar Sahu of the Centurion University. He was able to build the drone under his guidance and constant supervision. He said that he will apply for patent after his design is turned into a product.

He, however, will not sell the design but will build a brand and market the product, he said. The state government will provide him an accommodation for office where he will work on development of his drone. The state government has also promised to provide him financial and expert assistance to further his endeavour, he added.

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ID:ee.randbjyp@gmail.com,Tel & Fax:06854-231114(O)
No.5642 No.12.12.2022
No.B-946:Bid Documents consisting of work, Estimated Cost, Cost of Tender paper, BMD, Time of completion, Class of Contractors and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt. Website i.e www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

- Name of the Work : Civil Works as mentioned in DTCN.
- No. of Works : 3 Nos.
- Estimated Cost : Rs.7.84 lakhs to Rs.11.72 lakhs
- Period of completion : 3 months
- Date & Time of Bidding : From 11.00 hours of 12.12.2022 upto 17.00 hours of 22.12.2022
- Last date & time for receipt of bids in portal : 17.00 hours of 22.12.2022
- Bids received online shall be opened on : 11.00 hours of 23.12.2022
- Name and address of the Officer inviting Bid : Superintending Engineer, Jeypore (R&B) Division, Jeypore

Further details can be seen from the www.tendersodisha.gov.in
Sd./- Superintending Engineer,
Jeypore (R&B) Division
OIPR-34027/11/0007/2223

RESERVE BANK OF INDIA
Foreign Exchange Department
Pl. Jawaharlal Nehru Marg, Bhubaneswar - 751 001
www.rbi.org.in

PUBLIC NOTICE
Revocation of Full-Fledged Money Changer (FFMC) Licence - Sivani Forex Private Limited
In exercise of powers conferred on it under Section 10 (3) of the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, the Reserve Bank of India, has revoked the Full-Fledged Money Changer (FFMC) Licence of the following company for not applying for Licence renewal before expiry of its validity period.

Sr. No.	Name and Registered office Address	Licence Number	Issued on	Revocation Order Date
1	Sivani Forex Pvt. Ltd. House No.-409, 4 th Floor Janpath Tower, Ashok Nagar Bhubaneswar-751009	FE.BBN.FFMC/L-6/2019	November 01, 2020	October 31, 2022

Consequent to the revocation, the FFMC shall not undertake or transact money changing activities as specified in the Master Direction on Money Changing Activities dated, January 01, 2016, updated from time to time, and available on the RBI website (<https://www.rbi.org.in>). This is issued in public interest.
Bhubaneswar December 09, 2022
Sd/-
(Deputy General Manager)

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
E-Procurement Notice
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
SONEPUR (R&B) DIVISION, SONEPUR
E-mail - eepwdsnr@gmail.com Phone -06654-221081
CANCELLATION OF BID IDENTIFICATION
No.SE/R&B/SNPR/20/2022-23
Letter No.5074// Dt.07.12.2022
No.B-954:The bid for the work "Construction of Office-cum-Residential quarter of section Officer. (R&B) Section, Tarva in the District of Subarnapur for the year 2022-23" (Tender ID: 2022_EICCL_83505_5) invited vide Bid Identification No. EE/R&B/SNPR/20/2022-23 is hereby cancelled due to 1st time single participant bidder.
Sd/- Superintending Engineer
Sonepur (R&B) Division, Sonepur
OIPR-34081/11/0014/2223

SBI STATE BANK OF INDIA
STRESSED ASSETS RECOVERY BRANCH (SARB), Plot No.: 778,
First Floor, Maharshi College Road, Sahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007
POSSESSION NOTICE
(For Movable/Immovable Property) [Rule- 8 (1)]

Publication of Notice regarding possession of Properties u/s 13(4) of SARFAESI Act, 2002
Notice is hereby given under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, Demand Notice under section 13(2) was issued on the date mentioned against below accounts and stated hereinafter calling upon the following Borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the notice with interest within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower/Guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken 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 Act on the date mentioned against below accounts. The Borrower/Guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the **State Bank of India**, for an amount stated below with interest, costs and expenses thereon. **The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of the section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to them, to redeem the secured assets.**

Name of the Account / Name & Address of the Borrower/Guarantors	Owner of the Property	Description of the Properties Mortgaged / Charged	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession	Dues Amount
Borrower: Puran Alloy and Steel Pvt. Ltd., Plot No.: 1, Mancheswar Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, Pin- 751010 / Directors/Guarantors: 1) Sri Ashok Kumar Basa, 44-A, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India-751007. 2) Sri Tusar Mishra, Plot No.: 13, Satya Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, Pin- 751007	Puran Alloy and Steel Pvt. Ltd., at Plot No.: 01/P, Mancheswar Industrial Estate, Mouza: Gadakana, Pandra, Bhubaneswar of IDCO Bhubaneswar and the Land Schedule is as follows, Mouza: Gadakana, IDCO Plot No.: 1, Revenue Khata No.: 915, 822, 417, 471, 526, 571, 899, 571, 526, 526, 801, 801, 697, 870, 165, 165, 520, 229, 256, 104, 705, Revenue Plot No.: 4839 (P), 4841 (P), 4842 (P), 4844 (P), 4845 (P), 4846 (P), 4847 (P), 4848 (P), 4849 (P), 4850 (P), 4851 (P), 4852 (P), 4853 (P), 4890 (P), 4891 (P), 4892 (P), 4894 (P), 4901 (P), 4902 (P), 4895 (P), 4896 (P) respectively & Mouza: Pandra, IDCO Plot No.: 1, Revenue Khata No.: 300, 176, 372, 599, 747, 389, Revenue Plot No.: 453 (P), 454, 455 (P), 472 (P), 473 (P), 452 (P) respectively. (Lessor) (Property in the name of Puran Alloy and Steel Pvt. Ltd., (Lessee)), Bounded by North: Road, South: IDCO Plot, East: IDCO Plot, West: Road, Together with all buildings and structures thereon and all plant and machineries attached to the earth which are standing erected and permanently attached or shall at any time hereafter during the continuance of the security hereby constituted be erected standing and permanently attached thereto.		24.08.2022	06.12.2022	₹3,77,30,766.80 as on 23.08.2022 + further interest from 24.08.2022, costs, etc. thereon

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 08.12.2022
Sd/- Authorised Officer, State Bank of India, SARB, Bhubaneswar

“Whatsoever has courage can give courage to others just as the flame of the candle can light up another.”

THE MOTHER



FIFA's Follies

Count on the International Federation of Association Football, better known as FIFA, to come up with a fatuous slogan for the World Cup in Qatar: “Football Unites the World.” An official promotional video has Argentina’s Lionel Messi and Brazil’s Neymar mouthing the words in Spanish and Portuguese, respectively. Is it true? Does football really unite the world?

Of course not. It does not even unite nations. Back home in Brazil, the team’s yellow and green colours have been coopted by supporters of the recently ousted president, Jair Bolsonaro (backed by Neymar), which has annoyed supporters of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, backed by the team coach, Tite, and the dyed-blond striker, Richarlison.

The idea that sporting events unite the peoples of the world is an old obsession, going back to Baron Pierre de Coubertin’s invention of the modern Olympic Games in 1896. Sports, in the baron’s mind, and that of an endless succession of sporting officials, ought to transcend politics, international tensions, and any other discord. FIFA, too, subscribes to the fantasy of a world without politics, where conflict is confined to the playing fields.

In fact, the choice to hold this year’s tournament in Qatar, a tiny oil-rich sheikhdom with no footballing history or evidence of robust local interest in the game, is itself political. The country’s ruling emir craved the prestige of a global event, and Qatar had the money to buy it. Thick envelopes are said to have been slipped into the pockets of voting FIFA officials. And FIFA was richly rewarded for giving broadcasting rights to Al Jazeera, Qatar’s state-funded TV channel.

FIFA evidently was not bothered much by Qatar’s poor human-rights record, abuse of immigrant workers, and laws that punish homosexuality – certainly no more than even dodgier venues bothered the international sporting officials in the past. After all, the last World Cup tournament was held in Russia, which was already under international sanctions. And the 1936 Olympics took place in Hitler’s Berlin.

But the fact that tiny Qatar, the first Arab country to host the World Cup tournament, wields such clout shows how much power has shifted in recent times. And FIFA, like the International Olympic Committee, always bends to the power of money, making it clear that neither the players nor visiting European dignitaries should wear armbands with the words “OneLove.” That expression of support for people’s right to love who and how they want was seen as a political statement, and FIFA cannot allow sports and politics to mix.

Except that it can and does. It has been perfectly acceptable for Iranian, Saudi, or Qatari fans to express solidarity with the Palestinian cause by waving Palestine’s flag in the football stadiums. So, while the Dutch minister for sport, Conny Helder, could do no more than wear a tiny “OneLove” pin, the Qatari official sitting next to her calmly tied an ostentatious Palestinian band around his arm.

Only the German team protested openly against the ban on expressing support for sexual freedom, covering their mouths in a group picture. They were quickly told by FIFA to stop or face serious consequences. Any criticism of human-rights violations in Qatar was swiftly met with accusations of racism, backed by FIFA’s Swiss chief, Gianni Infantino, who reminded fellow Europeans of the “3,000 years” of Western imperialism. T-shirts bearing the words “woman” and “freedom” were prohibited as well, lest they irritate the Iranian theocracy, which is being challenged with those slogans at home.

So much for international unity. Just as notable is the lack of national unity. It was interesting to see how many Iranian women without headscarves were in the stands watching their national team. Even more remarkable was that demonstrators in Tehran and other Iranian cities, protesting the regime’s efforts to bask in the glow of football victories, cheered when their team lost to the United States, of all countries.

Most remarkable of all was the refusal of the Iranian players themselves to sing the national anthem before their opening match against England. They were warned by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps not to repeat this brave act of defiance in support of the demonstrations at home.

Then there was the extraordinary defeat of the young German team, which had tried to stand up for its sympathies. Like most national teams, the German side is multiethnic. One of their players, Ilkay Gündoğan, has a Turkish background. Jamal Musiala, their best midfielder, has a Nigerian father. And the top German defender, Antonio Rüdiger, is a Muslim whose mother is from Sierra Leone.

When the team failed to proceed to the knock-out stage, only because Spain lost to Japan, conservative pundits in Germany blamed a lack of the traditional German fighting spirit. Members of the far-right Alternative für Deutschland party even said that lack of spirit was due to the team’s desire to wear “woke” “OneLove” armbands. Even before this World Cup, the mixed national team was attacked in certain right-wing circles for not being truly German.

One of the ironies of modern football is that national teams whip up passions in a kind of carnivalesque performance of patriotic partisanship. That is why national rulers like to drape themselves in their country’s footballing colours. But the players themselves are mostly colleagues in club teams all over Europe, speak several languages, and are often close friends off the field, making them unsuitable avatars for this type of chauvinism. They are members of an extremely wealthy, truly cosmopolitan, elite – just the type right-wing populists like to hate.

So, the football stars are, in a sense, united, even if the World Cup unites no one else. Still, one can understand why FIFA chose its slogan. “Money makes the world go round” would have been a little too honest.

The writer is a Dutch author and editor.
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WISDOM CORNER

“Trust is the glue of life. It’s the most essential ingredient in effective communication. It’s the foundational principle that holds all relationships.”
STEPHEN COVEY

“Life is a succession of lessons which must be lived to be understood. All is riddle, and the key to a riddle is another riddle.”
RALPH WALDO EMERSON

“A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately at peace with himself.”
ABRAHAM MASLOW

WORDSWORTH

Destrier

You may still on occasion encounter this term for a knight’s warhorse, though these days it’s almost always employed by writers of historical novels. A work which is a science-fictional variation on the theme is Timeline by Michael Crichton (1999). The hero is sent back by time machine to medieval France but misses the last bus home. As a result he finds himself stranded in the middle of a civil war, having to cope with the armour and equipment of the well-dressed knight. This horse was gigantic, and covered in more metal than he was. There was a decorated plate over the head, and more plates on the chest and sides. Even in armor, the animal was jumpy and high-spirited, snorting and jerking at the reins the page held. This was a true warhorse, a destrier, and it was far more spirited than any horse he had ever ridden before.

CIVIC FINANCE CRUNCH

FOCUS URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The Reserve Bank of India’s recent release of the annual ‘Report on Municipal Finance’ is undoubtedly a good yardstick to assess the poor state of municipal finances in the country today. As is well known, the 74th amendment, which came into force in 1993, suggested 18 functions that local bodies have to manage. But sources of funds being too meagre and localised revenue generation being insufficient, urban development has been greatly affected. The demographic skew in rural and semi-urban areas has been very much manifest. Cities are treated like piggy banks to fund programmes outside cities while infrastructure requirements in cities languish, reducing their growth potential.



Dhurjati Mukherjee

THE DEPENDENCE ON THE DEVOLUTION OF TAXES AND GRANTS FROM THE UPPER TIERS HAS RISEN OVER THE YEARS



Ian Buruma

FIFA evidently was not bothered much by Qatar’s poor human-rights record, abuse of immigrant workers, and laws that punish homosexuality



Sources of funds being too meagre and localised revenue generation being insufficient, urban development has been greatly affected

essential services for urban population in India has consequently remained poor. The rapid rise in urban population density, however, calls for better urban infrastructure, and hence, requires greater flow of financial resources to local governments. With own revenue generation capacity of municipal corporations declining over time, dependence on the devolution of taxes and grants from the upper tiers has risen. This calls for innovative financing mechanisms.

RBI’s analysis of municipal finances for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20 reveals that the combined budget size of the municipal corporations in India is much smaller than that of the Central and state governments. The composition of municipal revenue in India has changed considerably over time, with increased reliance on transfers. Also, the ratio of revenue expenditure to capital expenditure is lower than that of the Centre and the states. The report noted that Indian cities are far behind in being able to generate the resources required for providing good quality infrastructure and services to their citizens and lack financial autonomy. India lags the levels achieved by OECD and other BRICS countries. It may be mentioned here that countries such as Austria, Greece, Ireland,

Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, Turkey, United Kingdom, were dependent on grants from the general government. However, the municipal finances of the developing countries and especially those in South Asia have been quite precarious like that of India.

Among the BRICS nations, the local governments in Brazil and Russia depended on general government grants whereas China and South Africa generated their own tax and non-tax revenues. Both China and South Africa generated more than 50% of revenue through tax and non-tax sources while India generated only about 40% through these sources.

As the report rightly suggested, the increase in urban infrastructure in the country has not been on par with the pace of urbanisation that has taken place in the last decade or so as the performance of the urban local bodies has been rather poor. The dependence on the devolution of taxes and grants from the upper tiers has risen over the years. Alternative sustainable resource mobilisation through municipal bonds needs to be explored as per the report.

India’s big development targets in areas like climate change, education and healthcare require a much higher degree of local autonomy. It goes without saying that

city governments need more powers to raise revenue and need to be aggressive in this matter. They need to invest these resources to improve the lives of urban citizens. Water, power, sanitation, roads are critical constraints in India’s desire to attract higher levels of manufacturing investment. Most studies predict India’s urban population will surpass its rural population around the 100th anniversary of the nation’s independence – around 2047. Once urban voters become crucial to electoral fortunes, state governments will have no alternative but to focus attention on city infrastructure. According to recent World Bank estimates, India will have to invest USD 840 billion over the next 15 years, or an average of USD 55 billion per annum into urban infrastructure to effectively meet the needs of its fast-growing urban population. Improvement of roads is of prime necessity in cities and towns and most of these are in pitiable conditions due to lack of repairs. For regular maintenance huge funds are required and for this toll tax may be levied. With the dwindling financial position of municipalities, there is possibly no other option but to resort to this method.

It is to be noted that the Adani group has been roped in for redevelopment of Dharavi, one of the biggest slums of the world. Such redevelopment can be considered in most metros with public-private participation, if necessary, as such development is sure to bring in money from sales of commercial spaces. How this project pans out is worth a watch.

However, overall, says the report, despite institutionalisation of the structure of local governance in India, there has been no appreciable improvement in the functioning of municipal corporations!

The author is Sr. Consultant & Guest Faculty of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kolkata.

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SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

The scope for multilateral climate finance

With climate change already affecting the lives and livelihoods of millions of people around the world, the need for a coordinated global response has never been more urgent. But to mobilise the huge sums required to finance the investments we need to ensure a climate-resilient future, the world must establish institutions that can support large-scale green projects and programmes in developing countries. Fortunately, we already have such institutions in place: multilateral development banks (MDBs).

When multilateral lending institutions emerged in the aftermath of World War II, some questioned their financial sustainability and capacity to mobilise private capital for public projects. But the MDB model has proven to be dynamic and able to leverage governments’ capital contributions many times over. Given their access to cheap funds, highly rated MDBs can also offer long-term loans at relatively low cost, making them well-positioned to provide the scale of support needed to address the complex challenges of climate change.

But the MDB model has yet to achieve its full potential. A recent independent report commissioned by the G20 finds that multilateral lenders are constrained by capital-adequacy requirements that place excessive limits on how much risk

they can assume. As a result, capital is being underutilized at a time when the world needs it most. The report recommends a series of measures, including more accurate risk assessment, that would enable MDBs to use capital more efficiently and increase their lending capacity. Over time, according to the report, these reforms could increase MDBs’ lending capacity by hundreds of billions of dollars without hurting their AAA credit ratings.

While implementing these recommendations requires further analysis, MDBs already have a significant advantage over other lenders: preferred creditor treatment. This longstanding practice puts multilateral institutions ahead of other creditors in sovereign-debt repayment. But private investors and credit-rating agencies are unsure how to quantify the value of this convention, because it is not written into bond and loan contracts. And the unavailability of consistent, detailed data about MDB credit performance heightens uncertainty about the effect of this mechanism on credit performance.

That is why the G20 panel commissioned an independent analysis to model the effect of preferred creditor treatment practice by comparing multilateral lenders’ credit performance to that of commercial lenders. The results were striking: based on publicly available

data, borrowing countries are 3-4 times less likely to default on sovereign loans owed to multilateral institutions than they are on sovereign debt owed to commercial lenders, and MDBs’ expected credit losses were 14 times lower. MDBs’ existing capital-adequacy frameworks, the panel concluded, underestimate the value of this preferential status, as do the methodologies of credit-rating agencies. More accurate risk weighting could free up substantial MDB capital, and greater transparency of MDB credit histories would also boost private-sector interest in lending alongside MDBs.

MDBs’ other major advantage is their ability to “call on” contingent government commitments and convert them into paid-in capital if they are at risk of defaulting on their obligations to creditors. But that has never happened, and analyses reviewed by the G20 panel found that such capital calls are extremely unlikely. Recognising that callable capital provides MDB creditors with additional financial security, rating agencies factor that into their bond ratings.

And yet most MDBs do not currently assign any value at all to their own callable capital. They should. Since such contingent commitments cover the extreme tail risk of default, multilateral lenders can safely adjust the risk parameters of their capital-adequacy frameworks to re-

ate more headroom for increased lending. Doing so would not materially increase risk and would preserve their bonds’ sterling ratings. MDBs can also innovate in ways that enhance their lending capacity. The G20 panel recommends that multilateral lenders use private insurance, securitisation, and third-party guarantees to free up space on their balance sheets. It also proposes offering new forms of hybrid non-voting capital to private and public actors, and for shareholders to extend temporary callable capital to support higher lending during crises. These innovations are scalable and adaptable to each lender’s unique circumstances. Moreover, they do not require changes in multilateral institutions’ articles of agreement, shareholding structures, or governance. They also have wider strategic benefits.

For the past few decades, multilateral lenders have excelled at prudent capital management. But by improving their capital efficiency, they could turn a successful model into a powerful tool for creating a sustainable, carbon-neutral world.

Frannie Léautier is CEO, SouthBridge Investment. Nancy Lee is senior policy fellow, Center for Global Development.
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Frannie Léautier & Nancy Lee

THE MDB MODEL HAS PROVEN TO BE DYNAMIC AND ABLE TO LEVERAGE GOVERNMENTS’ CAPITAL CONTRIBUTIONS MANY TIMES OVER

Combating corruption

Sir, Almost five per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of developing countries is drowned by the menace of corruption. The developed nations, too, are reeling under the onslaught of corrupt ways of their people and institutions. As American author John Steinbeck said it is not just power that corrupts, but the fear of losing the power that corrodes the corrupt. Fight against corruption has to be a part of culture. People that elect corrupt politicians are not victims but they are actually accomplices in the crime. Actually it is all about unchallenged privileges that give rise to moral and intellectual dishonesty. Since people’s indifference is the most fertile ground for financial manipulation, an individual has to lead from the front in the eradication of corruption. While bribe taking is a chronic problem, offering bribe is not considered so. It in itself is a statement because as there are ready bribe givers so there are many bribe receivers. The revolution has to come from within. Youth has a large role in acting as a catalyst of change because it is an age where the mind is generally free of corrupt ideas. The exuberance of youth, and fresh youthful ideas, can create an intensity that is required to further any anti-corruption movement. They know “corruption is a disease and transparency is its treatment.”
Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Row escalates

Sir, The Karnataka-Maharashtra border row has returned to haunt the two states, with pro-Kannada and Marathi activists targeting vehicles on either side of the interstate border. Leaders from both states took potshots and blamed each other for the situation. Two Maharashtra ministers supposed to visit Belagavi skipped their visit even as the deputy commissioner banned their entry. The border dispute fanned by political elements from both sides has created a law and order problem. But ultimately, the average person is affected as the violence and protests force businesses to shut down and buses to keep off roads.
NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Adieu Lapierre

Sir, French writer Dominique Lapierre, the bestselling author of the ode to Kolkata, ‘City of Joy’, has passed away. He has also collaborated with Larry Collins to write six books that sold more than 50 million copies worldwide. Through his book ‘Five Past Midnight in Bhopal’, Lapierre pushed the government and corporates to do more for the victims of the horrific Bhopal gas tragedy and keep the issue alive.
TS Karthik, CHENNAI

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

national

of the day quote

There cannot be any right to a man living in independent India to marry three-four women (without divorcing the previous spouse). We want to change such a system. We will have to work to give justice to Muslim women

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CHIEF MINISTER

The time is now ripe for the Indian economy to ramp up infrastructure facilities and create employment opportunities as a solution to resolve recessionary trends

NITIN GADKARI | MINISTER FOR ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

We have to do positive politics only. We are decent, honest and patriotic people. We have to maintain this identity in future as well. Many congratulations and thanks to all those workers of Gujarat who worked hard day and night

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Controversial author Farhat Khan arrested

Bhopal/Indore: Madhya Pradesh police on Thursday arrested Dr Farhat Khan, writer of a 'controversial' book, while she was undergoing dialysis at a Pune hospital, state home minister Narottam Mishra said. In a related development, the principal and a professor of Government Naveen Law College in Indore, which had allegedly kept a copy of Dr Khan's book in its library, were suspended following the report of a committee, officials said. "Controversial writer Farhat Khan was arrested in Pune when she was undergoing dialysis in a hospital there."

Parl passes Wild Life (Protection) Bill

New Delhi: Parliament Thursday passed the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill which seeks better management of protected areas and also provides for certain permitted activities like grazing or movement of livestock and bona fide use of drinking and household water by local communities.

Pak releases BSF jawan

New Delhi: A Border Security Force (BSF) jawan, who inadvertently crossed over to the Pakistani side in the Punjab sector, was handed back by Rangers of that country Thursday after he spent more than 30 hours in captivity, officials said. "A BSF constable, who had inadvertently entered the Pakistan territory during zero line checking-in area of border post Mauzam Base in Abohar sector, was safely handed over back to the BSF during a commandant-level flag meeting with Pakistan Rangers today at 17.10 hrs," a spokesperson said.

Tarn Taran blast mastermind held

New Delhi: The NIA Thursday arrested Bikramjit Singh, wanted in the 2019 Tarn Taran bomb blast case, at the Delhi airport after securing his extradition from Austria, an official spokesperson said here. The official said Singh, alias Bikkar Panjwar, alias Bikkar Baba, was arrested after his extradition process was completed by the competent authorities of Linz, Austria, in coordination with Interpol.



It is in the DNA of @BJP4Karnataka to reap political benefits out of controversies. Belagavi border issue, which could have been resolved through negotiations, is now allowed to grow so that BJP can take benefits

SIDDARAMAIAH | FORMER KARNATAKA CM

'MANDOUS' TO CROSS COAST NEAR CHENNAI

Moderate to heavy rainfall is expected in Tamil Nadu as cyclonic storm 'Mandous' over Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify into a severe cyclonic storm soon and then weaken gradually and cross the coast near here on December 9 midnight, the India Meteorological Department said Thursday



SP defends Mainpuri bastion

Out of the six Assembly seats in five states where bypolls were held Monday, the Congress and the BJP won two each while one each went to the BJD and RLD after counting of votes Thursday

AGENCIES

New Delhi/Lucknow, Dec 8: The Samajwadi Party retained the high-profile Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat, while the BJP wrested Rampur Sadar assembly seat in UP from it and Kurhani constituency in Bihar from the ruling Nitish Kumar-led alliance in results of the December 5 by-elections announced Thursday.

The ruling BJP in UP, however, lost Khatauli to Samajwadi Party ally Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD). The Congress retained its two assembly seats - Bhanupratappur in Chhattisgarh and Sardarshahar Assembly seat in Rajasthan's Churu district. The party is in power in the two states.

Dimple Yadav, the wife of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, defeated her nearest rival and BJP candidate Raghuraj Singh Shakya by 2,88,461 votes in Mainpuri, a pocket borough of SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav's family.

The win would provide some solace to Akhilesh Yadav after the defeat in the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections early this year and the loss of Azamgarh and Rampur Lok Sabha seats to the BJP in June bypolls.

Samajwadi Party ally Rashtriya Lok Dal's Madan Bhaiya defeated his BJP rival Rajkumari Saini by a margin of over 22,000 votes in Khatauli. Saini is the wife of former BJP MLA Vikram Singh whose disqualification from the state assembly following his conviction



Samajwadi Party candidate Dimple Yadav waves at supporters after her victory

in a 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots case necessitated the by-election.

Madan Bhaiya polled 97,071 votes, while Saini received 74,996, according to the Election Commission.

The BJP, however, for the first time won from SP leader Azam Khan's bastion Rampur Sadar which he represented before he was disqualified for his conviction in a hate speech case.

In Bihar, BJP candidate Kedar Prasad Gupta defeated Manoj Singh

Kushwaha of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U) by 3,645 votes in Kurhani seat.

The JD(U) had snapped ties with the BJP four months ago.

In the cliffhanger of a contest, Gupta polled 76,653 votes while Kushwaha finished with 73,008 votes. The by-election was necessitated by the disqualification of RJD MLA Anil Kumar Sahani.

The RJD is a constituent of the ruling Mahagathbandhan (grand

alliance).

"The victory is an affirmation of the people's faith in the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a resounding slap in the face of Mahagathbandhan which came to power by fraud and continues to cheat the masses", said Samrat Chaudhary, senior BJP leader and former minister, as he joined the jubilations outside the counting centre in Muzaffarpur.

Congress' Anil Sharma defeated Ashok Kumar Pincha of the BJP by a margin of 26,850 votes in Rajasthan's Sardarshahar assembly, with Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot describing it as "people's seal of approval" on his government's "good governance and public welfare schemes".

This is the 10th time the Congress won the seat since Independence. The bypoll was necessitated following the demise of senior Congress leader and MLA Bhanwarlal Sharma, who is Anil Sharma's father.

Congress candidate Savitri Mandavi won from Bhanupratappur Assembly a margin of 21,171 votes against her nearest rival Brahmanand Netam of the BJP, a poll official here said.

Mandavi, the wife of Congress MLA Manoj Singh Mandavi whose death necessitated the by-election, polled 65,479 votes, while the BJP's Netam secured 44,308 votes, he said.

Former IPS officer Akbar Ram Korram, who contested as an independent, gave a spirited fight and polled 23,417 votes.

EC accepts name change of TRS to Bharat Rashtra Samithi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, Dec 8: The Election Commission on Thursday informed TRS President and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao that it has accepted the name change of his party from Telangana Rashtra Samithi to Bharat Rashtra Samithi.

In a letter to the TRS chief, the EC cited a request from the party to accept its name change and said, "I am directed to refer to your letter issued on 05-10-2022 on the subject cited and to say that the commission has accepted your request for change in the name of your party from Telangana Rashtra Samithi to Bharat Rashtra Samithi. The necessary notification in this regard will be issued in due course."



The EC's letter was made known to the media by KCR's office. Telangana's ruling TRS on October 5 changed its name to 'BRS', heralding the party's foray into 'national politics.' A resolution to this effect was passed at the party's general body meeting here. Rao read out the resolution and announced that the party's general body meet unanimously resolved to change the name from TRS to BRS.

Following the communication

from the EC, the Chief Minister decided to organise the formation programme of BRS at the "auspicious time of 1.20 pm" on Friday and commence the official programmes relating to it, a press release from Rao's office said. On the occasion, Rao will sign on the EC's letter at 1.20 pm and send it to the Election Commission office, it said. Later, he will hoist the BRS flag followed by an inaugural ceremony.

The southern satrap asked the state party executive committee members, party district Presidents, ministers, MPs, MLAs, MLCs and all important leaders to attend the programme in Telangana Bhavan-the TRS (now BRS) headquarters.

SC: Jallikattu can't be termed blood sport



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 8: The Supreme Court said Thursday notwithstanding the cruelty involved in "Jallikattu" it cannot be termed a blood sport as nobody is using any weapon and the blood may only be an incidental thing.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice K M Joseph said though cruelty may be involved in the sport people do not take part in the event to kill the animal.

"Because there is death does not mean it is a blood sport. I don't suggest that people who are going to participate and climb on to the bulls are going there in order to extract blood in that event. People are not going to kill the animal. Blood may be an incidental thing," the bench, also comprising Justices Ajay Rastogi, Aniruddha Bose, Hrishikesh Roy and CT Ravikumar observed.

The top court, which Thursday reserved its verdict on a batch of pleas challenging the Tamil Nadu law allowing "Jallikattu", made

the remark in response to the submission of senior advocate Shyam Divan, appearing for some of the petitioners, who insisted "Jallikattu" is a blood sport.

"Blood sport used to be a very common event across the world and it involves animal, fight or contest and great degree of brutality and cruelty. Secondly, there is scholastic material which appears to indicate that there are movements across the world which diminished cruelty from citizen's perspective. This combined with legal awareness and general reforms," Divan said.

The bench remain unimpressed and asked, "How are you describing this as blood sport? Nobody is using any weapon. What is your understanding of the concept? Here people are bare handed. There may be cruelty involved but it cannot be termed as blood sport. Don't show us definitions. Tell us how?"

Divan submitted the term blood sport was used because it included killing or maiming innocent animals.

No peace for families living near shell of Noida twin towers

HEALTH EXPERTS WARNED THAT THE RESIDENTS OF THE HOUSING SOCIETY WERE LITERALLY CAUGHT BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Noida, Dec 8: Embattled residents of Noida's upscale Emerald Court complex must endure the deafening noise from machines drilling through the rubble of the razed twin towers well into the New Year, experts warn.

Mountains of earth, metal and concrete fly in the face of claims that workers had already carted away 60 per cent of 80,000 tonnes of debris of the skyscrapers demolished after the Supreme Court deemed them illegal and ruled that the remains of the 104-metre structures must be cleared by November 28.

Mayur Mehta of Edifice Engineering, which carried out the demolition and is overseeing the disposal of the rubble, said that the company had expected to be able to finish the work "in a month", but then came the ban on construction activities because of poor air quality and work was stopped for 25 days last month. "We are now going at full speed," Mehta told IANS.

He denied allegations of violating noise pollution rules at the site where Apex and Cayenne stood till the demolition of the two towers comprising 914 apartments in all August 28. "The ambience-level sound was 64 decibels (dBA), near



the machines it was 78 dBa and at Aster-2, which is closest to the site,

the level was 58 decibels," he said, adding the Central Building

Research Institute was part of the survey and that all stakeholders accepted the findings and deemed the levels safe for residents.

Normal conversation is 60 dBA and some Emerald Court residents using measuring devices or mobile apps said they had recorded up to 62 decibels from inside their frontline Aster-2 homes December 6.

"My submission is, Edifice should not crush reinforced concrete, which is not necessary for removing rubble, till the ground level," said Anish Bansal, a World Bank executive who lives in Aster-2. "They can leave structures in

basements alone, even if that means making an amendment to their contract with Supertech," Bansal told IANS. Acoustics levels of running excavators range between 75-78 dBA, while crawler-mounted rock drillers are even louder. At any given time, until 8 p.m. six to seven such machines work at the site, sandwiched between Emerald Court and ATS Village.

Others said the pace of work has slowed because of the quest for high-value iron. At least three residents were showing visible signs of the impact from pollution, which has impeded their speech and other functions.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 8: Several MPs Thursday urged the government to create sports infrastructure in rural areas and initiate measures to include rural youth in selections, as the Lok Sabha resumed debate on sports and steps taken by the government in this regard. The discussion had started in Lok Sabha March 31, during the Budget Session of Parliament.

Manickam Tagore of the Congress stressed that sports helps in building trust and said it gives confidence and builds trust in community. "The need for Bharat Jodo is an important process and Bharat Jito can happen only with Bharat Jodo," he said.

Tagore also suggested that private sector should be roped in for development of sports facilities in rural areas. "Private sector is also an important part of it. How is the ministry planning to encourage private players to support them?" Tagore said. BJP MP from Sikar Smedhanand Saraswati lauded Khelo India and said it remains to be seen how the flagship programme brings changes on the ground level.



Sea port construction resumes at Vizhinjam

The over four-month long protest was called off Tuesday after discussions between the leaders of the agitation and the Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 8: With the fisherfolk calling off their over 130-day-long agitation, for now, against the Vizhinjam sea port here two days ago, construction resumed there Thursday with trucks full of material rolling into the project site.

Visuals of the project site shared by a source in Adani Group showed the trucks loaded with construction materials rolling in and the surrounding area being devoid of protesters who were camped there

for over four months. The agitation was called off Tuesday and on the next day the protestors informed the Kerala High Court that the tent set up at the protest site outside the port was being removed.

completing the construction of the 2,960 metres long breakwater of which around 1,400 metres have been completed, the source said. Piling required for berth construction, main power sub-station, port operation building, gate complex, workshop and a third of the port approach road -- including two bridges forming part of it -- stood completed, the source added.

yard construction has also been completed.

The over four-month long protest was called off Tuesday after discussions between the leaders of the agitation and the Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

A large number of fisherfolk had been staging demonstrations outside the main entrance of the multi-purpose sea port at Mulloor near Thiruvananthapuram for over four months.

They had been pressing for their seven-point charter of demands that include stopping the construction work and conducting a coastal impact study in connection with the multi-crore project.

The agitators had been alleging that the unscientific construction of groynes, the artificial sea walls as part of the upcoming port, were some of the reasons for the increasing coastal erosion.

The protesters had attacked Vizhinjam police station on the night of November 27, injuring several policemen.

Plantation on 2L ha in NE to meet huge demand for rubber



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agartala, Dec 8: Under the NE-MITRA project, at least two lakh hectares of land would be brought under natural rubber (NR) cultivation in seven northeastern states with an investment of ₹1,000 crore to meet the country's growing demand for NR, Rubber Board chairman Sawar Dhanania said Wednesday.

He said that the northeastern states including Assam and Tripura, currently cultivate rubber in around two lakh hectares of land and annually produce 1.12 lakh tonne natural rubber.

Dhanania, who is in Tripura for the past four days and holding meetings with various stakeholders and state government officials, said that India is now producing 7 lakh MT of natural rubber against the requirement of 12.50 MT.

To meet the domestic requirement of natural rubber, the country needs to expand the rubber cultivation in more traditional and non-traditional areas, he told the media. He added that four tyre manufacturing companies would invest ₹1,100 crore to undertake rubber plantation over an additional 2,00,000 hectares in northeast India in the next five years and the mission has already started.

The Rubber Board has identified a vast stretch of land in the northeast region and West Bengal for rubber cultivation.

To a question, he said that intercropping in the rubber gardens and rubber cultivating areas is increasing with various other crops being produced.

Beekeeping (or apiculture) is also

a viable scheme in the natural rubber cultivable areas. Referring to his meeting with Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha, he said that to build up infrastructure, the state government would invest ₹500 crore.

Claiming that rubber cultivation is most eco-friendly, he said that rubber trees consume maximum carbon dioxide from the air and release maximum oxygen to nature. After 30 years, furniture with longevity was manufactured from the old rubber trees in the south Indian states and in Tripura. In the coming years, many more factories to make furniture from rubber trees are coming up in the country, Dhanania said.

Another senior Rubber Board official said that the area under natural rubber in the country in 2021-22 was 8,26,660 hectares and the tappable area under rubber was 7,18,800 hectares in 2021-22, only 5,26,500 hectares (73.2 per cent) has contributed to the NR production during the year. The average yield, measured in terms of production per hectare of the tapped area, increased to 1,472 kg per hectare in 2021-22 from 1,442 kgha in the previous year. India consumed 12,38,000 MT of NR in 2021-22, an increase of 12.9 per cent from the 10,96,410 MT consumed in 2020-21.

At present, Tripura, which is the second largest NR producing state in the country after Kerala, is cultivating natural rubber on 89,264 hectare of land and annually producing 93,371 tonnes of rubber, worth ₹1691 crore. About two lakh families, including tribals, are directly and indirectly associated with rubber cultivation in Tripura.

ASSAM SEES BIG SPURT IN HIV CASES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Dec 8: Since April, 2,269 people have tested positive for HIV in Assam, which is much higher than the previous two years, according to official data.

A total of 5,57,747 samples were tested from April to October this year. Of that, 2,269 samples turned out to be positive for HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), according to the Assam State AIDS Control Society (ASACS).

Among these patients were 131 pregnant women, it said.

In 2021-22, a total of 2,366 HIV cases were detected in the state, while it was just 1,288 in 2020-21.

ASACS Assistant Director Rajib Sarma said Assam has 25,073 people living with HIV (PLHIV) as per NACO HIV Estimation Report 2021. "Out of this, 45 per cent of PLHIVs are female. Children living with HIV are 3 per cent," he added.

The total number of people alive by taking Anti-Retroviral therapy (ART) is 10,765 in the state.

"The HIV prevalence rate in India is 0.21 per cent and the same rate in Assam is 0.09 per cent," Sarma said.

As far as the HIV prevalence in the districts is concerned, Kamrup Metropolitan has the maximum number of cases at 7,610, followed by Cachar at 5,200 cases, Nagaon at 1,602 cases and Dibrugarh at 1,402 cases.

"81.63 per cent is transmitted through heterosexual route, 5.54 per cent is through HIV-infected syringe and needles, parent to child is 4.76 per cent, through homosexual route is 4.61 per cent, 0.85 per cent through blood and blood products, and 2.61 is not specified," Sarma said.

To create HIV awareness among the people, the ASACS is using the press, outdoor advertising, folk arts and social media, among others.

K-Rail not shelved: Vijayan

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 8: Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Thursday informed the Kerala Assembly that the K-Rail project has not been shelved but is awaiting the Centre's clearance.

Vijayan was replying to the adjournment motion moved by the Congress legislator Roji M John.

"The project will change the face of Kerala as it is going to give a huge boost to the economy. The person who moved this motion states that this project has been frozen. This is not true as the DPR for this project has been submitted to the Centre and is awaiting approval and the clarifications sought by the Railway Ministry is also being worked upon," said Vijayan.

"As we await clearance, there has been a temporary redeployment of revenue officials to other projects. It is wrong to say that this project has been shelved," said Vijayan. No decision has been taken to withdraw the cases that have been registered against those people who tried to prevent officials from doing their duty with regards to the project, he added.



At this, Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan said that at no cost will they allow the destructive project to progress.

He said that the Congress-led UDF is always for the development of the state and will never stand against projects.

"But since this is a destructive project, we will not allow it to happen. Vijayan feels he will be able to persuade the Prime Minister and the BJP leaders to get the clearance, but, at no cost will we allow this project to take

off. Vijayan knows that this is not going to happen, but is still not ready to withdraw it," he added.

"The need of the hour is to withdraw cases against hapless people who protested across the state when their properties were marked for the project. Incidentally, if cases were to be registered against people protesting against projects, then it is against your own party men, who all along have opposed development," said Satheesan and demanded Vijayan to bring out a notification which

Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan said that at no cost will they allow the destructive project to progress

says that this destructive project stands withdrawn.

Metroman E Sreedharan was one of the first to term the K-Rail proposal idiotic saying it will never be implemented as it's neither economically feasible nor environmentally viable.

If completed, the K-Rail project will see a 529.45 km corridor connecting Thiruvananthapuram to Kasaragod with semi-high speed trains covering the distance in around four hours.

Both the Congress and the BJP are opposed to it given the massive cost exceeding Rs 1.50 lakh crore. Besides being an environmental and economic disaster, the project would be a huge burden for the next generation, they say even as Vijayan and his men have been saying the cost will be around Rs 65,000 crore only.

Int'l Tourism Mart gives necessary impetus to Northeast

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Aizawl, Dec 8: In a bid to rejuvenate the tourism and hospitality sector in the northeast, Aizawl, the state capital of Mizoram, hosted the 10th International Tourism Mart for the first time.

The event brought together the tourism business fraternity and entrepreneurs from the eight northeastern states.

Banking on the 'High on Happiness' index and its responsible tourism policy, Mizoram had chalked out grand plans to draw tourists to its lush green hills and

forests. Organised by the Union Ministry of Tourism, the objective of the International Tourism Mart is to highlight tourism potential of the northeast region in domestic and international markets.

The International Tourism Marts are organised in the northeastern states on a rotation basis.

While Mizoram hosted it for the first time, the earlier editions were held in Guwahati, Tawang, Shillong, Gangtok, Agartala, Imphal and Kohima.

The event focused on Priorities of G20 for Tourism Track, since



India assumed the G20 Presidency for a year starting from December 1 this year to November 30, 2023.

The Mart had been planned and scheduled to facilitate interaction

between buyers, sellers, media, government agencies and other stakeholders to create a buzz.

It included presentations by the eight northeastern states on their

tourism potential, cultural evenings, sightseeing visits to local attractions in and around Aizawl.

With ample natural beauty and a deep-rooted sense of culture and tradition, Mizoram is another northeastern gem that has great tourism potential.

Aizawl is situated at about 1,132 metres above sea level and is a beautiful and bustling 112-year-old city set on ridges of steep hills.

Once a remote village used as a British army fort, Aizawl has grown into a picturesque city.

With 90 per cent of the state's area under forest cover and its attitude

and pleasant climate being strong points, there is an ample scope for eco-tourism and adventure tourism also, offering a dream destination to enterprising tourists, reported Daily Pioneer.

"We have to use this occasion (G-20 meetings) to showcase our cultural richness. Our focus will be to increase the global investments not only in the hospitality industry but also to promote entertainment centres, adventure tourism, cruise tourism, and wellness tourism," said Union Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy.

Meghalaya: Drones to send medicines to remote areas

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE



Sangma said "We are seeing something that is unparalleled in any place of the world. It is a matter of pride for the state of Meghalaya that we would be the first state to institutionalise this initiative and have a system that can be expanded to other areas of the state as well."

Ramkumar S said that the ground-breaking effort intends to improve the universal access to healthcare in the state by delivering vital supplies like drugs, diagnostic samples, vaccines, blood and blood components quickly and safely to different regions of the state using a dedicated drone delivery network.

He said that the project aimed at providing access to life-saving drugs and other medical essentials to far-flung and hard-to-reach areas of the state.

'Lock up men as they create trouble, let women walk free'

KERALA IS YET TO BE FREE FROM ARCHAIC NORMS, UNDERSCORING THAT OLDER GENERATION SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO TAKE SUCH DECISIONS, SAYS THE JUDGE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kochi, Dec 8: The Kerala High Court Wednesday pointed out that if the object of a curfew in women's hostels in educational institutions is to ensure the safety of the inmates, then it should be the men who should be locked up.

A single bench of Justice Devan Ramachandran said that imposing curfew on women's hostel will not serve any purpose and nothing can be gained from mistrusting women students.

"Lock up the men, I am saying (this) because they create trouble. Put a curfew for men after 8pm. Let ladies walk out," he remarked.

He also said that Kerala is yet to be free from archaic norms, underscoring that older generation should not be allowed to take such decisions.

"How long can we keep our students locked up? Think, Kerala has not grown up and our students are required to be kept locked up. So be it, if that's what society wants. Let

CURFEW IN WOMEN'S HOSTEL



not these decisions be taken by people who belong to a different generation. As the saying, every generation is like a new country, we do not have any right to keep laws on the new generation," Justice Ramachandran observed.

He made the observation while

considering a plea moved by five female MBBS students and office bearers of the College Union of the Medical College Kozhikode, who approached the court to challenge a Government Order (GO) issued in 2019 that prescribed a condition restricting the entry and

exit of hostel inmates of higher education colleges after 9.30pm, without any reason.

The judge during hearing said that he is calling upon society to think about it and is opening the issue for discussion, if needed.

"When we shut down things like

during the Covid times, there were not many crimes other than the crimes within houses. All the frustration was taken on women within the houses. Always the attack is on women. I understand that mental health went down. Open up the city, but make it safe. So the state has the issue to ensure at least the campuses are safe. Parents are scared 'of' their children, they think children will be spoilt if left out after 9.30," he said.

He clarified that the court has no problem in imposing restrictions as Article 19 is not absolute. However, such restrictions must apply equally for all men and women and not one gender, he added.

"We keep rules for the hostel but relax it for men. That gives the impression that the girls are the problem for all concerned. That is all (that) I am saying. I am not accusing the government, the government is the reflection of society. When all parents want their daughters to be locked up, how can the government say no to that?" he asked.

international

of the day quote

Violence in South Sudan's Upper Nile State has forced many people to flee the country or hide in swamps

STEPHANIE TREMBLAY | ASSOCIATE SPOKESPERSON FOR ANTONIO GUTERRES

The cholera outbreak in Lebanon is under control. A new batch of vaccines are expected to arrive in December for the second phase of the vaccination campaign

FIRAS ABIAD | LEBANESE CARETAKER HEALTH MINISTER

Attempting to enjoy the safety, security, and freedoms of an open society, while secretly working to undermine that very society, is a hypocrisy that runs through every sanctions charge announced by the Task Force

ANDREW ADAMS | ASSISTANT US ATTORNEY

SHORT TAKES

NYT journalists, on 24-hour strike

New York: Hundreds of journalists and other employees at The New York Times began a 24-hour walkout Thursday, the first strike of its kind at the newspaper in more than 40 years. Newsroom employees and other members of The NewsGuild of New York say they are fed up with bargaining that has dragged on since their last contract expired in March 2021. The union announced last week that more than 1,100 employees would stage a 24-hour work stoppage starting at 12:01 a.m. Thursday unless the two sides reach a contract deal.

King Charles III 50p enters circulation

London: The first coinage featuring King Charles III will start to appear in circulation at Post Offices around the UK from Thursday, with millions of the new 50-pence coins bearing the new monarch's portrait given out as change to customers. The coin with the 74-year-old monarch's image reflects a transition from the Elizabethan age of the late Queen Elizabeth II to the Carolean era of Charles, with the coin also commemorating the life and legacy of the Queen on its reverse.

27 people lashed in public in Afghan

Islamabad: Twenty-seven people were lashed in public on Thursday in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan as punishment for alleged adultery, theft, drug offences and other crimes, according to a court official. Afghanistan's new authorities have implemented hard-line policies since they took over the country in August 2021 that have underlined their interpretation of Islamic law, or Sharia. The country's Supreme Court issued the final rulings after appeals. In a statement, the court said the lashings took place in the northern province of Parwan, with 18 men and nine women punished in all.

Israeli army kills 3 in West Bank raid

Ramallah: Israeli forces killed three Palestinians during an early Thursday raid in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian Health Ministry said, the latest violence to shake the region after months of unrest. The Israeli military said it was carrying out an arrest raid in the flashpoint city of Jenin in the northern West Bank when forces came under fire and then responded with live fire. The Palestinian Health Ministry did not disclose the men's identity, and it was not immediately clear if they were affiliated with a militant group.



The sale of US F-16 fighter jets to Ankara needs to be finalised as soon as possible

MEVLUT CAVUSOGLU | TURKISH FM

THREAT OF NUKE WAR RISING: PUTIN

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said the threat of a nuclear war was rising, but insisted Moscow had not "gone mad" and would not use its nuclear weapons first. Speaking at Russia's annual human rights council meeting, he also said the war in Ukraine could be a "lengthy process", the BBC reported



Harry, Meghan slam UK tabloids in new Netflix series

Harry, who along with Meghan stepped down from royal duties two years ago, said it was his duty to expose the "exploitation and bribery" of the media

REUTERS

London, Dec 8: Prince Harry said the British royal family had dismissed race-related hounding of his wife Meghan by the press as a rite of passage as the couple delivered a fierce attack on the media in their Netflix documentary series released Thursday.

Harry also drew comparisons between how papers had treated Meghan and the intense media intrusion that his mother Princess Diana had suffered. Diana was killed in a car crash in Paris in 1997 as her limousine sped away

from chasing paparazzi photographers.

In the first three episodes of the much-anticipated documentary, the couple - the Duke and Duchess of Sussex - made a series of disclosures, with Meghan recalling her first death threat, Harry talking about wearing disguises to their dates, and previously unseen footage of their son Archie.

In the series, Harry said both he and Meghan had "sacrificed everything", and that he was terrified of his wife being driven away by the media. Meghan's father is white and her mother is African



American. He also referred to "the pain and suffering of women mar-

rying into this institution" (the royal family). However, the initial

episodes held no bombshells for the royal family. The main focus was on their treatment from the British tabloid press and how it had impacted their relationship and ultimately led to their exit from official royal life.

The royal family had themselves been braced for renewed criticism since the couple delivered scathing attacks on some members, including his father King Charles and elder brother Prince William, most notably in an interview last year with TV show host Oprah Winfrey.

Their allegations of racism in the royal household were particularly

stinging, and the issue raised its head again last week when William's 83-year-old godmother stepped down from her honorary role as a royal aide after making "unacceptable" comments about a Black woman's heritage at a Buckingham Palace reception.

Buckingham Palace said it would not be commenting on the series. Netflix said that members of the royal family had declined to comment within the series, but a royal source said neither the palace nor representative of Prince William or other royals had been approached.

Griner freed in prisoner swap with Russia

The swap, at a time of heightened tensions over Ukraine, achieved a top goal for Biden but carried a heavy price



AGENCIES

Washington, Dec 8: Russia freed WNBA star Brittney Griner Thursday in a dramatic prisoner exchange, as the US released notorious Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout but failed to win freedom for another American, Paul Whelan, who has been jailed for nearly four years. "She's safe, she's on a plane, she's on her way home," Biden said from the White House, where he was

accompanied by Griner's wife, Cherelle, and administration officials. The deal, the second such exchange in eight months with Russia, procured the release of the most prominent American detained abroad.

Griner is a two-time Olympic gold medalist whose months long imprisonment on drug charges brought unprecedented attention to the population of wrongful detainees. Biden's authorisation to

release a Russian felon once nicknamed "the Merchant of Death" underscored the escalating pressure that his administration faced to get Griner home, particularly after the recent resolution of her criminal case and her subsequent transfer to a penal colony.

The Russian Foreign Ministry also confirmed the swap, saying in a statement carried by Russian news agencies that the exchange took place in Abu Dhabi and that Bout has been flown home Russian and US officials had conveyed cautious optimism in recent weeks after months of strained negotiations, with Biden saying in November that he was hopeful that Russia would engage in a deal now that the midterm elections were completed.

A top Russian official said last week that a deal was possible before year's end. Even so, the fact that the deal was a one-for-one swap was a surprise given that US officials had for months expressed their determination to bring home both Griner and Paul Whelan, a Michigan corporate security executive jailed in Russia since

December 2018 on espionage charges that his family and the US government has said are baseless.

"We've not forgotten about Paul Whelan," Biden said. "We will keep negotiating in good faith for Paul's release." Whelan's brother David said in a statement he was "so glad" for Griner's release but also disappointed for his family.

He credited the White House with giving the Whelan family advance notice and said he did not fault officials for making the deal. "The Biden Administration made the right decision to bring Ms. Griner home, and to make the deal that was possible, rather than waiting for one that wasn't going to happen," he said. In releasing Bout, the US freed a former Soviet Army lieutenant colonel whom the Justice Department once described as one of the world's most prolific arms dealers. Bout, whose exploits inspired a Hollywood movie, was serving a 25-year sentence on charges that he conspired to sell tens of millions of dollars in weapons that US officials said were to be used against Americans.

Russia attacks in east Ukraine

REUTERS

Ukraine, Dec 8: Russian forces attacked settlements in eastern Ukraine from the ground and air, officials said Thursday, in support of the Kremlin's apparently scaled-back ambition of only securing the bulk of Ukrainian lands it has claimed in the war.

Fighting was underway along the entire line of demarcation in the Donetsk region, with the front-line town of Avdiivka shelled by Russian tanks Thursday morning, said Tatiana Ignatchenko, a spokeswoman for the regional administration.

Near the city of Lysychansk, Russia deployed more troops to try to capture the village of Bilohorivka, Ukraine's governor of Luhansk region said, while a commander in another fought-over settlement described an intensifying Russian air offensive.



"They are bringing in more and more reserves," around Bilohorivka to try to capture the village, Luhansk governor Serhiy Haiday told Ukrainian television. "There are constant attacks."

In a reminder that despite the hostilities, Russia maintains lines of communication with the West, Washington said Moscow had freed U.S. basketball player Brittney Griner in return for the release of Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has given conflicting statements on the goals of the war since his Feb. 24 invasion, but is now clear the aims include some expansion of Russia's borders, in contrast with comments made at the start of the "special military operation," when he said Moscow's plans did not include the occupation of Ukrainian land.

Saudi Arabia, China sign strategic deals

REUTERS

Riyadh, Dec 8: Saudi Arabia and China showcased deepening ties with a series of strategic deals Thursday during a visit by President Xi Jinping, including one with tech giant Huawei, whose growing foray into the Gulf region has raised US security concerns.

King Salman signed a "comprehensive strategic partnership agreement" with Xi, who received a lavish welcome in a country forging new global partnerships beyond the West.

Xi's car was escorted to the king's palace by members of the Saudi Royal Guard riding Arabian horses and carrying Chinese and Saudi flags, and he later attended a welcome banquet.

The Chinese leader held talks with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, de facto ruler of the oil giant, who greeted him with a warm smile. Xi heralded "a new era" in Arab ties.

The display stood in stark contrast to the low-key welcome extended in July to US President Joe Biden, with whom ties have been strained by Saudi energy policy and the 2018 murder of Jamal Khashoggi that had overshadowed the awkward visit. The United



States, warily watching China's growing sway and with its ties to Riyadh at a nadir, said on Wednesday Xi's trip was an example of Chinese attempts to exert influence around the world and would not change US policy towards the Middle East.

A memorandum with China's Huawei Technologies [RIC:RICH.HWTUL], on cloud computing and building high-tech complexes in Saudi cities, was agreed despite U.S. unease with Gulf allies over a possible security risk in using the Chinese firm's technology.

Huawei has participated in building 5G networks in most Gulf states despite the US concerns.

Prince Mohammed, with whom Biden bumped fists instead of shaking hands in July, has made a comeback on the world stage following the Khashoggi killing and has been defiant in the face of US ire over oil supplies and pressure from Washington to help isolate Russia.

EU split over newest members joining ID-check-free zone

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brussels, Dec 8: European Union countries are weighing on Thursday whether the bloc's three newest members — Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia — can fully open their borders and participate in Europe's ID-check-free travel zone, but more delays to their entry appear likely.

A green light would be a boon for their economies. The so-called Schengen area is the world's largest free travel zone. It comprises 26 countries — 22 EU states plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. Almost 1.7 million people live in one Schengen country and work in another.

But full accession for the EU's newest members — Bulgaria and Romania joined the bloc in 2007, Croatia in 2013 — requires unanimous support from their partners, and objections were still being raised on the eve of a meeting of interior ministers in Brussels meant to examine their cases.

The three countries already partly adhere to the Schengen rulebook, but internal border controls have yet to be lifted. The hold-up has long been over concerns among the trio's partners about the reach of organised crime, unauthorised migration, and other security concerns.

Iran holds 1st execution over anti-govt protests

EVEN BEFORE THE RECENT UNREST, EXECUTIONS HAD BEEN RISING IN IRAN



IRAN HAS BEEN ROCKED BY PROTESTS SINCE THE SEPTEMBER 16 DEATH OF 22-YEAR-OLD MAHSA AMINI, WHO DIED AFTER BEING DETAINED BY THE COUNTRY'S MORALITY POLICE

AT LEAST 475 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THE DEMONSTRATIONS OVER 18,000 HAVE BEEN DETAINED BY AUTHORITIES

AGENCIES

Dubai, Dec 8: Iran said Thursday it executed a prisoner convicted for a crime allegedly committed during the country's ongoing nationwide protests, the first such death penalty carried out by Tehran.

The execution comes as other detainees also face possible death penalty for their involvement in the protests, which began first as an outcry against Iran's morality police and have expanded into one of the most serious challenges to Iran's theocracy since its 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Activists warn others could be put to death as well soon since activists say at least a dozen people so far have received death sentences over their involvement in the demonstrations.

The "execution of of

SHOCKING REVELATION

London: Iranian security forces are targeting women at anti-regime protests with shotgun fire to their faces, breasts and genitals, according to interviews with medics across the country, according to a media report. Doctors and nurses - treating demonstrators in secret to avoid arrest - said they first observed the practice after noticing that women often arrived with different wounds to men, who more commonly had shotgun pellets in their legs, buttocks and backs, The Guardian reported.

#MohsenShekari must be me with STRONG reactions otherwise we will be facing daily executions of protesters," wrote Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, the director of the Oslo-based activist group Iran Human Rights.

"This execution must have rapid practical consequences internationally," Iran's Mizan news agency reported the execution. It accused the man of blocking a street and attacking a security force member with a machete in Tehran.

The Mizan news agency, run by the country's judiciary, identified the executed man as Mohsen Shekari. It said he had been convicted in Tehran's Revolutionary Court, which typically holds closed-door cases that have been internationally criticised in other cases for not allowing those on trial to pick their own lawyers or even see the evidence against them.

Mizan said Shekari had been arrested September 25, then convicted November 20 on the charge of "moharebeh," a Farsi word meaning "waging war against God." That charge has been levied against others in the decades since 1979 and carries the death penalty.

Iran is one of the world's top executioners. It typically executes prisoners by hanging. Already, Amnesty International said it obtained a document signed by one senior Iranian police commander asking an execution for one prisoner be "completed in the shortest possible time" and that his death sentence be carried out in public as "a heart-warming gesture towards the security forces."

Covid spread fears grow as China unwinds curbs

REUTERS

Beijing/Shanghai, Dec 8: As many Chinese embraced new freedoms Thursday after the country dropped key parts of its tough zero-Covid regime, there was mounting concern that a virus, which had largely been kept in check, could soon run wild.

Three years into the pandemic, many in China had been itching for Beijing to start to align its rigid virus prevention measures with the rest of the world, which has largely opened up in an effort to live with the disease.

Those frustrations boiled over into widespread protests last month, the biggest show of public discontent since President Xi



Jinping came to power in 2012. Without saying it was a response to those protests, some cities and regions began relaxing Covid controls, in moves that heralded a nationwide loosening of the rules unveiled by the

National Health Commission Wednesday.

The NHC said infected people with mild symptoms can now quarantine at home and it dropped the need for testing and health status checks on mobile apps for

a variety of activities including travelling around the country.

Domestic ticket sales for tourist and leisure spots have soared, according to state press, while some people took to social media to reveal they had tested positive for the virus - something that had previously carried heavy stigma in China.

China reported 21,439 new local COVID-19 infections December 7, down slightly from the previous day and below a peak of 40,052 cases November 27. Cases have been trending lower recently as authorities across the country dropped testing requirements.

China and Hong Kong stocks lifted Asian equity markets on Thursday, as these still cautious

steps towards reopening were seen giving the world's second largest economy a chance to regather momentum. Macau casino operators (.CSCEG10) in part led the rally, finishing up 12.2%, sending their quarterly gain to 46.5%.

China's yuan, which has also recovered some ground against the dollar in recent weeks, was little changed Thursday.

More broadly, the shift will probably depress economic growth over the next few months as infections surge, bringing a rebound only later in 2023, economists said.

That growth will keep picking up pace with the implementation of relaxation measures, state media CCTV quoted Premier Li Keqiang as saying Thursday.

MANDATE 2022

GUJARAT REMAINS SAFFRON, CONGRESS BAGS HIMACHAL

Political analysts believe the Gujarat debacle is bad news for the Congress not only in terms of the scale of loss but also in ceding space to the Aam Aadmi Party that could challenge the grand old party in other two-party states such as Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh which go to polls next year

The Himachal Pradesh victory is significant for the Congress especially because its electoral clout in the north has been on a decline for more than a decade

The Congress Thursday suffered its worst-ever defeat in Gujarat but won a majority in the Himachal Pradesh assembly, a mixed bag for the party that not only faces a rampaging BJP but an ambitious AAP vying for the leadership of the Opposition in the run-up to 2024 general elections.



BJP leaders and workers dance to celebrate the party's decisive lead in Gujarat Assembly elections, in Bhopal



Congress candidate Sunder Singh Thakur flashes the victory sign as he celebrates his win in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly elections, in Kullu



Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves at supporters during the celebrations of BJP's victory in the Gujarat Assembly elections, at party headquarters in New Delhi

Political analysts believe the Gujarat debacle is bad news for the Congress not only in terms of the scale of loss but also in ceding space to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) that could challenge the grand old party in other two-party states such as Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh which go to polls next year.

While the grand old party wrested Himachal Pradesh from the BJP in line with the tradition of alternate governments in the hill state, it suffered a crushing defeat in Gujarat where it was winning just 17 seats in the 182-member state assembly. Its vote share fell sharply to 27 per cent from 42 per cent in 2017, with the AAP cornering most of these anti-BJP votes.

Former Congress leader Sanjay Jha, who had also been a party spokesperson, said the Congress is paying a "spectacular price for its self-inflicted mammoth Punjab disaster where it gave away the state on a silver platter with golden ribbons to its nemesis, the AAP".

That explains the dismal withering away in Gujarat and Delhi," he said. The decimation in Gujarat would not only have a bearing on the morale of the Congress and its workers that has been running high on the back of a successful rollout of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, but also impact the party's ability to mobilise support and resources for future electoral battles.

Manindra Nath Thakur, who teaches political science at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, termed the Gujarat loss a "disaster" for the Congress and said it could lead credence to the argument that the AAP may replace or challenge the grand old party in bi-party states.

Due to the votes given by the people of Gujarat, the AAP is today becoming a national party. The politics of education and health is making a mark for the first time in the country. Congratulations to the entire country on this

MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

Bhupendra Patel wins big; Rivaba opens account in style

With the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) scripting a record victory in the Gujarat Assembly elections for the seventh straight term, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel joined the party Thursday by routing his nearest Congress candidate by nearly 2 lakh votes at the Ghatlodia Assembly constituency in Ahmedabad district.



While Patel got 2, 12,480 votes, Congress' Ameer Yajnik finished a distant second with 21,120 votes. In Jamnagar North, BJP candidate Rivaba Jadeja, who's the wife of India's cricketer Ravindra Jadeja, made an impressive electoral debut by defeating AAP's Karshanbhai Karmur by close to 60,000 votes.

Among other prominent BJP candidates, OBC leader Alpesh Thakor won by 43,322 votes from Gandhinagar, Hardik Patel won from Viramgam by a margin of 56,215 votes, while senior leader Yogesh Patel won from Manjalpur by 1,00,754 votes. Meanwhile, the

In Jamnagar North, BJP candidate Rivaba Jadeja, who's the wife of India's cricketer Ravindra Jadeja, made an impressive electoral debut by defeating AAP's Karshanbhai Karmur by close to 60,000 votes

2017 GUJARAT POLLS: Key constituencies and winners

Vadgam
With a voter share of over 9 thousand voters, Vadgam, a key constituency in determining the overall Gujarat result, is scheduled for SCs
WINNER: Dalit activist and a staunch critic of PM Narendra Modi, Jignesh Mevani of Congress won this seat

Rajkot (West)
Rajkot (West) is the largest constituency in the Saurashtra region with more than 3 lakh voters. It is highly dominated by the Patels.
WINNER: BJP veteran and former Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani won from this seat

Mandvi
An RSS stronghold, the Mandvi constituency is located in the Kutch district. Its vote count in 2014 was of 2.24 lakh with a Muslim voter population of 50,000.
WINNER: Congress's Anandbhai Mohanbhai Chaudhari won this seat

Maninagar
Maninagar, popularly known as the 'Dadar' of Ahmedabad, has been Narendra Modi's constituency since December 2002. Modi won this constituency thrice before he became the prime minister in 2014.
WINNER: BJP's Suresh Dhanjibhai Patel won this seat



AAP FAILS TO IMPRESS

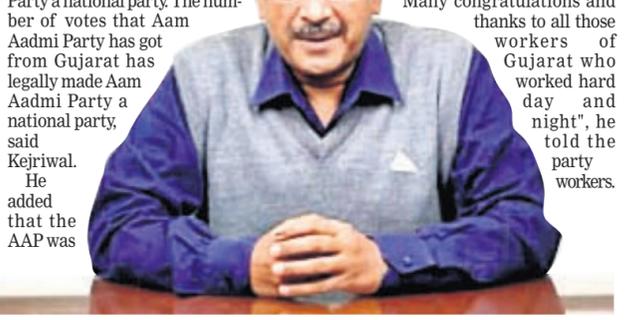
Aam Aadmi Party National Convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Thursday said that Gujarat is considered a stronghold of the BJP, but we have been able to breach this fort. Next time, we will win the fort, he told party workers.

"We are grateful to the people who reposed faith in us. This time we have succeeded in breaking the fort, next time we will win the fort", Kejriwal said in a video message to the party workers after the party fulfilled the required criteria to get national recognition.

"Many many congratulations to the workers of Aam Aadmi Party and all the countrymen. Your Aam Aadmi Party has now become a national party. The people of Gujarat have made Aam Aadmi Party a national party. The number of votes that Aam Aadmi Party has got from Gujarat has legally made Aam Aadmi Party a national party, said Kejriwal.

He added that the AAP was established as a small party just ten years ago and now the party has governments in two states and has become a national party. "I will be forever grateful to you for the love I got from the people of Gujarat every time I went to Gujarat during the elections. I learned a lot from Gujarat"

About his campaign strategy in Gujarat, Kejriwal said that we ran a positive campaign and never used foul language, did not speak against anyone. "We said that we have done this work in Delhi and Punjab and if we get a chance in Gujarat, we will do similar work. This is what separates us from other parties. "In the last 75 years, the politics of caste, religion, abusing and fighting has been going on. For the first time a party has come, which talks about the issues of the people of the country, talks about making the country number one, schools, hospitals, electricity, water and roads to take the country forward. We have to do positive politics only. We are decent, honest and patriotic people. We have to maintain this identity in future as well. Many congratulations and thanks to all those workers of Gujarat who worked hard day and night", he told the party workers.



Priyanka effect in Himachal as Rahul skipped



Heartfelt thanks to the people of Himachal Pradesh for this decisive victory. Hearty congratulations to all Congress workers and leaders. Your hard work and dedication are truly behind this victory



RAHUL GANDHI | FORMER CONGRESS PRESIDENT

As the Congress won in Himachal Pradesh, its leaders Thursday credited party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's campaign in the hill state for the good showing of the party in the assembly elections. Priyanka Gandhi led the party's charge in Himachal Pradesh with several rallies and was also closely involved in strategy planning for the polls. Many leaders hailed her leadership in securing the win for the party and defeating the BJP's election machinery. "Heartfelt thanks to the people of Himachal Pradesh for

giving the mandate to the Indian National Congress. This victory is the victory of people's issues and their resolve to progress. Best wishes to all the leaders and workers of the Congress party. Your hard work paid off," Priyanka Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi. All India Congress Committee (AICC) in charge of Himachal Pradesh Rajeev Shukla hailed Priyanka Gandhi's campaign and leadership, lauding the "hard work" put in by her. Senior Congress leader Anand Sharma also complimented Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for her "spirited" campaign in

the state. This is Priyanka Gandhi's first electoral success while heading the campaign charge. The party had lost Uttar Pradesh assembly polls while she spearheaded the canvassing there earlier this year. Party sources said the team of Priyanka Gandhi and Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, who was the senior observer for the polls, played an important role in formulating the election campaign. Based on the feedback, a systematic election campaign was prepared under the leadership of Priyanka Gandhi that involved framing of welfare schemes for women, youth, and employees, the sources said. During her rallies in Sirmour, Kangra, Solan and Una, Priyanka Gandhi raised the issues of Agnipath, inflation, unemployment and the old pension scheme.



Himachal Congress president Pratibha Singh flashes victory sign as she celebrates the party's victory in the Assembly elections

of the day quote

As one of the fastest-growing economies, the world's largest community of developers and a large start-up ecosystem, India is well poised to lead the AI revolution and establish itself as an AI innovation garage of the world

Urbanisation is going to be the key. By 2047, 50 per cent of the population will live in urban areas, if you don't have basic services in urban areas, then it is going to be a big challenge

As an industry, we are united on our ask that GST continues to be levied on the gross gaming revenue and not on the contest entry amount

SHORT TAKES

Layoffs continue

San Francisco: Chip-maker Intel has begun layoffs and is also offering thousands of manufacturing employees globally three months of unpaid leave as it aims to weather the poor sales amid global macroeconomic conditions. The company started its expected layoffs in California with at least 201 employees as "part of a broader cost cutting effort", reports CRN. After Zomato, Swiggy may lay off more than 250 employees or up to 5 per cent of its workforce starting this month based on their performances.

BharatPe-Ashneer fight gets uglier

New Delhi: Fintech unicorn BharatPe has filed a criminal suit against its former MD and co-founder Ashneer Grover and his family, seeking up to Rs 88.67 crore in damages for alleged cheating and embezzlement of funds. The suit, running into 2,800 pages, alleges that Grover, his wife Madhuri Jain and other family members created fake bills, enlisted fictitious vendors to provide services to the company, and overcharged the company for recruitment.

Blue tick for iPhone users may be hiked

New Delhi: Elon Musk is considering to raise the price of Twitter Blue subscription service with verification from \$8 to \$11 for iPhone users, keeping the 30 per cent cut that Apple takes on revenues from iOS apps on its App Store. According to a report in The Information, the micro-blogging platform has informed some employees that it plans to change the pricing of its Twitter Blue subscription service. The company executives are considering charging \$7 for Blue service for Twitter on the web and \$11 via iOS app on iPhones, the report said, quoting sources.

Inox GFL raises around ₹1,500cr

New Delhi: Inox GFL Group Thursday said that it has raised around Rs 1,500 crore across its entities in the last fortnight. The Inox GFL Group, recently embarked on a journey towards deleveraging across all its operating entities. Towards this goal the Group has been on a significant fundraising spree, raising almost Rs 1,500 crore across its entities in the last fortnight, a company statement said. This funding has been used to pare down debt substantially across its operating companies and consequently the interest outgo will reduce substantially, it added.



My sense is that there could be one more rate hike and that may be the time for thinking about a pivot, and maybe around 6.5 per cent as it looks today, subject to what happens to the world

UDAY KOTAK | MD, KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK

AIR INDIA TO REFURBISH FLEET

Full service carrier Air India said Thursday said it plans to refurbish its legacy wide body fleet, comprising 27 Boeing B787-8 and 13 B777 aircraft at an investment of \$400 million. This refurbishment will see a complete overhaul of existing cabin interiors, including the addition of latest generation seats and best in-class inflight entertainment across all classes, Air India said



India's top 100 firms create ₹92.2 trillion wealth in 5 years

Technology sector has been the largest wealth-creating sector between 2017 and 2022, followed by the financial sector

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 8: Two Adani group companies - Adani Enterprises and Adani Transmission - have uprooted the traditional leader Reliance Industries in annual wealth creation in 2022 so far, while the top 100 of them created a massive Rs 92.2 lakh crore of wealth, during the 2017-22 period, according to a report.

However, Reliance Industries has smashed all records to emerge as the largest wealth creator during the five-year period ending March 2022, says the leading brokerage Motilal Oswal in its 27th annual wealth creation study.

The Gautam Adani group companies have been rallying to dizzying heights in the year as the group snapped up many assets and di-

versified into newer areas.

The rally was so high that Adani September 16 became the second richest person in the world with \$155.7 billion, only second to Elon Musk who had \$253.5 billion of net worth, according to the Forbes real-time billionaires list. The spike was following the stocks of Adani Enterprises, Adani Ports and Adani Transmission hitting record highs on that day.

Adani, who owns 75 per cent each in these three companies, has added more than \$70 billion to his fortune in 2022 in mid-September. As against this, Ambani was pushed to the distant eighth slot with a net worth of \$92.3 billion.

Reliance Industries, Adani Transmission and Adani Enterprises are the biggest, fastest and the most consistent wealth



creators, respectively between 2017 and 2022. Adani Enterprises and Adani Transmission are also the top all-round wealth creators, said the report.

The study is based on the analyses of the top 100 wealth creating companies during the 2017-22 and the wealth created is calculated as change in the market capitalisa-

tion of these companies between 2017 and 2022, duly adjusted for corporate events such as mergers, de-mergers, fresh issuance of capital, buyback, etc.

These companies created Rs 92.2 lakh crore of wealth during this period, which is the highest ever so far, the report said, adding Reliance has smashed all records to emerge as the largest wealth creator during the five-year period.

This is for the fourth time in a row that Reliance has emerged as the largest wealth creator over 2017-22. This takes Reliance's overall No.1 tally to 9 in the last 16 five-year study periods.

While TCS, Infosys and HDFC Bank remain among the top 5 wealth creators, Adani Transmission is the fastest wealth creator for the second time in a row

with a CAGR (Compounded Annual Growth Rate) of 106 per cent, and Adani Enterprises is the most consistent wealth creator for the second successive year.

Over 2017-22, Adani Enterprises has emerged as the most consistent wealth creator, outperforming the Sensex in all the last five years, and offering the highest price CAGR of 97 per cent. The company is also the best all-round wealth creator, followed by group company Adani Transmission.

The technology sector has emerged as the largest wealth creator after a gap of eight years, while the public sector turned out to be the worst. The only public sector unit that created wealth is Gujarat Gas, but its contribution is just 0.3 per cent of the total wealth created.

FPIs bet on financial services

India's outperformance is expected to continue going forward as the US, Europe and China continue to grapple with their own problems including high inflation, possibility of slowdown in economic growth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 8: The Indian financial services space seems to be in a sweet spot as foreign investors have made a net investment of Rs 14,205 crore (\$2.1 billion) in the sector in November amid strong credit growth and manageable non-performing loan portfolio.

The investment comes following a net withdrawal of Rs 4,686 crore from financial services stocks in October on account of profit booking.

Overall, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have made a net investment of Rs 36,238 crore in the country's equity markets in November. Of this, the financial services sector attracted Rs 14,205 crore, which accounts 39 per cent of total investment made by FPIs in equities, data with National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) showed.

Most of the buying was concentrated in the first half of the month of November 2022.

Manish Chowdhury, Head of Research at Stoxbox, said the financial services sector is coming out of a lean period and is doing well due to a strong uptick in loan

- ▶ FPIs inject ₹14,205 crore in financial services in Nov
- ▶ FMCG stocks attract investment of ₹3,956 crore
- ▶ Inflows into Information technology stocks at ₹3,859 crore
- ▶ Auto stocks attract a total of ₹3,051 crore
- ▶ Oil and gas sector witnessed investment of ₹2,774 crore
- ▶ FPIs made a net investment of ₹36,238 crore in Nov



growth and manageable non-performing loan portfolio.

"We believe that an expected acceleration in capex spending should ultimately trickle down to enhanced incomes which would open opportunities on a wide range of financing frontiers including housing, vehicle, SME, etc. The margins of these companies should also benefit from low-cost deposits garnered earlier," he added.

At the end of November, assets under custody of the financial services sector stood at Rs

16.13 lakh crore.

After the financial services stocks, fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) emerged as the second most preferred sector with a net investment of Rs 3,956 crore. The inflow was mainly driven by steady consumption.

"Consumption stocks are drawing inflows amid steady private consumption in Urban India and expectations of a revival in rural demand given the healthy sowing of the Rabi crop," Hitesh Jain, Lead Analyst - Institutional Equities

at YES Securities, said.

According to Bajaj, commodity prices have fallen sharply in recent times which may have reduced the input cost for the FMCG company that could translate into expansion in margin for this segment.

The FMCG sector was followed by information technology at Rs 3,859 crore, auto at Rs 3,051 crore and oil, and gas sector at Rs 2,774 crore.

"IT companies remain attractive for FPIs given the under-ownership and considerable dilution in the valuation of IT stocks," YES Securities' Jain said.

On the other hand, consumer durables saw the maximum selling by FPIs in November at Rs 1,275 crore. Besides, power and telecommunications witnessed sales of Rs 1,100 crore and Rs 1,084 crore respectively.

As far as overall FPI flows are concerned in the equity markets, it will depend upon the US Federal Reserve's policy meeting which is scheduled on December 13-14. However, risk-on sentiments seem to have improved recently as prospects of rapid quantitative tightening cycle have receded amidst fallen bond yields.

Power deficit drops to 0.1% in Oct from 2% in April this year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 8: Power deficit or gap between electricity required and supplied has fallen from two per cent in April this year to 0.1 per cent, Parliament was informed Thursday.

"The gap between energy requirement and energy supplied has been reduced from two per cent to 0.1 per cent between the month of April, 2022 and October, 2022," Power Minister R K Singh stated in a written reply to Lok Sabha.

The data showed that the deficit was 2,752 million units (units) in April this year which came down to 124 MU in October, 2022.

The power deficit was 609 MU (0.4 per cent) in May, 796 MU (0.6 per cent) in June, 434 MU (0.3 per cent) in July, 465 MU (0.4 per cent) in August and 312 MU (0.2 per cent) in September.

In another reply to the House, the minister informed that as March 31, 2022, the coal stock position was 25.6 Million tonne (MT), or 9 days of stock, and it increased to 26.1 MT September 30, 2022 and further increased to 30.9 MT, or 11 days of stock, as November 30, 2022.

The coal stock available at coal-based thermal power plants of the country is monitored by the Central Electricity Authority on a daily basis.

Meanwhile India has achieved 165.94GW of renewable energy capacity till October as against the target of 175GW by 2022, Parliament was informed.

"Against the target of achieving 175 GW of Renewable Energy installed capacity by 2022, a total of 165.94 GW of renewable energy capacity (including large hydro) has been installed in the country as on October 31, 2022," Singh stated.

YELLOW METAL CRAZE

India gets first ever 'gold ATM'

REUTERS

Mumbai, Dec 8: From the outside, it looks just like a regular cash dispenser, but this is India's first ever "gold ATM", delivering gold coins at the click of a button in a country where gold is often seen as a safe and preferred investment.

Set up in the south Indian city of Hyderabad, the gold ATM is the brainchild of GoldSikka and dispenses gold coins that weigh anywhere between 0.5 and 100 grams.

A 100-gram coin is worth around \$7,000, making the need to hide your pin number from whoever's waiting in line behind you even more urgent.



"Instead of going to jewellery showrooms, they (customers) can come here directly and they can get the coins here," GoldSikka Vice President Pratap, who only gave his

END OF AN ERA

Queen of skies: Boeing rolls out last 747 jet

After more than half a century, the Boeing 747 has rolled out its last aircraft. When it was first produced in 1969, it was the largest commercial aircraft in the world, the first with two aisles

AGENCIES

Washington, Dec 8: An era of the Boeing 747 jet, dubbed as the 'Queen of Skies', has finally come to an end. The Virginia-based aircraft company Tuesday night rolled out its final 747 jumbo jet from Everett factory in Washington state of the US.

The final customer for the 'Queen of the Skies' is the cargo carrier Atlas Air, which ordered four 747-8 freighters early this year. The delivery of the final 747 to Atlas Air will be made in early 2023. The production of the jet, which is the world's first twin-aisle airplane, commenced in 1967 and spanned 54 years. As many as 1,574 such jets were manufac-

tured during this time.

The jumbo jet - which has taken on numerous roles as a cargo plane, a commercial aircraft capable of carrying nearly 500 passengers and as the Air Force One presidential aircraft - debuted in 1969. It was the largest commercial aircraft in the world and the first with two aisles, and it still towers over most other planes.

The 747's design included a second deck extending from the cockpit back over the first third of the plane, giving it a distinctive hump that made the plane instantly recognizable and inspired a nickname, the Whale. It took more than 50,000 Boeing em-



ployees less than 16 months to churn out the first 747. The company has completed 1,573 more since then.

But over the past 15 years or so, Boeing and its European rival Airbus released new widebody planes with two engines instead

of the 747's four. They were more fuel-efficient and profitable.

Delta was the last US airline to use the 747 for passenger flights, which ended in 2017, although some other international carriers continue to fly it, including the German

For more than half a century, tens of thousands of dedicated Boeing employees have designed and built this magnificent airplane that has truly changed the world. We are proud that this plane will continue to fly across the globe for years to come

KIM SMITH | VP AND GM FOR THE 747, BOEING

airline Lufthansa.

In India, the only airline that flew this airplane was Air India and inducted the 747 under its founder JRD Tata. The Maharaja's first B747 - Emperor Ashoka - had become a part of its fleet in 1971. The carrier had launched a new "Palace in the Sky" livery for this aircraft. However, the carrier's four B747s were deregistered by the DGCA.

India take on mighty Oz

Harmanpreet praises Powar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Navi Mumbai, Dec 8: Indian women's cricket team skipper Harmanpreet Kaur on Thursday denied any fallout with Ramesh Powar who has been sacked as the head coach with less than two months to go for the T20 World Cup.

In a repeat of the 2018 saga when Powar was replaced as the head coach after being at loggerheads with then captain Mithali Raj, the former India spinner once again faced the axe and was shunted to the National Cricket Academy, reportedly on request of Harmanpreet.

Harmanpreet, however, categorically denied the reports of rift and termed it a "decision" taken by the BCCI. "Well, it's nothing like that. I've always enjoyed working with Ramesh sir whenever I got an opportunity. We have learnt a lot from him and grown as a team," she said on the eve of their five-match T20I series against Australia.

"It's the BCCI's decision who's moved to NCA. He will work there as the spin coach, and whenever we'll go to NCA, Ramesh sir is always available."

The board has now roped in Hrishikesh Kanitkar as the batting coach of the team and he will be at the helm for the series against Australia. Former India all-rounder Kanitkar was in charge when they won a series in Sri Lanka and Harmanpreet said he's the "apt candidate" for the job and that the team is in the right hands.

Hailing his "calmness", she said: "We had a very good experience with him when we were in Sri Lanka. He was always available whenever it's needed. He brings a lot of experience to the team. We are only looking forward and how we proceed further. We are in right hands. We are fully okay with whatever the decision BCCI is taking."

"He's very calm. We needed someone who can give that calmness on the field. You would have seen that in the past at a crucial time, the girls need that support, someone who can guide with calmness and tell us what and how to do with some clear thoughts. We had experienced that in Sri Lanka."



Alyssa Healy and Harmanpreet Kaur pose with the winners' trophy, Thursday

She further said the team was very excited when they got to know that Kanitkar was coming on board. "It would have been difficult if it was a new coach, but we have already worked with Hrishikesh sir."

"I don't think there will be any problem. If a new coach would have come we would have to explain a lot of things, how we are working. He already knew the type of work we were doing. I don't think there would be any major changes. When we got to know that he's coming on board, the team got a lot of positivity because we really liked the way he worked with us in Sri Lanka."

The Indian skipper also spoke on the BCCI's decision to bring in pay equity which means the centrally-contracted men and women players would get the same match fee. As per the new policy, the women players will now get Rs 15 lakh per Test, Rs 6 lakh for an ODI and Rs 3 lakh for a T20I. The new pay structure will come into effect from the series against Australia.

"It's an outstanding decision taken by the BCCI. Equal pay is something that brings a lot of motivation to the current players and the upcoming stars. It gives a lot of responsibility; we know many people are watching us whenever we

go out and play. We want to give our 100 per cent."

"Definitely this was the first step. I'm sure there would be many more to come. I'm sure the BCCI must be thinking about (equal pay) in domestic cricket as well," Harmanpreet said.

"Domestic cricket is very important. Now, the Women's IPL is coming, and all those things will be important for domestic cricketers. There is money involved, and with that we will get a lot of good domestic matches. Things will come to you. We just need to perform."

Harmanpreet said their main objective is to win an ICC global title which has been missing from their trophy cabinet.

"We have to play good cricket now, taking a lot of responsibility as a team. Every tournament, we are reaching finals, but we are yet to win that big trophy. But the way we are playing, a lot of things have changed in the country."

India will play the first two T20Is at the DY Patil stadium December 9 and 11, before moving to CCI for the remaining three fixtures December 14, 17 and 20. The series will be a good preparation for the T20 World Cup in South Africa, starting February 10.



Indian women cricketers Shafali Verma (R) and Richa Ghosh share a light moment during the team's training session

Verma, who will lead in the U-19 World Cup next month, will be put under pressure by the Australian pacers considering her weakness against the short ball.

Jemimah Rodrigues has shown good form ever since returning to the national side while skipper Harmanpreet too has regained consistency. Harleen Deol and Yastika Bhatia have made a comeback after their prolific run in the Challenger Trophy.

Leg-spin bowling all-rounder Devika Vaidya has made a return to the T20 side after eight years and her presence lends variety to the spin attack full of left-armers and offies.

Renuka Thakur has been the standout pacer for the team over the past six months and she would be hoping for support from uncapped left-arm seamer Anjali Sarvani.

Australia, who will be led by Alyssa Healy in Meg Lanning's absence,

too have fresh faces in the line-up. Expectations are high from 19-year-old batter Phoebe Litchfield who is expected to fill the retired Rachael Haynes' shoes. The southpaw had spent a lot of time with Mandhana during the WBBL last year.

Ex-Ireland pacer Kim Garth and Heather Graham are also expected to make their Australia debut. Lanning is not part of the touring party as she has taken an indefinite break from the game.

Navi Mumbai, Dec 8: The build-up to the series has been far from ideal but the Indian women's cricket team will be keen to give a tough time to the all-conquering Australia in the five-match T20 rubber beginning here Friday.

With two months go for the T20 World Cup in South Africa, the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side should also exactly know where they stand following the five games.

Head coach Ramesh Powar was suddenly sacked three days before the series opener and former India batter Hrishikesh Kanitkar is now in charge of the support staff as the designated batting coach.

India managed to win the Asia Cup in October though they were guilty of experimenting a tad too much which cost them a league game against Pakistan.

In the recent past, India have managed to compete against the mighty Australia but failed to get over the line. One such case was their last meeting in the Commonwealth Games final in August when India threw it away after a blunder from Harmanpreet in the run chase.

The batting has a settled look with star batter Smriti Mandhana expected to score the bulk of the runs. Her opening partner Shafali

THE SQUADS

INDIA: Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Shafali Verma, Yastika Bhatia, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepthi Sharma, Radhika Yadav, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Renuka Singh Thakur, Meghna Singh, Anjali Sarvani, Devika Vaidya, S Meghna, Richa Ghosh & Harleen Deol

AUSTRALIA: Alyssa Healy (C), Tahliia McGrath (vc), Darcie Brown, Nicola Carey, Ashleigh Gardner, Kim Garth, Heather Graham, Grace Harris, Jess Jonassen, Alana King, Phoebe Litchfield, Beth Mooney, Elyse Perry, Megan Schutt & Annabel Sutherland

Labuschagne, Head tons prop Australia

Clarke hits out at 'inconsistent' Cricket Australia

Formers slam India's 'outdated' approach

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Adelaide, Dec 8: Marnus Labuschagne (120 batting, 235b, 11x4) and Travis Head (114 batting, 139b, 12x4) posted unbeaten centuries in a 199-run stand to lead Australia to 330/3 against West Indies at stumps on day one Thursday of the second cricket Test.

Labuschagne scored his third century in as many innings against West Indies. Head scored his first Test century on his home ground - Adelaide Oval - in the day-night match.

Both teams made injury-enforced changes following Australia's 164-run win in the series-opener in Perth last weekend. Marquino Mindley, one of three changes for the depleted West Indies, left the field with a hamstring strain after bowling just two overs on debut.

The Australians got on top early after stand-in captain Steve Smith won the toss and opted to bat first. Usman Khawaja (62, 129b, 9x4) shared a 34-run opening stand with David Warner (21) and 95 with Labuschagne for the second wicket before his dismissal for 62 triggered the only slight wobble in Australia's innings.



ON A ROLL: Marnus Labuschagne (L) and Travis Head walk off the field after the end of play on Day 1 of the second Test against West Indies, Thursday

Part-time seamer Devon Thomas (1/43) was the unlikely bowler to break the second-wicket stand, trapping Khawaja lbw from around the

wicket on the first ball of the 42nd over. Khawaja was given out and immediately reviewed the decision, but the third umpire confirmed the

dismissal and Australia was 129/2.

In the next over, former skipper Jason Holder (1/42) took a return catch off his own bowling to dismiss Smith for a duck as Australia lost two wickets for two runs in 11 deliveries. But Labuschagne and Head counter-attacked in quick time, restoring Australia's dominance.

Labuschagne cut Thomas to the point boundary to raise his 10th century in his 30th test, and third in succession in this series following his 204 and 104 not out in Perth.

Head was next, reaching triple figures for the fifth time in a test with a driven boundary through mid-off, continuing his dominance through the off-side. His century came off 125 deliveries.

West Indies skipper Kraigg Brathwaite cycled through seven bowlers in pursuit of a wicket on a pitch that favored the bat, with only Joseph (1/81), Holder and Thomas getting any rewards.

BRIEF SCORES
Australia 330/3 (Marnus Labuschagne 120 batting, Travis Head 114 batting, Usman Khawaja 62; Jason Holder 1/42, Devon Thomas 1/43) vs West Indies. Match to continue.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Melbourne, Dec 8: Former Australia captain Michael Clarke has accused his country's cricket board of double standards and making David Warner the "scapegoat" in its messy handling of his captaincy ban following the ball-tampering scandal.

Four years after the scandal, Warner is still living with the leadership ban while accomplice Steve Smith happens to lead Australia in the ongoing day-night Test against the West Indies.

Not prepared to let his family be the "washing machine for cricket's dirty laundry", an angry Warner Wednesday withdrew his application for revocation of lifetime leadership ban, saying the independent review panel wanted him to go through "public lynching".

Showing support to his former teammate, Clarke said the Cricket Australia's review of the scandal has been inconsistent. "You can tell he's disappointed and frustrated," Clarke said on Big Sports Breakfast. "I think the other thing that probably hurts a little bit more is the fact Steve Smith is going to captain this Test match."

"I can understand Davey's disappointment. In regards to where Davey is with his age, he's unfortunately missed out on the opportunity in my opinion. I don't think that's the concern, it's the fact it's taken so long to process this or to get to where it's at."

"I see it as very inconsistent. I find it very hard to believe it's okay for one but not okay for the other to have a leadership role. If CA decided all the guys involved in what went down in South Africa, none of them were going to play a leadership role, I think that's a fair call."

Clarke feels Warner has been made the scapegoat for the incident that happened in 2018. "But if it's okay for one, it's okay for Smithy, it's got to be ok for (Cameron) Bancroft and it's got to be okay for Warner."

"I don't know if it's fair to make David Warner the complete scapegoat and say everyone else can go back to normal. We'll forgive you but we won't forgive Davey."

Clarke further said he wasn't 100 per cent supportive of any of the three being involved in a leadership role and that the scandal would linger until they retire.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Mushfiqur Rahim appeals after KL Rahul was struck on the pads by Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Wednesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 8: Former players Virender Sehwag and Venkatesh Prasad has slammed India's "outdated" approach following their ODI series loss in Bangladesh.

Expressing anguish over India's miserable run in white ball cricket, former seamer Prasad urged the think tank to make "tough calls", while Sehwag urged Rohit Sharma and Co to "wake up".

In his usual quirky style, Viru took to Twitter to describe his anguish: "Cryptos se bhi tez gir rahi hai apni performance yaar. (Our performance is falling faster than cryptos). Need to shake up - wake up."

India earlier lost 0-1 to New Zealand in a rain-curtailed ODI series. Playing non-stop cricket, the star-studded Indian batters looked out of place while bowling has been below par.

That India have not won a major ICC title since their Champions Trophy triumph in 2013 was once again highlighted by Prasad.

"India is innovating in so many fields across the world. But when it comes to playing Limited overs cricket, our approach is a decade old," Prasad wrote in a series of tweets.

"England after the 2015 WC first round exit took tough calls and turned around to become such an exciting team, India need to take tough calls. And change approach drastically. We haven't won a T20 WC since the IPL started & last 5 years have been poor in ODI's apart from winning inconsequential bilateral."

"Haven't learned from our mistakes for too long and far from being an exciting team in limited overs cricket. CHANGE," he added. India will look to secure a consolation win in the third ODI in Chattogram Saturday.

Former coach Madan Lal lashed out at India, saying the team lacked "intensity and passion" and was heading in the wrong direction.

"Definitely the Indian team is not going in the right direction. I have not seen the intensity in the team off late. I have not seen 'Joshi' in them in the last couple of years," Lal told PTI in an interview.

"They are not looking like an Indian team at all. That passion of playing for the country is missing. Either their bodies are too tired or they are just going through the motions. And this is a serious concern."

Argentina face the Netherlands

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Doha, Dec 8: Lionel Messi up against Virgil van Dijk. The youngest coach - Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni - at the World Cup taking on the oldest - the Netherlands' Louis van Gaal. South America versus Europe. A back catalog of famous meetings.

The quarterfinal match between Argentina and the Netherlands has all the ingredients of a classic. And the possibility of it being Messi's final game on football's biggest stage just adds to the anticipation.

The seven-time world player of the year is three wins away from achieving his ultimate dream but he has two people, in particular, blocking his path.

It's set to be a clash of styles between two of football's historic powerhouses, with Argentina - a two-time champions - preferring to play a possession game and the Dutch - three times a beaten finalists - now typically playing on the counterattack under Van Gaal.

Prannoy out of semifinal race

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangkok, Dec 8: India's HS Prannoy went down fighting in three games to China's Lu Guang Zu in his second Group A match to bow out of the semifinal race at the BWF World Tour Finals here Thursday.

The 30-year-old from Kerala, who had lost to the same opponent in his only meeting at the French Open this year, put up a brave effort but couldn't go the distance, losing 21-23, 21-17, 19-21 in a gruelling 84-minute contest.

It was his second loss in Group A following the opening match defeat to Japan's Kodai Naraoka. The World No.12 Indian will face World No.1 and Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen in his final Group A match Friday.

Axelsen topped the group after beating Naraoka 21-5, 21-15 in a lopsided contest. The Dane had also defeated Lu in straight games Wednesday. With the top two players in the group making it to the knockout stage, it will be either Naraoka or Lu joining Axelsen in



the semifinals.

After losing the first set, Prannoy came back strongly and sealed the second set. The Indian also dictated the pace in the rallies in the decider and grabbed a 6-3 lead after a lucky net chord. However, errors again crept up in his game as Prannoy rushed on to a couple of shots and allowed Lu to turn the tables at 7-6.

The Chinese then used his speed and quick reflexes to enter the

final midgame interval with a three-point lead. Lu maintained the lead till 15-12 when Prannoy scripted a mini recovery to claw back at 16-16.

With the match entering its final stretch, both the shuttlers were celebrating each point with a fist pump and roar as they moved to 19-19. After an excruciating rally, Prannoy sent one long to hand his rival the match point and Lu sealed it when the Indian went wide.