



BHUMI'S VIEWPOINT

Actor Bhumi Pednekar says she believes that cinema can be a powerful tool to showcase progressive women on screen

LEISURE P2



UK ROYAL FAMILY FEUD

Prince Harry and his wife Meghan criticise the Royal family in new episodes of their Netflix documentary series

INTERNATIONAL P10



FRANCE REACH FINAL

France continue their FIFA World Cup title defence beating Morocco 2-0 in the semis to set up final with Argentina

SPORTS P12

SHORT TAKES

JEE-Main in 2 parts, starts January 24

New Delhi: Engineering entrance exam JEE-Main will be conducted from January 24 to 31, except on Republic Day, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced Thursday. The second session of the exam will be held in April. Applications for the exam will be accepted from December 15 to January 12. The exams will be conducted in 13 languages. They are English, Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu. "For academic session 2023-24, it has been decided that JEE(Main)-2023 will be conducted in two sessions," Sadhana Parashar, senior director (Exams), NTA.

Elephant deaths continue in state

Realam: There is no respite in pachyderm deaths in Odisha as a female elephant died after coming in contact with a live electric wire at an orange orchard in this block of Deogarh district here Thursday. The incident was reported from close to Khilabereni village under Chadheimara panchayat which comes under Kundeigola section of Realam forest range in the district. Officials stated that a herd of 17-18 elephants tried to enter the orchard in the wee hours of Thursday. At that time, one of the animals came in contact with the live wire and died on the spot.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



We need one more hall where people can come, buy tickets and boycott the movie!

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX			VARIATION
SENSEX	61799.03	↓	878.88
NIFTY	18414.90	↓	245.40
DOLLAR	82.61	↑	₹0.06
EURO	88.44	↑	₹0.34
GOLD	₹54,240	↓	₹434
SILVER	₹68,262	↓	₹1040

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
TEMP MAX	31.6°C	30.0°C	
TEMP MIN	17.9°C	17.5°C	
Humidity	67%	66%	Forecast
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	Shallow to moderate Fog likely



NEW LEASE OF LIFE: Fishermen release a huge whale shark, which had got entangled in the nets, into the sea at Putiyathura coast in Thiruvananthapuram, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

Smartphone ban for all entering Srimandir

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Dec 15: The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) said Thursday after a meeting of its managing committee that a complete ban would be imposed on carrying smartphones inside the 13th century shrine here from next month. The restriction will come into effect from January 1, 2023.

A similar ban was earlier imposed only for devotees, but now the restrictions will be applicable for everyone, including police personnel, servitors and employees, the SJTA said. Servitors will also have to deposit their smartphones before entering the temple premises, the SJTA added.

"Special arrangements will be made for the safe custody of the phones," SJTA chief administrator Vir Vikram Yadav told reporters. "Officials and servitors, however, can carry basic mobile phones which don't have the features of photography and videography," he added.

The decision to ban smartphones completely within the temple premises was taken after photographs and videos of the Sanctum Sanctorum went viral on social media.

Rijju fires fresh salvo at judiciary

In a fresh twist to the Centre-SC imbroglio, the Law Minister blames the Collegium system for the delay in appointment of judges

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 15: It seems that the war of attrition between the Union Law Ministry and the judiciary will continue for a substantial period even as cases continue to pile up across the country. Law Minister Kiren Rijju fired a fresh salvo Thursday at the Supreme Court and said that the government has a very limited role in the appointment of judges. In other words, he indirectly blamed the Supreme Court Collegium for the delay in appointment of judges to the various high courts.

Rijju was responding to a question in Parliament on the large number of pending cases when he doubled down on his criticism of the Collegium system of appointing judges. He said it was worrying that more than five crore cases are pending across India. The basic reason, the minister said, was the delay in appointment of judges.

"The government took many steps to reduce pendency of cases, but it has a very limited role in filling vacancies of judges. The Collegium chooses names, and apart from that, the government has no right to appoint judges," Rijju informed.

Rijju said the government had often conveyed to the Chief Justice



The government took many steps to reduce the pendency of cases, but it has a very limited role in appointment of judges
KIREN RIJU | LAW MINISTER

of India and High Court Chief Justices to 'send names (of judges) that reflect quality and India's diversity and give proper representation to women'. But the current system did not reflect the sentiment of Parliament or the people, he remarked.

"I don't want to say much as it may seem like the government is interfering in the judiciary. But the spirit of the Constitution says it is the government's right to appoint judges. It changed after 1993," Rijju pointed out.

Rijju also referred to the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act brought in 2014, which was scrapped by the Supreme Court in 2015. "Unless the procedure of the

appointment of judges changes, the issue of high judicial vacancies will keep cropping up," the Union Law Minister asserted.

It should be stated here that the Supreme Court had said November 28 that the Collegium system 'is the law of the land and the Centre has to follow it'. The top court had expressed anguish over the Centre not clearing names recommended by the Collegium to fill up the vacancies of judges.

A bench of Justices SK Kaul and AS Oka said a three-judge bench of the apex court had laid down the timelines within which the appointment process had to be completed and those timelines have to be adhered to by the Centre.

Odia girl stabbed to death in Gujarat

The victim meets the same fate as that of Shradha for insisting on marriage to her boyfriend of 3 years

POST NEWS NETWORK

Surat, Dec 15: In what can be termed as a rerun of the Shradha Walker murder case, an Odia girl has been murdered by her live-in boyfriend in this town of Gujarat. The body of the deceased, identified as Luni Das, was found lying in a pool of blood with multiple stab injuries near Anjani Industrial Estate here.

Luni, a resident of Bhubaneswar had allegedly been in a relationship with the accused Jagannath Gouda for the last three years. When she insisted on marriage, Jagannath decided to eliminate her, police informed.

In the Shradha murder case her boyfriend had chopped her body into pieces after strangling her. In this case Jagannath stabbed



Jagannath Gouda

Luni 49 times to ensure her death. Police said that Jagannath's action demonstrates the anger that he had towards Luni. The Crime Branch of this city zeroed in on the accused after examining over 500 CCTV footage and call details.

Police said that Jagannath had taken Luni to Surat from Bhubaneswar two weeks back. Initially he sweet-talked her to stay with him. Then he took her to a secluded place and stabbed the victim to death. He was so infuriated by the marriage demand that he stabbed her multiple times even

Cops get concrete proof against Aftab

New Delhi: Police have finally got some major material evidence in the murder case of Shradha Walker. A DNA test has confirmed that the bones that alleged killer Aaftab Poonawala led the cops to, in a jungle in Delhi's Mehrauli area and in Gurgaon, are of Shradha's. Traces of blood found in their flat too match with hers says the test report, carried out by using DNA samples from her father. She had been killed in May by Aaftab who had then chopped her body into pieces before throwing them away.

after Luni had died.

Joint police commissioner of Surat, Sharad Singhal informed that they are yet to get details as to when exactly Luni was murdered. However, the accused has confessed to the crime. "We have also learnt that he is a drug addict. He had developed the idea that Luni was mentally torturing him," Singhal said.

8 more held in Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Dec 15: Eight more persons, including Sambalpur Bar Association president Sureswar Mishra, have been arrested for their involvement in vandalism on the premises of the district court during the agitation demanding a separate Orissa High Court bench, police said Thursday. So far 32 persons have been arrested among whom are 23 lawyers, eight transgenders and a civilian. All the 32 have been produced in court and sent to judicial custody.

Police officials informed that in the days to come more arrests will be made as raids are continuing to apprehend culprits involved in the incident of vandalism.

Earlier, the Supreme Court held Wednesday that justification for having additional benches of the High Court in Western Odisha no longer exists as the use of technology has made the parameters obsolete.

The Supreme Court had also issued contempt notices to the advocates, who participated in the boycott of courts December 12.

Continued on P4

Nigerian nabbed for duping Odia woman

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: Sleuths of the Odisha Crime Branch has arrested a Nigerian national from Delhi for allegedly duping a woman in the state of ₹28.67 lakh, police said Thursday. The accused, identified as Patrick Chizorom Orajaka (35), was arrested from an apartment in Delhi. He was produced in a court in Delhi and has been brought on transit remand for four days to Odisha, an official of the Crime Branch said.

According to the official, the woman came in contact with the accused through Instagram and then subsequently started chatting on WhatsApp. After a few days, the Nigerian told the victim that he was coming to India to meet her.

However, the next day, the victim got a call allegedly from a Delhi customs officer who said that Orajaka has been detained for carrying 90,000 euros with him, which is against the rule. In order to get her friend freed, the victim deposited money in a phase wise manner in different accounts.

Later on however, she realised that she had been duped and filed a complaint. The police have seized 16 ATM cards, 12 mobile phones, 22 bank passbooks, 10 cheque books, 20 SIM cards, a laptop, passport and other documents from the accused.

Woman elopes with 'minor' lover in Bhubaneswar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: Love knows no bounds and can make people desperate. To fulfil their aspirations, lovers can go to any lengths. Even if it means breaking the law, the lovers are ready to take the risk.

One such incident has recently surfaced in the Odisha capital with a woman eloping Wednesday with allegedly a 'minor' boy while her husband was at work. While escaping, the woman allegedly locked up her father-in-law, who was sleeping at his residence. The incident has taken place in

Ganganagar locality under Airport police limits in the Odisha capital.

It has been stated by Sandip Nayak in his complaint to the police that his newly-wed wife Namita has eloped with her 'lover'. He alleged in his complaint that Namita has decamped with gold jewellery worth over ₹10 lakh and ₹1.5 lakh cash.

In his complaint, Sandip stated that Namita, with whom he had got married in February this year, took advantage of his absence and ran off with her boyfriend after locking her father-in-law while the latter was asleep.

As per the FIR, Sandip has alleged that Namita was having an extra-marital affair with a person called 'Raju' and had hatched a plan with him to run away. And she did so taking advantage of Sandip's absence.

Airport Police official said a case has been registered and the matter is under investigation.

Sources however, informed that this is not the first time that Namita has run away from her in-laws' place. They informed that Namita used to teach the person she has eloped with and the latter is a 17-year-old minor. The two used to stay close by, and the



boy used to frequently visit Namita's in-laws' residence for tuition. They had eloped once earlier, but had come back after a few days. The sources added that Sandip, despite objection from his parents, had accepted Namita back in his life.

Police are also keeping mum on the incident as they are yet to come up with the whereabouts of Namita. Her parents have also refused to talk to the media.

Sandip also refused to talk about the incident. He stated that he has told the police regarding his wife and her lover. He urged mediapersons to leave him alone.

leisure



JAMES GUNN SCRIPTS NEW SUPERMAN FILM

DC Studios co-head James Gunn has announced that he is writing a new feature film about Superman. In step with the new project, Gunn has also revealed that actor Henry Cavill will not return as the hero.

WILL SMITH LEFT STUNNED WHEN CO-STAR SPAT ON HIM

Hollywood star Will Smith was stunned when one of his 'Emancipation' co-stars spat in his face. The incident happened during an improvised scene for the slavery drama after Will's infamous Oscar ceremony slap to comedian Chris Rock.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES
You are bursting with enthusiasm about your career and relationships. At work, you will easily persuade people to jump onto your bandwagon. But look before you leap. If things take a downturn, says Ganesh, the onus will be on you.

TAURUS
In all probability, the fair sex will have a wonderful time in kitchen and at the dining table, foresees Ganesh. You may have family friends and close relatives coming over to your place in the evening. Romance will free-flow with your soul mate later in the day, says a beaming Ganesh.

GEMINI
Today, you will look more presentable than ever, predicts Ganesh. At work, you will employ new business strategies to succeed. By evening, you will give a demo of your supreme sense for style, especially when it comes to dressing up. Your spouse will be enamoured by your new avatar.

CANCER
Give priority to your life and prestige in stead of meddling in others' matters, says Ganesh. Your enterprising nature will give you prestige and respect. Ganesh suggests that you take time off from your chores and indulge in entertainment or travel.

LEO
Your efforts to conceal your basic nature will not escape the attention of others. So do not indulge in deception and remain true to your basic nature. You will need to become more serious about the tasks you are handling, and will need to take on more responsibility. Such an attitude will bring you success, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
A vital turning point is about to take place in your relationships and will dictate how they will progress. Today you will be preoccupied with the organisational details for a social gathering with friends and near and dear ones. Later in the evening, a member of the opposite sex will make the big difference between hope and despair.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will be able to get good news from abroad, which will prove beneficial to you after a long time. If you are a businessman do not be in any hurry to fill any tenders or sign any agreements. Ganesh says always remember - Prevention is better than Cure.

SCORPIO
Ganesh will shower his blessings upon you today. Burst that grey cloud of worries and live in present. Your heart is overflowing with love and affection, and guess who's the lucky one to receive it? All your near and dear ones!

SAGITTARIUS
Suddenly, your wisdom is at work today. You see things in a different light and in a practical way. You are spiritually inclined today and take up meditation. Professionally, planning to take a jump? Go ahead, as the day is favourable for interviews, says Ganesh. You may just crack one. Amen!

CAPRICORN
Relationships will amuse you, today. Your strong communication skills will help you solve problems and misunderstandings which could otherwise have damaged precious relationships. The first relationship that gets the benefit of this power will be your romantic relationship. Both of you may have gone through a rough patch in the past, but today, you will bring back the joy.

AQUARIUS
Today is your day, says Ganesh. You will impress one and all with your wit and humour. Icing on the cake will be your dedication for your job and responsibilities. You will feel very energetic and won't mind working on the behalf of others. In spite of the extra load, you will not feel tired or bored through out the day.

PISCES
You will try to change your present today. Ganesh knows you have been troubled since the past few days but now you will feel as though all your obstacles are slowly being removed and it will be true. Have faith in this and concentrate on your office and family.

Kiara wishes she was part of Gangubai

Mumbai: Kiara Advani has said she couldn't keep her eyes off screen while watching Alia Bhatt-starrer *Gangubai Kathiawadi*. She has expressed her wish to be part of a Sanjay Leela Bhansali film. The actor is currently awaiting the release of her film *Govinda Naam Mera*.

Kiara was asked about her favourite film of 2022 which she wished to be a part of. "I couldn't blink while watching that film. I thought Alia was phenomenal in the film. I think what Sanjay sir does, the way he brings it out of his artistes is... I wish I had been a part of something like that," she said in an interview.

Kiara was spotted at Sanjay Leela Bhansali's office in September this year, leading to rumours that the actor might feature in his next.

Sanjay is currently busy with the BAFTA Awards campaign for *Gangubai Kathiawadi*. The film is being submitted for BAFTA members' consideration in all categories including Best Film, Director, Adapted Screenplay, Leading Actress and Film Not in the English Language. IANS



SRK to promote Pathaan at FIFA WC

Mumbai: Top actor Shah Rukh Khan is returning after four years to the silver screen with his upcoming spy-thriller movie *Pathaan*, and he's leaving no stone unturned to promote the film. After treating audience to the first song *Besharam Rang* from the

album, SRK will now be seen during the final of ongoing FIFA World Cup in Qatar.

The *DDLJ* actor will be present at a studio along with Wayne Rooney watching the FIFA World Cup 2022 final between Lionel Messi led Argentina and Kylian Mbappe led France which is set to happen December 18. SRK took to Instagram Thursday to share the news with his fans as he uploaded a video which has action shots from previous matches.

He wrote in the caption, "Field par Messi aur Mbappe... studio mein @WayneRooney aur main... #Pathaan! 18 Dec ki shaam hogi shaandaar! Dekhiye #FIFAWorldCup Final mere saath, LIVE."

IANS



Bhumi loves playing woman of today

Mumbai: Actress Bhumi Pednekar through her choice of roles, picked to play heroines who do not shy away from proclaiming that they are equal to a man.

"I have always believed that cinema can be a powerful tool to showcase strong, independent and fiercely progressive women on screen. My journey in cinema is a living example of this because I have consciously chosen films that present the woman of today, a woman who other

women can connect with and relate to," says Bhumi.

She adds, "Dum Laga Ke Haisha, Badhaai Do, Toilet: Ek Prem Katha, Lust Stories, Sonchiriya, Saand Ki Aankh, Bala, Shubh Mangal Saavdhaan, Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare and now *Govinda Naam Mera*, I have always been inclined to play women who have not compromised on their dreams and wishes and stood up against patriarchy."

Bhumi adds, "I love playing women who challenge the status quo in society and change the lens on gender. I love playing women who are equal to men. I would like this to be my small contribution to Indian cinema and my calling card. I want that, through my body of work, I loudly speak about the need for equality."

On the work front, Bhumi has back to back releases in 12 months including the likes of *Bheed*, *Ajwaah*, *The Lady Killer*, *Bhakhshak*, and another announced untitled film.

IANS



Sonakshi named PETA's Person of the Year

Mumbai: Actress Sonakshi Sinha, who was most recently seen in the film *Double XL* and will be seen in OTT series *Dahaad*, has been named PETA's 2022 Person of the Year.

The animal rights non-profit organisation has conferred upon her the title in order to celebrate her actions to help spare the lives of animals killed for fashion and her strong advocacy for dogs and cats in need.

This year, Sinha appeared in a campaign against the use of animal leather for

PETA India, in which she brandished a bag dripping with blood to raise awareness of the more than 1.4 billion cows, sheep, goats, dogs, cats, and other animals who are killed in horrific ways to be turned into leather accessories for the end user.

She advocates for animal- and Earth-friendly vegan leather which are made from pineapple leaves, cork, fruit waste, and mushrooms. Past recipients of PETA India's Person of the Year Award include former Supreme Court Justice KS Panicker Radhakrishnan, cricketer Virat Kohli, comedian Kapil Sharma, and actors Alia Bhatt, John Abraham, Anushka Sharma, Sunny Leone, R Madhavan, Jacqueline Fernandez, Hema Malini, and Sonam Kapoor Ahuja.

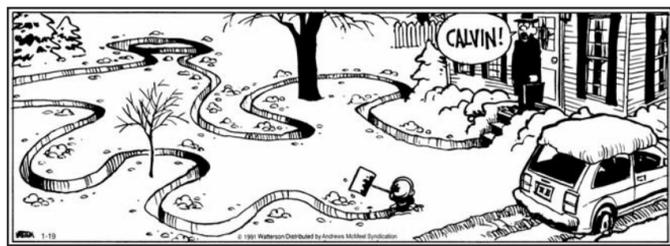
IANS



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

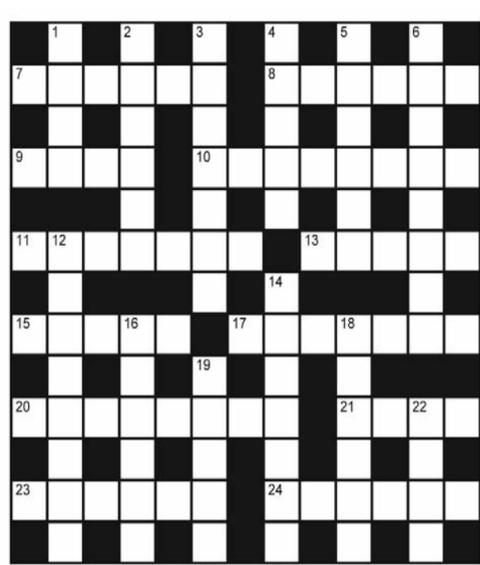


BREVITY



FUN post

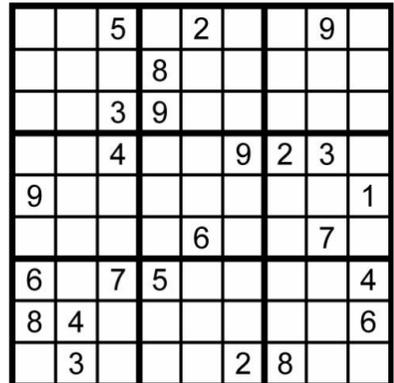
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Garment part
 - 8 Light source
 - 9 Big bovines
 - 10 Henry Fielding character (3,5)
 - 11 Put down, as a riot
 - 13 Wrinkled fruit
 - 15 Flower holder
 - 17 South African oryx
 - 20 Splendour
 - 21 Sail holder
 - 23 Common allergen
 - 24 It has an eye
- Down**
- 3 Jacket material
 - 4 Rascal
 - 5 Vessel lynchpin
 - 6 Pink wading bird
 - 12 Motive type
 - 14 Kipper
 - 16 Devoid of friends
 - 18 Boil slowly
 - 19 Redhead's dye
 - 22 Aria, e.g.

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.

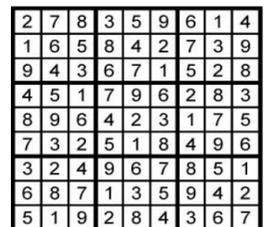


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

Parties roll up sleeves for likely early elections

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: Amidst a buzz in the state's political circle about an early election in Odisha, principal political parties - BJD, BJP and Congress - have rolled up their sleeves for a high-decibel fight.

Following a landslide victory in Padampur bypoll, the ruling BJD has planned to replicate the strategy in all the constituencies to ensure that the party comes out with flying colours in the next polls.

A crucial meeting of the BJD was held at Naveen Niwas here Thursday to review the Padampur byelection result and discuss the future roadmap.

"Padampur bypoll has become a model for us as we won it with a huge margin. If the formula we have applied in Padampur is executed in other constituencies, we will get similar results," said BJD leader Pradeep Majhi.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will visit Padampur next month to personally review the developmental projects, said senior BJD leader Prasanna Acharya. The BJD will make big plans for 2024, he said.

Similarly, Opposition BJP and Congress have also started exercises to be ready for the upcoming elections.



FOLLOWING A LANDSLIDE VICTORY IN PADAMPUR BYPOLL, THE RULING BJD HAS PLANNED TO REPLICATE THE STRATEGY IN ALL THE CONSTITUENCIES TO ENSURE THAT THE PARTY COMES OUT WITH FLYING COLOURS IN THE NEXT POLLS

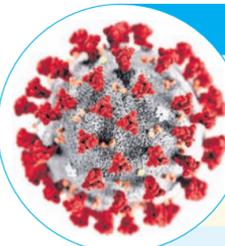
OPPOSITION BJP AND CONGRESS HAVE ALSO STARTED EXERCISES TO BE READY FOR THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS

As the BJP was able to defeat the ruling party in the recently concluded Dhamnagar bypoll, it has also planned to fight the next Assembly polls in a bigger way. State BJP in-charge Sunil Bansal



STUDENTS' DEMO

Members of All Odisha Students' Voice staged a protest at Higher Education Minister Rohit Pujari's residence in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, demanding campus polls



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	65,58,15,771	63,03,01,852	66,65,321
India	4,46,75,447	4,41,41,017	5,30,663
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

Cops record statements of Anand Tappo's kin

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: Commissionerate Police Thursday recorded the statements of the family members of Anand Kumar Tappo, who was found dead in an apartment in Infocity area here February 28.

Tappo's family reached the office of Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) here for the recording of statements under Section 161 of CrPC.

The deceased's mother told media persons that she used to treat international hockey player and Tappo's childhood friend Birendra Lakra like her son. She, however, expressed suspicion over the involvement of Lakra and Tappo's friend Manjeet Tete in her son's death. Police Monday questioned Lakra over the suspicious death. Tappo's father had also alleged during a presser that Lakra and Tete were involved in his son's murder.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Nag case: Pujari wants CBI probe

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 15: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Suresh Pujari Thursday requested the Union government to direct an investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into the high-profile honey-trapping and money laundering case in the state.

Pujari, who raised the issue under Rule 377 in Lok Sabha, said that prominent political leaders, businessmen, film producers, real estate dealers, bureaucrats and police officials are

reportedly honey-trapped by the accused (Archana Nag), who was allegedly running a high-profile sex racket to please wealthy and influential customers of different spectrums of the society.

"This incident has shaken the conscience of the people at large in Odisha and has practically put the system of our society in particular and the faith of the voters in democracy in general helplessly on the dock. This is not a good sign of a healthy democracy and will lead to a situation where the voters will start los-

This incident has shaken the conscience of the people at large in Odisha and has practically put the system of our society in particular and the faith of the voters in democracy in general helplessly on the dock

SURESH PUJARI | BARGARH MP

ing faith in elected representatives and bureaucrats," the BJP MP from Bargarh said. "I would request the Minister

of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions to take up the matter with the Odisha government and direct the CBI to investigate the entire episode, nab all the culprits and put all the accused persons to trial by a fast-track court to restore faith of people back on the system," Pujari added.

Significantly, Enforcement Directorate (ED), which is probing the money laundering angle in the high-profile honey-trap case, has taken Archana into on a seven-day remand and is interrogating her.



CLIMATE TALKS: Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan addressed a National Workshop on Climate Change, Climate Justice, Climate Action and Human Rights organised by World Human Rights Protection Organisation at Gitagovinda Sadan in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

State bags Agriculture Leadership Award '22

Bhubaneswar: Odisha Thursday received the Agriculture Leadership Award 2022 by Agriculture Today Group for playing a pivotal role in improving agricultural productivity. Adding another feather to its cap in the field of agriculture growth and development, Odisha has been awarded the coveted Agriculture Leadership Award 2022. Additional Secretary to Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment department Anjana Panda received the award in New Delhi. On the occasion, principal secretary of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment Arabinda Padhee said, "We feel motivated with the recognition and dedicate the award to all farmers of the state. We believe in a science-led, inclusive and sustainable agriculture development of Odisha. The appreciation of our work is humbling. We wish to do more." Odisha is largely a rural and an agrarian economy.

NHRC seeks reports on sewage tank deaths

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued notice to the Principal Secretary for the state Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department, commissioner of Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) and the twin city police commissioner seeking reports in connection with the death of two labourers while cleaning a sewage tank in Cuttack April 15, 2021.

While hearing a petition filed by rights activist Akhand, the commission directed the authorities to submit their respective enquiry reports within four weeks of the receipt of the report.

Akhand in his complaint demanded compensation to the victims and stringent action against erring officials holding the CMC authorities responsible for the unfortunate incident in which two poor daily wagers, P Shankar of Patapura area and Bishnu Nayak of Badamba area, perished.

The deceased were illegally engaged in manual scavenging to clean a sewage tank at CDA Sector 10 area in Cuttack.

The duo accidentally fell into the tank and sustained serious due to asphyxiation April 15, 2021. The next hearing on the matter will be conducted January 9, 2023.

Allocate funds for devpt of 11 rly stations: Sahu

New Delhi: BJD MP Chandra Sekhar Sahu Thursday urged the Union Railway ministry to allocate funds for the development of 11 stations in the state that would help them meet international standards.

The Berhampur MP, while speaking during Zero Hour in Lok Sabha, said the Ministry of Railways had announced the redevelopment of 12 stations in Odisha to meet international standards with superior passenger amenities and that an MoU was also signed in 2019 between Bhubaneswar Development Authority and East Coast Railway to construct a world class station building at Bhubaneswar.

"However, for the remaining 11 stations including Berhampur, Cuttack, Jharsuguda and Bhadrak there is no progress in construction and developmental activities. I, therefore, request the Railway minister to prepare an action plan and allocate funds for the proposed developmental works in the remaining 11 stations expeditiously as more than three years have passed and the expectations of people of Odisha have not yet been met," Sahu said.



Panda bats for Junagarh-Vizag DMU

BJP MP Basanta Kumar Panda Thursday requested Union Railway minister to commence DMU train from Junagarh to Visakhapatnam on daily basis and also make stoppage of Delhi-bound Samata Express at Nuapada railway station. Speaking during Zero Hour in Lok Sabha, the BJP MP from Kalahandi said that people of his constituency often travel to Visakhapatnam for treatment, shopping and during vacations. He said that people of his constituency are largely dependent on Visakhapatnam for shopping and medical purposes. "But there is no direct train to Visakhapatnam from Kalahandi and Nuapada. Both of these are aspirational districts. I request the Union Railway minister to consider my demands and take a decision at the earliest," Panda said.

Women's Reservation Bill will empower 66cr women: Patra



PARLIAMENT

New Delhi: Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Sasmit Patra Thursday raised demand for passage of Women's Reservation Bill, which seeks to grant 33 per cent reservation for women in Lok Sabha and state Assemblies. The BJD Parliamentary party leader in the Rajya Sabha, through a special mention, said that passage of the Women's Reservation Bill in the Parliament will be a historic step towards empowerment of 66 crore women of India.

"Especially when India is celebrating its 75 years of Independence and has the Presidency of G-20 now, by passing the Women's Reservation Bill in Parliament, India can set a shining achievement before the world. 33 per cent women's reservation through this Bill will give new opportunities of leadership to women and would help India become the best nation in the world," Patra said.

The BJD has been demanding the passing of Women's Reservation Bill for many years, Patra said, adding that in 2018, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had sent BJD delegations to 22 political parties and sought support from them for passage of

the Bill. "Many political parties also supported his initiative. In 2019 Lok Sabha elections, BJD chief Naveen Patnaik ensured 33 per cent Lok Sabha seat tickets of the party to women candidates and many of them are Lok Sabha MPs today," the BJD MP said.

Significantly, the Bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha in 2010 and sent to Lok Sabha. However, it could not be passed by the 15th Lok Sabha. Further, the Constitution amendment bill lapsed as the term of the 15th Lok Sabha ended.

Chandrani pitches for ST list modification

BJD Thursday sought inclusion of over 160 communities of the state in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list. The party supported the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Third Amendment) Bill, 2022, which seeks to modify the list of STs in Himachal Pradesh stating that it expands the possibility of inclusion of more tribes and sub-tribes under ST category. BJD MP Chandrani Murmu said that the tribal communities still need the constitutional status of STs, SCs and assistance under specific programmes. "They are being deprived of the benefits availed by other ST communities, though they have the same tribal characteristics as their respective notified STs. Nine communities of Odisha have been recommended for inclusion in the ST list of the state on priority basis. They are: Bhokta, Durua, Kalanga, Nakasia, Paba, Khandayat Bhuyan, Tamudia, Chapua Kamar and Kandhia. But no clarity has been provided on the progress of these proposals so far," Murmu said.

BJP MPs urge Mandaviya for Ayushman Bharat in Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: BJP MPs from Odisha Thursday urged Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya to pursue the state government for implementation of Ayushman Bharat scheme in the state.

A delegation of state BJP MPs including three Union ministers Dharmendra Pradhan, Ashwini Vaishnav and Bishweswar Tudu met Mandaviya in New Delhi Thursday and submitted a memorandum to him.

Almost all the states in the country irrespective of political lines are utilising the Central health scheme to benefit the people except



Odisha and a few others, denying the benefits of this well-crafted universal health scheme to citizens of Odisha, the MPs said in their memorandum.

They said the dwindling health-

care scenario of Odisha coupled with absence of Ayushman Bharat scheme is a major bane of Odias.

Universal health coverage in Odisha remains sporadic because of inequitable distribution of medical resources across the state. Poor rural healthcare infrastructure, gaping holes in medical and paramedic staff positioning, and access to diagnostics facilities remain major challenges in accessing healthcare services, the MPs said.

Acute shortage of medical staff and those in administrative positions grips the healthcare system in the state. Per capita availability of doctors and hospital beds are also one of the lowest in the country, they

pointed out.

The parliamentarians further said that Odisha has been ranked 14th for overall health performance among 19 large states in 2019-20, which is lower than neighbouring states like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

On state government's own Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY), the saffron party MPs said the scheme has limitation to cater to the tertiary healthcare needs of Odia people as it doesn't have a pan India portability/admissibility, enough number of empanelled hospitals, robust and fraud-free claim settlement process.

Despite having the State Health Insurance Scheme, most of the pa-

tients are being denied admissions to private hospitals even in the state citing non-availability of beds.

Also, Odisha is prone to distress migration which forces nearly 33.45 per cent of families in rural Odisha to migrate to other states in search of work. An estimated population of 1 crore Odias live outside the state for their livelihood, the MPs further pointed out.

Moreover, the government of India has recently announced that various state sponsored health insurance and benefit schemes can run parallelly. If the state wants to provide more than Rs 5 lakh benefit, partial funding for up to Rs 5 lakh will be provided by the Centre as per the existing scheme.

Continued from P1

8 more held in...

The apex court asked advocate Sibo Sankar Mishra, counsel for Orissa HC, to furnish the list of bar members and held that contempt notices will be issued to all the members as to why they should not be proceeded against and punished in accordance with law for contempt of orders of this court.

However, arrests of lawyers and others have created resentment among various quarters. Prohibitory orders around the court premises had been in force Wednesday amid deployment of heavy security forces.

"Five transgenders have also been arrested for their alleged involvement in vandalism inside a judge's chamber. Police are making the arrests on the basis of CCTV footage," informed Sambalpur SP B Gangadhar here Thursday.

Police stated that the prohibitory orders under Section-144 are still in place at Kacheri Chhak, the protest site, to maintain law and order situation. People are prohibited from entering within the 200 metres radius of the prohibited area.

Sanitation course for TULIP interns

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: A three-month certificate course on 'Sanitation Value Chain in Urban Odisha' for The Urban Learning Internship Programme (TULIP) interns commenced in Bhubaneswar recently. The launch of the first training module on Solid Waste Management (SWM) by Odisha Water Academy in partnership with Urban Management Centre (UMC) was inaugurated by G Mathi Vathanan, Principal Secretary H&UD.

Speaking on the occasion, Vathanan said that the programme has been designed to provide the TULIP Interns unique learning opportunity & real world hands-on learning in Municipal Solid Waste Management during the 3 months certification course. Further, he emphasised on the role of trained youth to drive changes in converting waste into wealth. The interns who will exhibit strong aptitude, commitment & put in sustained efforts during the internship programme will be retained as Sanitation Professionals. He clarified that the programme aims to impart domain knowledge, practical experience in urban sanitation, which will improve their professional competence & employability of the interns.

This is the first batch of TULIP interns who will be trained, groomed and mentored to be equipped with knowledge, skill, tool kit & social skills to handle the nuances, issues & challenges in urban sanitation landscape. The programme will create a cadre of 500 trained sanitation professionals across 115 ULBs of the State, who will work as sanitation experts to ensure effective management of solid & liquid waste in urban areas.

A tripartite MoU between H&UD department, Odisha Water Academy and Urban Management Centre was also signed in presence of Vathanan which will provide technical support for designing the pedagogy, training modules and capacity building of TULIP interns.

After successfully on boarding Women SHGs, Transgenders in Water & Sanitation, building the capacities of young fresh graduates/post graduates is an attempt to mainstream into urban sanitation.



Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ORSAC Prafulla Kumar Mallick presented the updates for discussion. Mahapatra urged various departments to make use of the data generated by ORSAC for project monitoring and more accuracy in delivery of services. He also directed ORSAC to emphasize more on citizen centric applications. It must focus on identifying formation of islands, shoreline dynamics, capacity of sand quarry,



REMEMBERING THE NOBLE SOUL: Auroville Foundation secretary Jayanti Ravi lighting the lamp at a programme organised on the occasion of 150th birth anniversary of Sri Aurobindo at JN Indoor Stadium in Cuttack, Thursday

Naveen launches devpt projects



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched several development projects worth around ₹214 crore in Jagatsinghpur district Thursday.

The Chief Minister virtually inaugurated four Mission Shakti Bhavans in Jagatsinghpur, Raghunathpur, Tirtol and Balikuda and dedicated a 10-bed ICU in the district headquarters hospital. Apart from this, the CM also laid foundation stones for 43 other development projects in the district, which, when completed, will benefit more than 12 lakh people of the district.

Speaking on the occasion, Patnaik said that in Paradip Biju Patnaik had laid the foundation for the industrial development of Odisha. Today, as a prosperous port of the country Paradip has created many opportunities for industrial growth and has become the lifeblood of our economy, he added.

Expressing his belief that the members of Mission Shakti in the district have become the leaders of development, the CM said that now

The Chief Minister said that ₹42 crore are being spent for the development of Maa Sarala temple and the work will be completed by December 2023

interest-free loans of up to ₹5 lakh can be given to them; a revolving fund of ₹1 crore has been set up for district level Mission Shakti Federation and ₹50 lakh has been kept for block level Mission Shakti Federation.

Throwing light on the health-care sector, Patnaik said that the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana has become a model for the entire country. Till date eight lakh people have received treatment under this scheme and the state government has spent more than ₹1,600 crore for this purpose. Appreciating the 5T High School Transformation Programme, the Chief Minister said, "102 schools have already been covered under the programme in Jagatsinghpur district and all the schools in the district will be covered in the fourth phase."

Stating that Maa Sarala temple has been included in the integrated development of heritage and monuments, and tourists destination plan, the CM said that ₹42 crore are being spent for the development of this famous Pitha and the work will be completed by December 2023.

Space-based surveillance application by ORSAC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: Odisha Space Application Centre (ORSAC) has made the way for space-based surveillance and imagery based remote sensing data in the sectors like forest, agriculture, mining, irrigation, land records, water resources, urban property assessment and natural resources. This was revealed in the 43rd governing body meeting of ORSAC held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra in state secretariat Thursday.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ORSAC Prafulla Kumar Mallick presented the updates for discussion. Mahapatra urged various departments to make use of the data generated by ORSAC for project monitoring and more accuracy in delivery of services. He also directed ORSAC to emphasize more on citizen centric applications. It must focus on identifying formation of islands, shoreline dynamics, capacity of sand quarry,

expansion of peri-urban areas, town development mapping, he said.

CEO Mallick appraised that during Covid pandemic days, ORSAC had developed



oped web based GIS to help in-bound migrant workers to locate their TMCs and mapping of Covid cases at Gram Panchayat levels. He also said that various Map API

City cop in Vigilance net

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: The state Vigilance Thursday carried out simultaneous searches at several places in Nayagarh and Bhubaneswar related to Abhimanyu Chaudhury, the sub-inspector of Tomando Police Station over the allegations of acquiring assets disproportionate to his known sources of income. The teams led by three deputy SPs, 11 inspectors, six ASIs and other staff raided the places on the strength of the search warrants issued by Special Judge, Vigilance here.

The house searches were conducted at one four-storeyed building in Paiknagar area of the city, a single-storeyed building at Nachhipur under Ranpur police limits in Nayagarh, the native village of Chaudhury and his office room at Tomando Police Station.

Vigilance sources revealed that the sleuths have so far come to know



that Choudhury and his family members own a four-storeyed building at Unit-18 Paiknagar worth over ₹1.5 crore, as many as eight plots which include seven plots in prime locations in and around Bhubaneswar and one plot in Nichhipur with registered sale deed value to the tune of ₹90 lakh.

The technical wing of the vigilance department has been examining the actual worth of the plots

Upgraded portal to make EV subsidy delivery easier

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: To make the disbursement of incentives on electric vehicles (EVs) more efficient, the state government is going to implement an upgraded EV Portal with Auto Disburse Model from December 25. The entire process will be automated, with the least possible human interface.

It was also informed that on the current portal application entry for the EV buyers will remain closed from December 14-24, as portal will go for upgradation.

The aim of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) is to bring efficiency to the process by eliminating the intermediary and transferring the benefits and subsidies directly to the bank account of the beneficiary on time.

On the benefits that will be

brought by the upgradation, joint commissioner Transport, Technical Dipti Ranjan Patra said, "This new portal will be made further robust by linking it with fund transfer portal of the banks. It will further expedite the process and will prevent any frauds as the beneficiary will receive the funds directly from the government treasury to their authenticated bank account. The account authentication will be done through National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)."

"The owners of the electric vehicles can avail the subsidy amount by logging on to odishatransport.gov.in->online services->apply subsidy for electric vehicles from December 25 onwards. The vehicle information would be automatically collected from Vahan Portal. The owner would be asked to give his bank details.

45 police officials booked by Vig

Bhubaneswar: The state Vigilance has booked 45 police officials including a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) under various acts of corruption during January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2021. The Vigilance Directorate, in a reply to an RTI application filed by noted rights activist Biswapriya Kanungo, revealed that 43 corruption cases have been registered during the above period. As many as nine cases have been registered against three inspectors and six Sub Inspectors (SIs) in 2017 while the vigilance has registered 16 cases against 12 SIs and four inspectors in 2018. The anti corruption wing of state government filed eight cases in 2019 involving four SIs, four inspectors and one Deputy Superintendent of Police. In 2020, three cases were registered against three SIs and one Inspector while the vigilance registered seven cases on corruption charges involving four SIs and three Inspectors in 2021. Meanwhile, the vigilance refused to share detailed information about the number of accused cops convicted, acquitted or facing trial.

and buildings owned by Choudhury as it suspect the real value would be much higher.

This apart, the sleuths also unearthed deposits to the tune of ₹78.80 lakh in various bank accounts, more than ₹1.75 lakh in cash and three two-wheelers worth over ₹1.89 lakh, one four wheeler

worth over ₹6.95 lakh. The Vigilance officials also found Choudhury possessing gold and silver ornaments and household articles worth ₹15.90 lakh. The sleuths have so far unearthed movable and immovable assets worth over ₹3.5 crore owned by Choudhury.

Elderly woman killed over suspected sorcery

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: An elderly woman was killed in Cuttack district, allegedly by one of her relatives who suspected that she practised witchcraft, police said Thursday.

The shocking incident reportedly occurred late Wednesday night at Chandanpur village under Tangi police station of the district.

The deceased has been identified as Meena Chatar. It was alleged

The accused and his family members have been suffering from an unknown disease. Suspecting Meena of practising black magic on them, Purti attacked Meena with a sharp weapon and fled the scene after killing her.

that a man of the village hacked Meena to death suspecting practicing witchcraft.

The deceased's son has filed a written complaint at Tangi police station accusing his neighbour

Begun Purti of killing his mother.

The accused and his family members have been suffering from an unknown disease. Suspecting Meena of practising black magic on them, Purti attacked Meena with a sharp weapon and fled the scene after killing her, alleged the victim's son.

Later, Tangi police, along with a forensic team reached the spot and sent the body for post-mortem. Further investigation and hunt to nab the prime suspect is on, said the police.

Fugitive wildlife criminal held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: The Special Task Force (STF) Thursday arrested an absconding wild life criminal during a raid at Baripada Forest Division in Mayurbhanj. The accused was identified as Fagu Prasad Hansda of Angarpada under the Udala police station in Mayurbhanj.

The STF sources claimed that Hansda had managed to flee the spot while his associate Dev Kumar Patra alias Sibhu was arrested by the STF in a raid Wednesday. The sleuths had seized a tiger skin during the Wednesday raid which was carried out with the help of Baripada Forest Division officials. STF had arrested Dev after registering a case (31/22) under sections 379, 411, 120(B) of the IPC and Section 51 of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

Hansda, a dreaded wild life criminal had earlier been arrested in Baripada Forest Division Case (76 of 2020-21) during illegal transportation of eight elephant tusks.

ITI residential course at CIPET-Bhubaneswar



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: Encouraging skill-based education, inaugural function for candidates pursuing a two-year full time ITI course was organised Thursday at CIPET, Bhubaneswar. The selected beneficiaries are sponsored by NTPC Darlipali from project affected villages and will pursue the course under electrician and fitter trade, with complete residential facilities.

Rohit Pujari, Minister of State, Higher Education graced the inaugural function in the presence of Ashim Kumar Goswami, Regional Executive Director (Eastern Region - II), Ajai Kumar Tandon, Chief General Manager (NTPC Darlipali) and other senior officials from NTPC & CIPET, Bhubaneswar.

Interacting with the candidates, Pujari praised NTPC for providing bright future to underprivi-

leged youth and encouraged the students to study judiciously.

Speaking at the event, Goswami said, "NTPC is not only producing power but is also empowering the youth of villages near project areas." He thanked NTPC for their contribution towards the future of the students from lower income groups and aligning them with the technical field.

The ITI Course programme will strengthen the capacity of youths from nearby villages of NTPC Darlipali for sustainable employment and will equip the young minds with the skill sets which would make them the major driving force for technology innovation and economic development.

This is the third batch of students (21 candidates) being sponsored by NTPC Darlipali. A total of 49 candidates have been sponsored by NTPC Darlipali for pursuing ITI Course at CIPET, Bhubaneswar.

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India test-fires Agni-V ballistic missile

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 15: India Thursday successfully test-fired nuclear-capable Agni-V ballistic missile having a range of over 5,000 km, marking a significant boost to the country's strategic deterrence, people familiar with the development said.

The test-firing of the missile from the Abdul Kalam Island off the Odisha coast came amid India's lingering border row with China.

Existing variant Agni-IV is capable of hitting targets at a range of 4,000 km while Agni-III has a range of 3,000-km, and Agni-II can fly up to 2,000-km.

The Agni-V missile has been successfully test-fired, two people familiar with the matter said.

There is, however, no official word on the test-firing of the missile. The test firing of the missile is part of the process for its induction into the tri-services strategic forces command.



The people said the test validated a number of critical aspects of the weapon.

In June, India successfully carried out a night launch of the nuclear-capable Agni-IV ballistic missile, in a boost to India's military capabilities. India has been steadily enhancing its overall military might in the last couple of years.

It has carried out successful tests of a number of missiles during the period.

In May, the extended range version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile was test-fired from a Sukhoi fighter jet.

It was the first launch of the extended range version of the BrahMos missile from a Su-30MKI aircraft. An anti-ship version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile was successfully test-fired jointly by the Indian Navy and the Andaman and Nicobar Command in April.

Death of six newborns in a fortnight rocks Borigumma



POST NEWS NETWORK

Borigumma, Dec 15: The back-to-back deaths of five newborns within a fortnight and the latest death of another Wednesday have sparked concern among the residents in villages under Borigumma block of Koraput district.

Newborns' deaths are increasing with each passing day. It is alleged that they are dying due to lack of proper care and treatment at the mother and child health centre. Their lives have been put to risk due to the negligence and whimsical attitude of the Health department and lack of awareness among people.

Reports said that a newborn hailing from Rengalguda Baliguda village under Pandasguda panchayat under Kotpad block died Wednesday. The deceased was the newborn son of Raibari Muduli and Indra Muduli in the village. Raibari gave birth to the baby boy at Borigumma community health centre, December 1.

The baby weighed 2.5 kg during birth and

both the mother and child were discharged from the hospital the next day, December 2. The baby's health condition was perfect at the time of discharge but suddenly deteriorated Tuesday night.

Family members were arranging vehicles to take the baby to the hospital but he succumbed before a vehicle could arrive. Later, the parents of the deceased newborn buried the body in their courtyard.

"Since the baby arrived home after discharge, no health personnel turned up at our residence to enquire about his health condition or conduct a health check-up," family members alleged. However, the back-to-back demise of six newborns within a fortnight has raised question marks on the availability of healthcare facilities in the block.

Expressing concern over the development, the Health department constituted a team and launched an investigation. However, the actual reason behind the frequent deaths of newborns is yet to be ascertained.

Earlier, three babies from Nuaguda village, one from Narigaon and another from Borigumma had died in quick succession within a fortnight. The actual reason behind each of the deaths is yet to be ascertained. The Health department has also not taken any serious measures to stop the deaths. Locals also alleged that the Health personnel posted in the rural areas are yet to take stock of the situation by undertaking visit to their respective areas.

Woman dies in freak mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Dec 15: In a freak mishap, an elderly woman died after a fragment of a waste injection syringe hit her eye while setting fire to a heap of garbage outside her house at Kulad village in Ganjam, Thursday.

The deceased was identified as Lakshmi Mohanty, 72, wife of late Jagannath Mohanty at Bilupadha under Tarsingh police limits. Medical outpost police registered a case and handed

over the body to her family members after post-mortem.

Police said that the woman had been staying at her son Santosh Mohanty's house in Kulad village for the last four months. The incident occurred when she went to throw the waste on the garbage heap after sweeping the front yard of the house.

She noticed that the garbage had been lying there since long and set it on fire. However, fate had some-

thing else in store for her. An injection syringe dumped in the waste suddenly exploded and a fragment from it hit her eye. She lost her sense and collapsed on the spot. Some women who were nearby informed her son.

Family members rushed her to the Bhanjanagar hospital first and later shifted her to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur after her condition deteriorated. She however, succumbed during treatment.

Residents stage roadblock in Keonjhar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Dec 15: Mineral transportation from mineral rich Keonjhar district came to a standstill Thursday as residents of Kandrapasi panchayat staged a road blockade on Palashpanga-Bamebari road over severe air pollution caused by dust due to operation of mineral-laden vehicles as well as bad road condition.

The road connects Palashpanga under Sadar block with Bamebari under Joda block. It is daily used by thousands of iron ore and other mineral-laden trucks to various mines in the district. The road blockade threw traffic out of gear on the route as thousands of mineral-laden trucks, tippers, trailers and Haiwa vehicles were stranded on both sides of the route due to the agitation.

Women of the panchayat were seen spearheading the agitation while no official was learnt to have reached the spot when last reports came in. Police rushed to the spot and tried to placate the agitators but they refused to listen.

The 28-km long road was constructed after the formation of Keonjhar Infrastructure Development Company (KIDCO) comprising the mineral and industrial firms as well as the administration. The mining firms sanctioned funds for the construction of the road by



taking loans from the banks. Later, a toll gate was established to raise funds spent on the road construction. The project failed to become financially viable due to mismanagement.

Later, the road developed cracks at many places and potholes appeared on the road as no repair work was undertaken due to paucity of funds. The bad shape of the road resulted in frequent mishaps on the route leading to loss of lives and properties. The dust pollution has made life miserable for residents in over 10 panchayats adjacent to the road. Dust particles settle on and inside the houses along the route. People are suffocated due to air polluted by floating dust particles. A thick layer of dust can be seen spread on the houses, plants and trees in the backyard, farmlands and water bodies affecting humans and livestock alike.

The ambient air is always too hazy making it difficult for people to see and commute even in the day time. The villagers alleged that though they had drawn attention of the administration, their pleas were never addressed. Left with no option, they staged a road blockade. Kandrapasi sarpanch Ayodhya Nayak said that earlier water was being sprinkled to check the dust pollution but now that practice has also been stopped.

Environmentalist Pradip Mohanty said that this has happened due to lack of coordination among the various mining firms.

Sadar IIC Sunil Kar said the companies have been asked to sprinkle water at regular intervals and informed them to come for discussion. The local tehsildar has been apprised of it and very soon the matter will be resolved, he added.

Woman killed by brother-in-law

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jeypore, Dec 15: A woman was killed while trying to end a fight between her younger sister and brother-in-law at Bariniput under Jeypore Sadar police limits in Koraput district, Thursday.

The deceased was identified as Nargis Nayak in the area. The accused was identified as Upendra Bhandari,

her brother-in-law and husband of her younger sister Sharmila Bhandari, was arrested.

The incident occurred when Upendra and his wife Sharmila were locked in a bitter fight over some issues, Thursday. Nargis tried to separate the couple and end the fight between them. In a fit of rage, Upendra pushed Nargis as she tried

to intervene.

As a result, Nargis' head got banged against a wall and she sustained critical injuries. She was rushed to the district headquarters hospital in Jeypore where doctors pronounced her dead on arrival. Sadar police registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem. The accused Upendra was arrested and produced in court.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

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Advised Value (₹) : 10,21,42,174.70, EMD (₹) : 6,60,700/-, Tender Document Cost (₹) : 11,800/-, Period of Completion : 24 Months.

Bidding Start Date : 26.12.2022, Tender Closing Date and Time : At 15:30 Hrs. of 09.01.2023.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Complete details and Tender documents will be available at website <https://www.reps.gov.in>

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				From	To	3	4	5	6
1	Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Bargarh	ONLINE- BGH-15 OF 2022-23	As per DTCN	22.12.2022 at 11.00 A.M.	03.01.2023 upto 5.00 P.M.	03.01.2023 upto 4.00 P.M.	07.01.2023 at 11.00 A.M.		

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OIPR-25062/11/0019/2223

The Balasore Co-operative Urban Bank Ltd.
REGD.NO.-BL/44 , ESTD.-1945 , R.B.I. Lic No.UBD.(ORI)0004P/09-10,
At-Vivekananda Marg,Post/Dist:Balasore,Odisha ,756001,Ph-06782-263044,
E-Mail-contact@blscub.com, www.blscub.com

POSSESSION NOTICE
For Immovable Property
(See Rule -8(1))

Whereas the undersigned being Authorised Officer of The Balasore Co-operative Urban Bank Limited, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act,2002 and in exercise of power conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules,2002 issued Demand Notice under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the borrowers and guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the notice plus interest and expenses thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

Whereas the borrowers having failed to repay the amounts, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers / Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described here-in-below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 9 of the said rules.

The Authorized officer has taken possession of the properties described here in below. The Borrowers, Guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the, The Balasore Cooperative Urban Bank Limited for the amounts shown against his/her name along with further interest, and expenses hereon.

Sl No.	Name and Address of the Borrowers / Guarantors / A/c No.	Description of Security Interest taken over possession	Liabilities due on the specific date as per notice	Date of Demand / Possession Notice
01.	Sarat Kumar Jena, S/o- Nityananda Jena, At- Patrapada , Po- Sunhat, Pin-756002 , Dist- Balasore. A/c No. 001016000392. Guarantors – Bhabani Shankar Jena, S/o- Sri Sarat Ku. Jena, At-Patrapada, Po- Sunhat, Dist- Balasore, 756002. 1. Sakuntala Jena, W/o- Sri Sarat Ku. Jena, At-Patrapada, Po- Sunhat, Dist-Balasore, 756002.	Mauza- Patrapada, Khata No-490/701, Plot No-109/1871, Area – A0.052dec. Plot No-149/1872, Area-A0.255 Dec. Mortgagor- Sarat Kumar Jena	Rs.1,65,471/- (Rupees one lakh sixty five thousand four hundred seventy one only) as on 01.12.2014 + future interest + expenses / Legal Charges (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	01.12.2014 / 20.09.2022
02.	Sk-Tazuddin, S/o- Sk.Sahabuddin, At – Khaprapada, Po- Azimabad, Dist-Balasore, 756001. A/c No. 001024001752. Guarantors – 1. Anjuman Bibi, W/o- Sk. Tazuddin, At – Khaprapada , Po- Azimabad, Dist-Balasore , 756001. 2. Anwar Khan, S/o- Kadar Khan, At – Khaprapada, Po- Azimabad, Dist-Balasore, 756001.	Mauza- Padhuapada, Khata No-84/284, Plot No-592/1766, Area – A0.012 Dec. Mortgagor- Sk-Tazuddin & Anjuman Bibi	Rs.1,83,559/- (Rupees one lakh eighty three thousand five hundred fifty nine only) as on dt.02.06.2016 + future interest + expenses / Legal Charges. (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	02.06.2016 / 20.09.2022
03.	Gajendra Behera, S/o- Abinas Behera, At/- Damodarpur, Po- Motiganj, Dist- Balasore,756003. A/c No. 001016000513. Guarantors – 1. Sabitri Behera, W/o- Sri Gajendra Behera, At/- Damodarpur , Po- Motiganj, Dist- Balasore, 756003. 2.Santosh Behera, S/o- Sri Gajendra Behera, At/- Damodarpur , Po- Motiganj, Dist- Balasore,756003	Mauza- Damodarpur, Khata No-522/288, Plot No- 296, Area – A0.003 Dec., Plot No- 296/869, Area – A0.020 Dec., Plot No-297/972, Area – A0.004 Dec. Mortgagor- Gajendra Behera	Rs.3,54,364/- (Rupees three lakhs fifty four thousand three hundred sixty four only) as on dt.27.04.2016 + future interest + expenses / Legal Charges (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	27.04.2016 / 20.09.2022
04.	Laxmipriya Pradhan, W/o- Gayadhar Pradhan, At- Po- Sunhat, Dist- Balasore, 756002. A/c No. 001024001509. Guarantors – 1.Gayadhar Pradhan, S/o- Late Bimbadhar Pradhan, At- Po- Sunhat , Dist- Balasore, 756002. 2.Biswanath Rout, S/o- Gopal Chandra Rout, At/Po-Sunhat, Balasore, 756002	Mauza- Sunhat, Khata No-584/1187, Plot No-358/5092, Area – A0.042 Dec. Mortgagor-Laxmipriya Pradhan	Rs.1,95,764/- (Rupees one lakh ninety five thousand seven hundred sixty four only) as on dt.27.04.2016 + future interest + expenses / Legal Charges (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	27.04.2016 / 20.09.2022
05.	Sri Binod Kumar Barik, S/o- Sudhir Chandra Barik, At- Manikhamb, Po- Motiganj, Dist- Balasore, 756003. A/c No. 001024001813. Guarantors – 1. Ananda Kumar Barik, S/o- Late Sudhir Ch. Barik, At- Manikhamb, Po- Motiganj, Dist- Balasore, 756003. 2.Deepak Kumar Singh, S/o- Dignpal Singh, At- Po- Sunhat, Dist- Balasore, 756002	Mauza- Manikhamb, Khata No-806/189, Plot No- 89, Area – A0.027 Dec. Mortgagor- Binod Kumar Barik & Ananda Kumar Barik	Rs.2,34,017/- (Rupees two lakhs thirty four thousand seventeen only) as on dt. 02.06.2016+ future interest + expenses / Legal Charges (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	02.06.2016 / 20.09.2022
06.	Pratap Maharna, S/o- Sadhab Maharna, At/ Po- Puruna Balasore, Dist- Balasore,756002. A/c No. 001024001509. Guarantors – 1.Jogendra Mohanty, S/o- Rabindranath Mohanty, At-New market, Po-O.T.Road, Dist- Balasore,756001. 2. Deepak Kumar Rana, S/o- Gopinath Rana, At- Damodarpur , Po-Motiganj, Dist- Balasore,756003.	Mauza- Suelpur, Khata No-116/83, Plot No- 803/1394, Area – A0.003 Dec. Khata No-509/182, Plot No-806, Area – A0.003 Dec. Mortgagor- Pratap Maharna	Rs.1,41,880/- (Rupees one lakh forty one thousand eight hundred eighty only) as on dt. 03.12.2016 + future interest + expenses / Legal Charges (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	03.12.2016 / 20.09.2022
07.	K. Chinna Rao, S/o- N.K.Naidu, At- Begunia , Po- Haripur, Dist- Balasore, 756001. A/c No. 001024001821. Guarantors – 1.K. Oralu Rao, W/o- K. Chinna Rao, At- Begunia, Po- Haripur, Dist- Balasore, 756001. 2. K. Siba Rao, S/o- K. Chinna Rao, At- Begunia , Po- Haripur, Dist- Balasore, 756001	Mauza- Begunia, Khata No-141 /297, Plot No- 514 / 869, Area – A0.02 Dec. Khata No-141 / 836 Begunia, Po- Haripur, Dist- Balasore, 756001. 2. K. Siba Rao, S/o- K. Chinna Rao, At- Begunia , Po- Haripur, Dist- Balasore, 756001	Rs.1,78,724/- (Rupees one lakh seventy eight thousand seven hundred twenty four only) as on dt. 02.06.2016 + future interest + expenses / Legal Charges (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	02.06.2016 / 20.09.2022
08.	M/s- Durga Industrial & Engineering, Proprietor-Durgamadhab Jena, S/o- Subash Chandra Jena, At- Srikrushnapur, Po- Januganj , Dist- Balasore,756019, A/c No. 001014000127. Guarantors – 1. Subash Chandra Jena, W/o.Gopinath Jena, At- Srikrushnapur ,Po-Januganj, Dist- Balasore,756019. 2.Shantilata Jena, w/o-Subash Chandra Jena, At- Srikrushnapur, Po-Januganj, Dist- Balasore, 756019	Mauza- Srikrushnapur, Khata No-400, Plot No- 297 / 1388, Area – A0.250 Dec. Mortgagor-Subash Chandra Jena & Durgamadhab Jena	Rs.9,77,931/- (Rupees nine lakh seventy seven thousand nine hundred thirty one only) as on dt. 27.01.2021 + future interest + expenses / Legal Charges (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	27.01.2021 / 20.09.2022
09.	M/s- Steel House, Proprietor- Manas Kumar Nayak, S/o- Narendranath Nayak, At / Po- Bhaskarganj, Dist- Balasore,756001. A/c No 001026000773. Guarantors – 1.Narendranath Nayak, S/o- Narayan Nayak, At / Po- Bhaskarganj, Dist- Balasore, 756001. 2. Sanjukta Nayak, W/o- Narendranath Nayak, At / Po- Bhaskarganj, Dist- Balasore,756001	Mauza- Sovarampur, Khata No-256 / 680, Plot No- 736 /2991, Area – A0. 075 Dec. Mortgagor- Narendranath Nayak & Manas Kumar Nayak	Rs. 20,32,571/- (Rupees twenty lakhs thirty two thousand five hundred seventy one only) as on dt. 27.04.2021 + future interest + expenses / Legal Charges (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	27.04.2021 / 20.09.2022
10.	M/s- Anwar Bag Centre, Proprietor- Anwar Khan, S/o- Kadar Khan, At-Khaprapada , Po- Azimabad, Dist- Balasore,756001. A/c No 001026000818. Guarantors – 1.Kadar Khan, S/o- Karim Khan, At-Khaprapada , Po- Azimabad, Dist-Balasore,756001. 2. Sk. Wahid, S/o – Sk. Mallik, At-Suelpur , Po-Motiganj, Dist-Balasore, 756003	Mauza- Padhuapada, Khata No-299/351, Plot No- 543, Area – A0. 035 Dec. Mortgagor- Anwar Khan & Kadar Khan	Rs. 6,01,020/- (Rupees six lakhs one thousand twenty only) as on dt. 31.10.2019 + future interest + expenses / Legal Charges (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	31.10.2019 / 20.09.2022
11.	Sujata Malik, W/o- Ganesh Mahapatra, At- Begunia, Po- Haripur, Dist- Balasore, 756001. A/c No 001026000841. Guarantors – 1.Ganesh Mahapatra, S/o- Gadadhar Mohapatra, At- Begunia, Po- Haripur, Dist- Balasore,756001. 2.Harish Chandra Jena, S/o- Mahendra Jena, At- Ranipatna ,Po-Balasore, Dist- Balasore,756001	Mauza- Begunia, Khata No-141/922, Plot No- 467 /884, Area – A0. 020 Dec. Mortgagor- Sujata Malik	Rs.5,84,101/- (Rupees five lakhs eighty four thousand one hundred one only) as on dt. 31.10.2019 + future interest + expenses / Legal Charges (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	31.10.2019 / 20.09.2022
12.	Sabita Sethi, W/o- Sudarshan Sethi, At- Damodarpur, Po- Motiganj, Dist- Balasore,756003. A/c No.001016000596. Guarantors – 1.Swarjhankar Sethi, S/o- Sudarshan Sethi, At-Damodarpur, Po-Motiganj, Dist- Balasore,756003. 2. Sanjit Sagar Sethi, At-Damodarpur, Po-Motiganj, Dist- Balasore, 756003. 3.Sulagna Sethi, W/o- Tushar Mahanta, At-Damodarpur, Po-Motiganj, Dist- Balasore,756003	Mauza- Damodarpur, Khata No-522/409, Plot No- 410, Area – A0. 027 Dec. Mortgagor- Sabita Sethi, Swarjhankar Sethi, Sangit Sagar Sethi & Sulagna Sethi	Rs.3,27,440/- (Rupees three lakhs twenty seven thousand four hundred forty only) as on dt. 15.09.2016 + future interest + expenses / Legal Charges (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	15.09.2016 / 20.09.2022
13.	Sk. Nizam, S/o- Sk. Ahemad, At/Po- Sunhat, Dist- Balasore,756002. A/c No. 001024002118. Guarantors – 1.Suhana Begum, W/o- Sk. Nizam,At-Po-Sunhat, Dist- Balasore,756002. 1.Sk.Gayausiddin, S/o- Sk. Maniruddin At-Po- Sunhat, Dist- Balasore,756002	Mauza- Sunhat, Khata No-1040 /76, Plot No- 1861 / 2894, Area – A0. 019 Dec. Mortgagor- Sk. Nizam	Rs.2,66,226/- (Rupees two lakhs sixty six thousand two hundred twenty six only) as on dt. 29.12.2021 + future interest + expenses / Legal Charges (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	29.12.2021 / 20.08.2022
14.	Ajit Kumar Mohanty, S/o- Pitambar Mohanty, At- Gopalganj , Po-Srikanthapur, Dist- Balasore,756001. A/c No. 001024000799.	Mauza- Bagbrundaban, Unit-15 Khata No-28, Plot No- 340/1142 Area – A0. 020 Dec. Mortgagor- Ajit Kumar Mohanty	Rs.1,21,801/- (Rupees one lakh twenty one thousand eight hundred one only) as on dt. 29.12.2021 + future interest + expenses / Legal Charges (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	29.12.2021 / 20.08.2022
15.	Harihar Pradhan, S/o- Tima Pradhan, At-Gosalapada (Begunia), Po- Sahadevkhunta, Dist- Balasore,756001. A/c No. 001023000098. Guarantors – 1.Sabita Pradhan, W/o- Harihar Pradhan, At-Gosalapada (Begunia), Po- Sahadevkhunta, Dist- Balasore, 756001. 2.Upendra Tarai, S/o- Bhanjia Tarai, At- Begunia ,Po- Haripur, Dist- Balasore, 756001.	Mauza- Begunia, Khata No-141/834, Plot No- 514/680, Area – A0. 020 Dec. Mortgagor- Sabita Pradhan & Harihar Pradhan. Mauza- Begunia, Unit-125, Khata No-157/1255, Plot No- 580/680, Area – A0. 010 Dec. Mortgagor- Sabita Pradhan & Harihar Pradhan	Rs.3,82,464/- (Rupees three lakhs eighty two thousand four hundred sixty four only) as on dt. 29.12.2021 + future interest + expenses / Legal Charges (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	29.12.2021 / 20.08.2022
16.	Bhudev Chandra Rana, S/o- Satrugna Rana, At- Shyamraipur, Po-Remuna, Dist- Balasore,756019. A/c No. 001024001322. Guarantors- 1.Saraswati Rana, w/o- Satrugna Rana, At-Shyamraipur, Po-Remuna, Dist- Balasore,756019. 2.Kishore Kumar Rana, S/o- Kanhai Charan Rana, At-Radhanagar, Po-Januganj , Dist- Balasore,756019.	Mauza- Shyamraipur, Khata No-191, Plot No- 384, Area – A0.06 Dec. Mortgagor- Saraswati Rana & Bhudev Chandra Rana	Rs.1,59,764/- (Rupees one lakh fifty nine thousand seven hundred sixty four only) as on dt. 25.09.2014 + future interest + expenses / Legal Charges (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	25.09.2014 / 14.11.2022
17.	M/s- R.S.Jewellery Works, Proprietor-Sri Satya Narayan Mistri, S/o- Sri Sankar Mistri, At-Radhanagar, Po- Remuna, Dist- Balasore,756019. A/c No. 001026000356. Guarantors – 1. Sri Anil Kumar Panda, S/o-Sri Aniruddha Panda, At-Makalpur, Po-Motiganj, Dist- Balasore,756019. 2. Sri Hari Narayan Mistri, S/o-Sri Sankar Mistri, At- Radhanagar , Po- Remuna, Dist-Balasore, 756019.	1. Mauza- Radhanagar, Khata No-46/9, Plot No- 83, Area – A0. 05 Dec. 2. Mauza- Radhanagar, Khata No-46, Plot No- 82, Area – A0.05 Dec. 3.Mauza- Ganeswarpur, Khata No-1289, Plot No- 06, Area – A0. 73 Dec. Mortgagor- 1. Hari Narayan Mistri, 2. Niranjan Mistri, 3. Satya Ranjan Mistri	Rs.3,51,736/- (Rupees Three lakhs fifty one thousand seven hundred thirty six only) as on dt. 10.10.2014 + future interest + expenses / Legal Charges (Less subsequent recoveries if any)	10.10.2014 / 26.12.2014

Date:08/12/22
Place: Balasore

Sd./- Authorised Officer
The Balasore Cooperative Urban Bank Ltd.

Locals sore over scam

Rajnagar: A number of projects have been marred by large-scale irregularities in Kurunti panchayat under Rajnagar block of Kendrapara district. Funds worth lakhs of rupees meant for six projects have been embezzled, locals alleged. They have warned of agitation if the administration fails to look into the corruption in the culvert construction and pipe-laying works for a drinking water project.

By your stumbling, the world is perfected.

SRI AUROBINDO



Climate Before Trade

Late last month, a foreign leader accused US President Joe Biden of pursuing “super aggressive” industrial policies. It was not Russian President Vladimir Putin or Chinese President Xi Jinping, whose countries are America’s main geopolitical rivals. Nor was it Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi or Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, whose countries have struggled under the weight of US-led sanctions.

No, the complaint came from French President Emmanuel Macron, a US ally, about the Inflation Reduction Act, Biden’s landmark initiative to decarbonise the American economy by subsidising domestic investment in electric vehicles, batteries, and other renewable technologies. Qualifying for these subsidies requires firms to source critical inputs from US-based producers, which irks Macron and other leaders, who claim that the new legislation undermines European industry. France, Macron noted, faces challenges of its own generating middle-class jobs. “And the consequence of the IRA,” he put it bluntly, “is that you will perhaps fix your issue but you will increase my problem.”

Imposing costs on other countries while addressing climate change is, however, precisely what the European Union has been planning to do. Through its carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM), the EU will soon impose duties on certain carbon-intensive imports. The goal is to maintain a high domestic price for carbon without allowing foreign firms to undercut European producers through cheaper imports. But the import duties will also hurt many lower-income countries such as Mozambique, Egypt, and India.

European officials argue that the CBAM differs from the IRA because it does not violate a fundamental principle of the multilateral trade regime: non-discrimination. The mechanism, they claim, aims merely to level the playing field between European companies, which are subject to high domestic carbon prices, and foreign producers, which are not. The CBAM, they insist, does not give European companies an unfair advantage. But one country’s leveling of the playing field is another country’s unfair targeting of comparative advantage. Equalising the costs of certain inputs, such as electricity, disproportionately affects exporters of energy-intensive products like steel and aluminum. That is why international trade rules have generally been averse to treating domestic and imported goods differently on the basis of their production processes; it is too easy to disguise protectionism under the guise of non-discrimination.

The better argument, and one that would apply equally to the IRA and the CBAM, is that the climate challenge is too important to be overshadowed by trade and competitiveness considerations. Letting governments introduce ambitious environmental programmes to promote renewable energy, regardless of the impact on other countries, might just be the most feasible path to decarbonisation.

China is a case in point. Years of high subsidies for the country’s solar and wind industries turned Chinese firms into world champions, and China into the world’s preeminent renewable-energy producer. With American and European firms priced out of global markets, the West admonished China for its egregious favouritism.

But while the Chinese subsidies may have disadvantaged Western firms, they were also one of the best things that a government ever did to fight climate change. By enabling firms to scale up much faster than they otherwise would have, these policies helped to cut the cost of solar power by 90% and to halve the price of wind power, enabling these technologies to become commercially viable enough to compete with carbon. Notwithstanding the hit to foreign competitors, China has made an undeniable contribution to solving humanity’s most pressing challenge.

Of course, it might be possible to achieve better, less acrimonious outcomes by encouraging greater international cooperation on green policies. My Harvard colleague Jeffrey Frankel, for example, argues that disputes over the CBAM and IRA should be adjudicated by the World Trade Organization. As he points out, the WTO does allow countries to pursue independent policies for environmental reasons. But the WTO is not the right forum for determining the circumstances under which trade rules should constrain green measures, or whether these measures should be constrained at all.

The WTO’s general presumption is that governments should pursue non-trade objectives – such as environmental sustainability or public health – so long as they do not distort trade. Similarly, the logic of mainstream trade economists assumes that efficiency and other public-policy goals can be neatly separable. Accordingly, non-discriminatory free trade is always possible if governments implement the right policies. Sustainability goals, in particular, could be met by pricing schemes (or equivalent quantity targets) that induce firms to internalise the costs of environmental externalities without distorting trade.

In the real world, however, governments pursuing green policies face administrative and political hurdles that require messy deals to bring opponents and potential losers on board. The IRA and the CBAM were both predicated on such bargains, promising jobs and profits to domestic producers in exchange for their agreement to a green transition that might otherwise be costly for them. In such circumstances, it would be difficult, and perhaps inappropriate, for global trade panels to render judgement on the availability of alternative instruments and second-guess domestic political tradeoffs.

Even when the conflict is more conventionally commercial, as was the case with the Chinese solar and wind subsidies, it is unclear whether we should let trade rules stand in the way when the measures in question advance the global decarbonisation effort.

In an ideal world, climate change would be addressed through a globally coordinated set of policies combining carbon pricing, non-discriminatory subsidies for green technologies, and transfers from high-income to lower-income countries. But in the world as it is, our only chance to ensure a sustainable future depends on a hodge-podge of national policies that will be wildly diverse and driven by complicated local considerations. We should not be trade purists and let the perfect become the enemy of the good.

The writer is Professor of International Political Economy at Harvard Kennedy School. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it. LOU HOLTZ

There are things which a man is afraid to tell even to himself, and every decent man has a number of such things stored away in his mind. FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine and at last you create what you will. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW



Brahma Chellaney

ALREADY, EUROPE'S DECISION TO TURN ITS BACK ON RUSSIAN GAS HAS INCREASED THE LIKELIHOOD OF A DEEP RECESSION



Dani Rodrik

Letting governments introduce ambitious environmental programmes to promote renewable energy, regardless of the impact on other countries, might just be the most feasible path to decarbonisation

SPECTRUM CORRUPTION

Hurdle in the way of inclusive growth

Corruption has for long been a subject of much debate and ways and means of its eradication have been outlined by various organisations and experts. But unfortunately, political corruption in India has shown an upward trend with centralisation of power at the helm. Thus, it can very well be said corruption in public life is a means of obtaining personal benefit through illicit means and the abuse of public office and property.

This is demonstrated by the increasing wealth of political personalities all over the country. A few days back the Association for Democratic Reforms survey revealed that the average assets of the candidates for the first phase of Gujarat polls have gone up by 44% this time from ₹2 crore in 2017 to ₹2.9 crore this year. The repeat candidates have reported a significant rise in their assets. This clearly reveals that being in power helps in increasing wealth and it is very much the case in India.

Another form of corruption has been the seizure of hundreds of crores of rupees from the homes of politicians in West Bengal, leading to possibly the biggest educational scam in recent years pertaining to the appointment of school teachers, non-teaching staff in schools in the state. It needs to

be pointed out here that all this has come to light only due to a meritorious and bold judge of the Calcutta High Court. The education system it seems has collapsed because the political class and even some professors and teachers are going all out to make that extra buck. It is also in this state that a top-level politician of the ruling party, engaged in cow smuggling to neighbouring Bangladesh and related illegal activities, was found to turn black money into white through forcibly grabbing the first prize lottery ticket from the genuine winner.

Corruption in public life sadly has been very much manifest as politicians indulge in unethical behaviour and there is abuse of public office and property. Similarly, private-sector corruption is all about making unjust profits by exploiting employees and consumers while skirting government regulations. It may not be wrong to say that corruption exists in every sector and at every level of government in the country.

As per a research conducted by Transparency International way back in 2005, over 62% of Indians have paid a bribe to a public official at some time in their lives. Another report from 2008 found that about half of Indians had first-hand experience paying bribes

or using contacts to get services from government agencies. The Corruption Perception Index ranked the country 78th out of 180 countries in 2018, indicating a steady decline in public perception of corruption. India’s government, whichever it may be, and political parties are notorious in corruption scandals. The political class is entangled in corruption for a number of causes, which include the social fibre changing, a lack of good education, sincerity and work culture, lack of genuine involvement with the masses and little incentive to work honestly and diligently. In India, anyone can enter politics and form a political party, like perhaps other countries, and need not have educational qualifications as these are not part of the eligibility criteria.

Only candidates who meet minimum educational requirements and have a clean criminal record should be allowed to run for public office. After winning the election, the candidates should go through some form of training to be able to handle numerous roles and responsibilities that are given to them. A well-educated and well-trained individual in all probability could lead the country more effectively than others. Corruption is less frequent in a society where people are educated, and the awareness level is high.

It is believed that identifying the root of an issue is half the battle won. Rather than debating the issue repeatedly, it is now time to seek for answers. The government and civil society must rid India of corruption. It is easier said than done. Apart from the thrust on education, there’s a need for reigniting value system, which has over decades got eroded. People and those in power who engage in corrupt practices must face harsh penalties. They must be made accountable.

Only raising education levels may not help, unless the judicial system is strengthened at all levels to take up cases of corrupt practices in fast track mode. Dispensation of justice must be prompt as it will act as a deterrent. The Election Commission must have its machinery in place too and ensure that its officers are not pliable or coerced.

While our political leaders and governments talk of transparency and accountability, the ground reality is different. Corruption is eating into the system. For an emerging economy like India, it stands in the way of a balanced development and inclusive growth.

The writer is a maxillofacial surgeon. ©INFA

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Salami slicing tactics

Sir, This refers to “China tried to change status quo in Arunachal: Rajnath,” Orissa POST, Dec 14. It is a great relief to the nation that vigilant Indian troops thwarted an attempt by the Chinese PLA to unilaterally change the status quo in the Yangtse area of Arunachal Pradesh’s Tawang sector. This latest skirmish again goes to show that China won’t give up on salami slicing Indian territory along the LAC. It is determined to unilaterally push the LAC westward and is no longer interested in engaging in serious dialogue to resolve the border issue. Add to this, China’s provocative moves are apparently linked to its reaction to the India-US joint military exercise held recently in Uttarakhand, about 100 km from the LAC. In a sharp response reeking of duplicity, Beijing had told New Delhi that the exercise violated the spirit of border agreements signed between the two nations, while conveniently ignoring its own transgressions and incursions. Also, China does not want the US to interfere in its relationship with India, but it is not doing enough itself to defuse tensions on the ground. Ironically, Chinese provocations are drawing India closer to America. India needs to take these misadventures seriously not only in terms of national security concerns but also in view of its overdependence on Chinese imports. However, New Delhi needs to do more to buttress its infrastructure along the entire LAC. Closing the border infrastructure gap with China is of paramount importance to secure India’s territorial sovereignty.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Defence against bullying

Sir, We all know that India is the birthplace of martial arts like Kalaripayattu and Sarir Sarak but social institutions have failed to include these martial arts in their system of things. There is a common perception in Indian households that one learns martial arts to fight with others. Martial arts not only add to physical well-being but also act as self-defence against bullying. Martial arts also help to keep people calm in difficult situations so that they can cope with problems with a cool mindset. Recently a ragging incident at Dibrugarh University rocked Assam where a student tried to end his life in order to get rid of the bullies. If he would have been trained in martial arts he would not have had to go through all the pain. So, this is a humble request to all the state governments in the country to include martial arts in schools and colleges as a proper discipline and not an add-on course.

Noopur Baruah, TEZPUR

FOCUS SANCTIONS

A SHOT TO THE FOOT



It will take years for Europe to recover from the unprecedented energy crisis that it has helped to create

It seems obvious that sanctions – an increasingly important tool of Western foreign policy – should inflict significant pain on the target without exacting unsustainably high costs from the country imposing them. But the European Union’s sanctions on Russia – intended to punish the country for its brutal war of aggression against Ukraine – do not meet this condition.

At the center of the EU’s plan to punish Russia is an effort to eliminate its dependence on the cheap Russian energy that long powered its growth, including by increasing its reliance on liquefied natural gas imported from the United States and elsewhere. But LNG has long been an overpriced (and carbon-intensive) alternative to piped gas: before Russia invaded Ukraine, it was 4-5 times more expensive than natural gas. Now, it is even more exorbitantly priced: since the war began, the cost of LNG has more than doubled.

But with the Kremlin slashing gas flows to Europe, in order to ensure that it – not the EU – dictates the timetable for phasing out Russian supplies, European countries have had little choice but to rely increasingly on LNG imports. This is creating serious challenges for Europe’s manufacturing base, to the point that some European firms are now considering shifting production to the US, which offers not only cheaper fuel, but also massive subsidies and tax credits under its new Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

Already, Europe’s decision to turn its back on Russian gas has increased the likelihood of a deep recession. Skyrocketing gas prices – which are a staggering 14 times higher than two years ago – have fueled inflation and destabilised eurozone financial markets. So, just when Europe’s economies are on the brink of contraction, the cost of living is spiking – and the threat of rolling power outages looms.

European policymakers’ adoption of desperate measures like price caps and regulated tariffs could well exacerbate the situation. To conserve gas, some European governments have even turned to coal. Moreover, European leaders like French President Emmanuel Macron have pleaded with US President Joe Biden to ease pressure on their economies by adjusting some controversial IRA provisions. Months after an agreement to strengthen and expand NATO, transatlantic relations are beginning to fray.

The one thing the EU appears unwilling to consider is changing course on sanctions. This month alone, it has imposed an embargo on imports of Russian crude and joined its G7 partners in introducing a \$60-per-barrel price cap. Europe’s sanctions recall America’s 1930 Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, which substantially raised import duties on more than 20,000 goods. Far from protecting US industry, the tariffs prompted other countries to retaliate, deepening the Great Depression and contributing to the rise of political extremism, especially in Europe.

Today, too, many European countries’ politics are lurching rightward. Italy’s current governing party traces its roots to Benito Mussolini’s Fascist movement; likewise, the Sweden Democrats has neo-Nazi roots. In Poland and

Hungary, right-wing governments show increasing authoritarian tendencies. If soaring energy prices and runaway inflation worsen economic conditions – a likely scenario in the short term – far-right forces could gain further ground across the continent.

One might be able to argue that the sanctions’ large costs were worth shouldering if they were significantly hampering Russia’s war effort. But while Russia has certainly suffered, and Ukraine has achieved some high-profile military victories, nearly one-fifth of Ukrainian territory remains under Russian occupation. If the EU is enduring so much pain, while Russia’s aggression proceeds apace, sanctions become tantamount to self-flagellation. This is why moral outrage, however justified, should never drive policy.

To be sure, the EU’s international image has long rested on its reputation as a force for democracy, human rights, and a rules-based order, which strengthens the case for a bold, if costly, response to Russian aggression. But, had cooler heads prevailed, it would have been obvious that a rapid transition away from Russian energy supplies would undermine the EU’s global standing by denting its

sustainability credentials – the turn to coal is a case in point – and causing a global energy crisis, which is hurting poorer countries.

Given that the EU accounts for 11% of global energy consumption, its quest to secure replacement supplies was bound to disrupt the entire global economy. After all, the alternative supplies the EU secured were not idle. International oil and LNG supplies were already tight, and there was inadequate production capacity to compensate for the loss of Russian supplies. As a result, when the EU rejected Russian energy, the world suddenly faced energy scarcity, with countries in Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere losing access to some supplies on which they had previously depended. In fact, soaring European gas prices have encouraged some shippers to divert LNG cargoes from Asia to Europe.

For far too long, the EU believed that economic and trade relations could be managed without regard for foreign-policy and security considerations. The Ukraine war made this approach untenable. But this should have prompted a more considered debate about what should come next, rather than an abrupt transition away from Russian energy supplies. This was a huge decision directly bearing on Europe’s socioeconomic security; by making it rashly the EU committed a major strategic blunder.

Russia’s actions in Ukraine are clearly both unjustified and unconscionable. But it makes little sense for Europe to respond by damaging its own competitiveness and global standing. It will take years for Europe to recover from the unprecedented energy crisis that it has helped to create.

The writer is Professor of Strategic Studies at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research and Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin.

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national

of the day quote

The main reason behind the success of BJP in Gujarat is that it is the home state of both Modi and Amit Shah, due to which the voters got influenced

KAMAL NATH | MADHYA PRADESH CONGRESS CHIEF

There is no truth in it. No one can finish off anyone. I have my own strength. I have strengthened the party and toiled to bring BJP to power. The entire state knows this

B S YEDYURAPPA | BJP LEADER

Crores of people drink liquor in the country, should all of them die?

SUSHIL KUMAR MODI | BJP LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Apex court puts off pleas to January

New Delhi: The Supreme Court said Thursday it will hear in the last week of January 2023, a batch of PILs challenging laws permitting funding of political parties through the electoral bond scheme. Electoral bonds have been pitched as an alternative to cash donations made to political parties as part of efforts to bring in transparency in political funding. A bench of Justices B R Gavi and Vikram Nath said the matter requires to be heard. "This is a 2015 matter. You can't have such an emergency just before the penultimate day of the vacation...There is no election as of now. We will hear it in the last week of January, 2023," the bench said.

Three killed in elephant attack

Guwahati: At least three people, including a one-and-half-year-old child, were killed due to an attack by a herd of wild elephants in Assam's Goalpara district Thursday, officials said. Two persons were also critically injured in the incident. A senior police officer in Goalpara said that the elephants attacked some commuters on a highway at Choto Sigr in the Lakhimpur area of the district.

Girls thrash headmaster

Mandya: A school headmaster was thrashed with brooms and sticks by girl students after he allegedly harassed one of them in a hostel in Katteri village in Karnataka's Mandya district. According to police, the accused, who was given charge of the girls' hostel, visited the facility every evening and used to harass them after calling them to his room. The students have alleged that the accused headmaster used to force them to watch porn videos and touch them inappropriately. He threatened that if they revealed anything about the matter, he would ensure that the girl students would get bad character remark on their transfer certificates.

22 injured

Hamirpur: Twenty-two people suffered burn injuries after an LPG cylinder leak triggered a fire at a wedding venue in Rath town of Uttar Pradesh's Hamirpur district, late on Wednesday night. Eight persons who were critically injured people have been admitted to the Orai Medical College in Jalaun district, said police. According to reports, a gas stove lit up by a cook triggered the blaze, which spread to a nearby wooden structure. However, locals and fire fighters controlled the flames.



The Union government must find out the "mastermind" behind the 'fake' Twitter accounts which allegedly fuelled tensions over the boundary dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka

AJIT PAWAR | NCP LEADER

BIZARRE REASON FOR THREATENING PAWAR

A man arrested for allegedly making a death threat call to NCP president Sharad Pawar, has told the Mumbai police that he committed the offence as he was agitated after his wife eloped with an NCP worker and the party chief did not intervene in the matter, an official said Thursday



Mehrauli murder: DNA of Shraddha's bones matches with father

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 15: DNA extracted from bone pieces recovered in the Mehrauli forest and from blood found at Aaftab Amin Poonawala's house in connection with the Shraddha Walkar murder case has matched with samples of her father, police sources said Thursday.

The police had recovered 13 bone pieces from the forest and its nearby area while searching for Walkar's body parts. She was allegedly strangled and her body sawed into 35 pieces and disposed in various parts of the capital by Poonawala, her live-in partner.

"In the Shraddha Walkar murder case, Delhi Police has received the DNA report from CFSL (Central Forensic Science Laboratory), Lodhi Road. The DNA report is helpful. "We have also received report of his (Poonawala's) polygraph test from FSL, Rohini, and this report will also help in investigation," Special Commissioner of Police (Law & Order) Sagar Preet Hooda told reporters here on Thursday.

The murder case that came to light a month ago had sent shock waves across the country, even as DNA forensic reports and the polygraph test report are expected to provide some vital clue to the police.

Delhi Police arrested 28-year-old Poonawala on November 12. During interrogation, he confessed to killing 27-year-old Walkar and

chopping her body parts into 35 pieces, police had said.

Following his confession, the police scanned through various forest areas and even a pond in Madangir was emptied to look for Walkar's missing body parts. Police have recovered more than 13 body parts from forest areas of Mehrauli and Gurugram.

"The police has received the DNA report of the bones found. The DNA of the bones matches with the samples of Walkar's father," a source said. Also, DNA samples extracted from the blood found at Poonawala's house

has also matched with samples of her father, the source said. The report of Poonawala's polygraph test was submitted to the police by the forensic sciences lab on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Lt Governor V K Saxena Thursday approved a proposal of the Delhi Police to appoint two special public prosecutors in the Shraddha Walkar murder case, Raj Niwas officials said Thursday. "LG V K Saxena has approved the proposal of the Delhi Police for appointment of Special Public Prosecutors to represent the State in the Trial Court in case FIR No. 659 dt. November 10, 2022 u/s 365/302/201 IPC, registered at PS Mehrauli. "The matter relates to the gruesome Shraddha murder case. Madhukar Pandey and Amit Prasad, advocates, will be accordingly representing the Delhi Police as special public prosecutors in the matter," an official said.

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Legal experts decry Rijiju's remarks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 15: Legal experts Thursday decried the Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju's remark in Parliament that the Supreme Court should not be hearing "bail pleas and frivolous PILs" amid soaring pendency of cases, terming it as "pathetic" and "absurd".

Noted lawyer Prashant Bhushan was critical about the part of Rijiju's statement with regard to listing of bail cases, saying it showed the "anti-liberty mindset" of the minister and the government.

Commenting on the statement made in the Rajya Sabha on



Wednesday, senior advocate Ajit Kumar Sinha said there cannot be "complete negation" of PILs (public interest litigations) and it cannot be said that the top court should not entertain bail pleas as Article 136 of the Constitution provides for special leave to appeal by the Supreme Court against any order of the high courts.

Another senior advocate, Jayant

Bhushan, said the minister's statement in the House only "suits" the government. While speaking on the New Delhi International Arbitration Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2022, Rijiju had said that the Supreme Court should not be hearing bail applications and frivolous PILs when pendency of cases is so high.

"Kiren Rijiju and his government are themselves responsible (for pendency) and they have refused to appoint the judges which are recommended by the Collegium and have kept hundreds of appointments on hold," Prashant Bhushan said.

20 names returned to SC Collegium: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 15: The government has "referred back" 20 names recommended for appointment as high court judges to the Supreme Court Collegium, Parliament was informed Thursday.

Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju said as on December 9, against the sanctioned strength of 1,108 judges, 777 were working in the 25 high courts, leaving a vacancy of 331 (30 per cent). "Against 331 vacancies at present, 147 proposals received from various high courts were at various stages of processing between the government

Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju said as on December 9, against the sanctioned strength of 1,108 judges, 777 were working in the 25 high courts, leaving a vacancy of 331

and the Supreme Court Collegium," he said in a written response to a question in the Rajya Sabha.

Further recommendations from high court collegiums are yet to be received in respect of 184 vacancies, the minister pointed out.

On November 29, PTI had reported that the government had asked the Supreme Court Collegium to reconsider 20 files related to the appointment of high court judges, including that of advocate Saurabh Kirpal who has candidly spoken about his gay identity.

The government had expressed "strong reservations" about the recommended names as it sent back the files to the Collegium on November 25, sources aware of the procedure to appoint Supreme Court and high court judges had said. Of the 20 cases, 11 were fresh and nine were reiterations made by the top court collegium, they had said.



Border Security Force personnel patrol near the India-Pakistan border at Samba on the outskirts of Jammu

PTI PHOTO

DELHI ACID ATTACK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 15: The Delhi Police Thursday issued a notice to Flipkart after it was found the acid thrown on the 17-year-old girl in west Delhi was purchased from the e-commerce site while the victim's family said doctors at Safdarjung Hospital have assured them that her vision has not been affected.

The Delhi Commission for Women also issued notices to Amazon and Flipkart for allegedly allowing the sale of acid on their platform and called it a matter of grave concern. However, when PTI searched on the two platforms, using keywords like 'nitric acid' and 'acid' no results were found.

The National Commission for Women issued summons to Amazon and Flipkart over the alleged sale of acid on their platforms. In a tweet, the panel said it has scheduled a hearing with the country head of Amazon India and the CEO of Flipkart India Pvt Ltd on December 23 at 2 pm and they are required to appear in person.

Later in the day, Flipkart condemned the attack and said it has blacklisted the seller from its platform and is extending all support to the probe agencies. In its notice, police have sought details of

DCW, cops issue notices



In its notice, police have sought details of the order placed by prime accused Sachin Arora who planned the attack to exact revenge

the order placed by prime accused Sachin Arora who planned the attack to exact revenge.

"The notice has been sent to Flipkart to provide information regarding the seller and the particular transaction. They have also been asked regarding the compliance of regulations related to acid sale," said a senior police officer. According to police sources, the main accused, Sachin Arora, browsed multiple sites for buying acid and also watched films, videos and crime shows to plan the acid attack. Along with his two friends, he also conducted a reconnaissance of the area, they said.

The victim's family said doctors have assured them that her facial burns will heal, even though it might take some time, and her vision seems to have not been affected.

Two bike-borne, masked men flung acid on the girl on Wednesday, minutes after she left her west Delhi residence for school, leav-

ing her with serious injuries. Police have arrested three men, including a neighbour of the victim, in connection with the incident.

Besides Arora, his two friends Harshit Aggarwal (19) and Virender Singh (22) were arrested, police said. During interrogation, it was learnt that Arora and the victim were friends till September. They fell out and this led the accused to attack her, Special Commissioner of Police, Law and Order, Sagar Preet Hooda had said, adding that he lived in the girl's neighbourhood.

The three accused were produced before a metropolitan magistrate who remanded them to police custody for two days. Sources claimed that Arora searched several websites to procure acid and found it on Flipkart.

He placed the order at an address farther from his home so that the order could not easily be traced to him and his family does not grow suspicious, they added.

HC reserves order on Uddhav's appeal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 15: The Delhi High Court Thursday reserved its order on an appeal by former Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray challenging a single judge's decision dismissing his plea against an Election Commission's (EC) interim order freezing the Shiv Sena name and election symbol.

Thackeray claimed the single judge's November 15 order, by which it had also directed the EC to expedite the proceedings pending before it, is "erroneous" and liable to be set aside.

A bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad, after hearing the arguments of counsel for both the parties, said, "We will pass appropriate orders."

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Thackeray, submitted that the EC did not hear him while passing the order for freezing Shiv Sena's name and election symbol. "Never in the history of the commission, freezing order has been passed without hearing the party," he argued.

100 days of Bharat Jodo Yatra: Congress eyes revival

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Dec 15: As the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' enters its 100th day Friday, Congress watchers feel it has found some answers the party had been looking for on the road to 2024 but questions remain whether it will yield electoral dividends going forward.

The Kanyakumari to Kashmir foot march has also courted many controversies in the last three months and led to several fiery exchanges between the Congress and the BJP including on Rahul Gandhi's ever-growing grey beard and his Burberry T-shirt.

With over 2,800 km under his belt, Rahul Gandhi has managed to catch the attention of his supporters as well as detractors and seen quite a few celebrities including from the tinsel town and ac-

ademia walking alongside him from time to time.

However, some political pundits feel the party should have had more tangible political objectives for the yatra and questioned the party for skipping poll-bound states of Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh. Amid questions over the yatra translating into any electoral dividend, two recently-concluded assembly elections turned out to be a mixed bag for the Congress as it was drubbed in Gujarat to its lowest-ever tally while won in Himachal.

A clearer picture of the impact on the party's electoral fortunes would emerge in the assembly polls next year, including in Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, which were covered well by the Yatra. Former Congress leader Sanjay Jha, who had also been a



party spokesperson, said the Bharat Jodo Yatra could become a "game-changer" for the Congress in the long term.

"For one, it has revived the political brand of Rahul Gandhi. The

BJP cannot ridicule him anymore using their 'fake news malicious campaign'. Secondly, the Congress has at last connected directly with the people through this mass movement," he said.

Noting that it will definitely percolate to the grassroots, Jha stressed that the critical part from now on is for Congress to sustain the mobilisation through its workers who are galvanized. "The Himachal Pradesh result shows that the Congress can still pull off a win against BJP if it demonstrates the hunger to win. Next year, the electoral impact of BJJ will be more visible in states like Karnataka, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, etc.," he said.

While the yatra's positive of enthusing the party's cadres has been acknowledged, many say it's real test remains its electoral impact. Sanjay Pandey, a political commentator and professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, said the yatra has given a "glimmer of hope" to the party and enthused ordinary party workers but whether

that would translate into electoral gains, only time will tell.

Sushila Ramaswamy, a professor at the Department of Political Science in Delhi's Jesus and Mary College, believes the yatra ought to have laid down more tangible political objectives at the start.

She asserted that electoral politics is very much part of what a political party should be doing and questioned the logic of yatra not going to poll-bound states of Gujarat and Himachal.

The yatra has traversed eight states - Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and now Rajasthan. The yatra will enter Delhi on December 24 and after a break of about eight days will move on to Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and finally Jammu and Kashmir.

UP Assembly to have new set of rules from next year

ONE OF THE MAJOR CHANGES IN THE RULES WOULD BE REDUCING THE NOTICE PERIOD TO CONVENE THE HOUSE FROM 14 DAYS TO SEVEN DAYS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Dec 15: In the New Year, the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly will have a new set of rules, making sweeping changes in the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, 1958.

Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana said that new rules are the need of the hour to run the Vidhan Sabha. He has formed a 10-member drafting committee to lay out a new draft of rules and procedures. "It would be better to bring in a new rule book instead of making amendments to the existing one as it would be a tedious process," he said.

The drafting committee, headed by principal secretary, Vidhan Sabha, Pradeep Dubey, includes retired officer from the law department, SN Srivastava, and retired special secretary, finance department, Shankeshwar Tripathi, as members.

The committee is likely to submit the draft for new rules to the Speaker in January. The Speaker will then put it before the 13-member



The need for replacing the 64-year-old Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of the UP Legislative Assembly was felt after new technology was introduced in the Vidhan Sabha

ber Rules Committee of the UP Vidhan Sabha.

The Rules Committee is chaired by the Speaker himself and has MLAs from various political parties. "Once approved by the Rules Committee, the draft would be tabled before the House for approval," the principal secretary said.

The need for replacing the 64-year-old Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of the UP Legislative Assembly was felt after

new technology was introduced in the Vidhan Sabha.

"It became more important after e-vidhan was introduced in the legislature," the principal secretary said.

One of the major changes in the rules would be reducing the notice period to convene the house from 14 days to seven days.

The language of the rules would also be simplified as it has been felt that legislators, especially the first-timers, find it difficult to understand the rules. Similarly, several other rules and procedures would not only be simplified but also clarified.

A proposal is also likely to be made to allow members of the House to list questions 15 days after the Speaker adjourns the House instead of the present procedure to list questions after the Cabinet adjourns the House sine die.

The new rule book is likely to come into force for the 2023 Budget session.

Where a hundred flowers bloom

THE VIBRANT AND BUSTLING MARKET AT MULICK GHAT, A PHOTOGRAPHER'S DELIGHT, ON THE BANKS OF THE HOOGHLY, ATTRACTS OVER 2,000 FLOWER SELLERS DAILY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Dec 15: At the crack of dawn, Krishna Srimani walks briskly towards Mullick Ghat flower market beside the towering Howrah bridge with his merchandise of flowers cut freshly from his farmland for prospective buyers.

Srimani (63), a second-generation flower grower, brings jasmines, mogras, roses and lotuses to sell at Asia's oldest wholesale flower market.

The vibrant and bustling market at Mullick Ghat, a photographer's delight, on the banks of the Hooghly, attracts over 2,000 flower sellers daily.

"My father used to sell flowers in this market which is 130 years old. I inherited the business from him and for the last 50 years I am running it," Srimani said.

The sale proceeds are enough to lead a decent life with his wife and two children, he added.

'Karigars' at the stalls string the cut flowers for making garlands. They also make decorative panels, and bouquets and women sort leaves which the clientele buy for offerings. Red hibiscus, marigolds in yellow, orange or red varieties, and jasmine required for pujas and wedding decor are in great demand at the market.

The rush and buzz in the wholesale flower market are even more during festivals and the wedding season. Wedding dates mean more customers and increased sales.

Unlike other days, the wedding dates are very special. On a normal day, if the turnover of the market is around Rs 1 crore, then on the wedding days it can easily go up to almost Rs 2 crore, revealed 47-year-



old Bhakti Maiti, who supplies decoration items for weddings.

Vendors are seen busy making flower arrangements, floral tiaras, and bouquets that are in great demand during festivals and weddings. The market also offers flowers used for other purposes -- birthdays, housewarming parties, and funerals.

The business here comprises not only countless farmers and middlemen who sell their products, but also shopkeepers who offer decoration services and more. Many vendors even stay in makeshift shelters in the area. Livelihood of people like porters who carry the bulk purchase up to the vehicles, tea vendors, fruit sellers, shop owners selling snacks also centre around this flower market.

The market starts around 4 am with flower sellers from adjacent areas of Kolkata gathering with their merchandise.

Vendors bring their flowers from

Khirai and Kolaghat in Purba Medinipur district, Bagnan in Howrah district and areas in Nadia, North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas districts to this market.

The flower sellers say around 50 varieties of marigold are sold at the market. Mexican tuberose (Rajanigandha) is also a big hit.

Swapan Burman, a member of Mulick Ghat Phool Bazaar Parichalan Samiti, a nominated body of the Department of Food Processing, Industries and Horticulture, Government of West Bengal, said the turnover, including wholesale, retail and exports, of the flower market is in crores.

Flowers are sent to Bangalore, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai and some places in Rajasthan, he said.

Lack of direct flights to places like the Netherlands has affected the export potential of the famed market, he claimed.

Plans are afoot to recycle flowers to make incense sticks, intro-

duce cold storage facilities, and revamp the market and make it more organised, he said.

Ajit Ghorai, a shop owner since 1982, said, "I have been a part of this market and associated with the business of flower decoration for the last 40 years. When I started here, my profit margin used to be double the expenses incurred. But now, as a result of competition, our days of happiness are gone, and we are compelled to make do with negligible profits."

The words of this market veteran were echoed by Madan Saha, another flower seller which does not have a grand structure to announce its presence.

"Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic, sales are not encouraging at all, and we are just able to make both ends meet. My association with the market is for over 30 years now, and each year the competition is increasing manifold," Saha said.

Noise levels at all-time high in Noida as debris cleanup misses deadline

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Noida, Dec 15: The Supreme Court-mandated demolition of Noida's infamous twin towers in August this year has left behind a recurring nightmare of noise pollution, lingering headaches, breathing issues, shaky floors and rising anxiety levels for the residents of the neighbouring Emerald Court complex.

And anger seems to be the common emotion among the residents of Aster-2, who live just nine metres away from the site, and are bearing the brunt of the continuing dismantling of the structure and removal of the piles of concrete debris and metal.

The debris has still not been moved, despite claims of the company assigned by Supertech, the developer of the twin towers, that 60 per cent of the 80,000 tonnes of debris has been carted away.

As a result, daily, sharp at 8 am, the workers dig away non-stop, with the sound from the mammoth machines employed by them reaching up to maximum 100 decibels if three work in tandem. The activity ends at 8 pm, after which the manual cleanup takes place, leading to yet another kind of metallic cacophony.

On Monday, three such big drillers were in operation right under the Aster-2 block and four near ATS Village at 7.35 pm. The work was stopped only after the residents complained bitterly.

Anish Bansal, a World Bank executive, told IANS, "We need to highlight that this digging is not compulsory. It is being done only in order to salvage iron and steel. Otherwise, they can just remove the loose structures above ground zero and retain the unbroken pillars in the basement. If the noise and vibration is for the purpose of removal of rubble, we wouldn't complain; we know that it is necessary. However, the removal of pillars by digging below ground zero is not necessary."

Inderjeet Kaur, a homemaker and mother of two living in Aster-

2, Emerald Court, told IANS that she had to undergo brain-mapping and was diagnosed with high stress levels because of the noise.

"We have seen this building from its foundations being laid to it being brought down, but all this was done with engineers around; now, there are no engineers to supervise the work. Semi-skilled workers are being employed at the site and they have zero expertise in removing debris from residential areas," Kaur added.

"It is living hell," Kaur continued, "with the noise level rising up to more than 70db throughout the day. Yesterday, I called the police to get their machines moved, but they did not act," she said, adding that she underwent brain mapping because she was experiencing a nagging headache. That's when she learnt that her stress levels were high because of the noise assault.

A senior citizen, who is also a stroke survivor, meanwhile, is complaining about severe wheezing issues because of the bad air quality, courtesy of the dust in the area. "Work from home is impossible," added Atul Gupta, an entrepreneur. "My work is suffering. My family is suffering. The only time we can relax is at night when these machines stop," Gupta said.

In a letter to the Chief Executive Officer of the New Okhla Industrial Development Authority, Uttar Pradesh, UBS Teotia, President, Emerald Court RWA, pointed out, "The deeper digging near the existing buildings may cause slippage or movement of the earth below the foundation of the existing building and may harm the existing structure with no safety measures in place."

The RWA president concluded by saying, "The residents are in complete distress due to continuous noise, vibration and pollution for the last one year and are not able to sustain any further." He urged the Noida CEO to ask Edifice to stop digging further, level up the ground and hand over the site to the residents at once.



'Area within 500m radius of Ram Temple restricted zone'

AS PER AYODHYA MASTER PLAN 2031, WITHIN 500 METRES PERIPHERY OF THE TEMPLE ONLY RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES WILL BE PERFORMED



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ayodhya (UP), Dec 15: The 500 metres periphery of under-construction Ram Mandir in Ayodhya will now be a restricted zone, where except religious activities no commercial or any other activity will be allowed, a senior official said Thursday.

According to Ayodhya Master Plan 2031, within 500 metres periphery of the temple only religious activities will be performed, Vice-Chairman of Ayodhya Development Authority, Vishal Singh told PTI.

Keeping the security of Ram Jannabhoomi on top priority and

to maintain the religious sanctity of the Ram Mandir, the area of about half kilometers will remain in full religious colour, he said.

Restricted temple zone has been created to preserve the grandeur and divinity of the temple. In this zone the maximum height of the buildings are also restricted to only 7.5 metres, Singh said.

Under the Master Plan 2031, the built-up area has also been marked, as in old areas of the city, such as Chowk and its adjacent areas, the height of the buildings in these areas will be 15 metres, he said. The roads in old city areas are relatively less wide, if big buildings are built there, along with the envi-

ronmental issues, the area will have to face many problems, he reasoned. Apart from this, zonal development plans will be prepared by dividing the development area into seven zones, the senior official said.

In the master plan, market areas have been marked on the main roads outside the old city areas, he said. From Devkali tri-section to DarshanNagar on Ambedkar Nagar Road, from Dabhasemar Sports Stadium on Allahabad highway to Maushiwala locality on Raebareli Road and from Saadatganj Hanumangarhi on Lucknow road to the last boundary of Ghatampur village on Lucknow-Gorakhpur highway will be the market area, he said.

The plan for regularisation of commercial buildings built in these areas has also been cleared, he informed.

Conservation of reservoirs, ponds, drains and other water sources or drainage sources has also been included in the master plan, he said, adding there will be no construction within a radius of six metres of such places.

To control the construction taking place in and around the river, a provision has been made for river central development, he said.

Preparation of water action plan for providing drinking water round the clock is also included in the master plan, he added.

Town of 'Indomitable Gauls' 50 km north of Kolkata

France's victory over Morocco in the semi-finals is still being celebrated at Chandannagar

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Dec 15: While most of Kolkata, including many dejected Brazil and Portugal fans, will root for Argentina during Sunday's football world cup finals in Qatar, a town of 'Indomitable Gauls' about 50 km to the north will cheer for Kylian Mbappe and his team.

"We shall certainly cheer for France. Had it been India versus France in some sporting event, we would have cheered for India. But this match is between France and Argentina and this used to be a part of France till about 70 years ago. It's only natural that most of the people here are supporters of

the French football team," said septuagenarian Dipankar Roy, a resident of Chandannagar, also known as Chandernagore, on the west bank of River Hooghly.

France's victory over Morocco in the semi-finals is still being celebrated at Chandannagar: Several younger fans are busy discussing how Hugo Lloris' side needs to defend better against Argentina.

"France is the defending champion. However, many of us had their hearts in their throats during the semi-final match even after France scored an early goal. The Moroccan side kept on attacking and there were a few near misses. It could have been anybody's game if Morocco



had a good finisher. It was only after the second goal that we started celebrating. Argentina will not make the same mistakes as Morocco did and France will have to be very careful," Sumit, a college-goer said. The French East India Company

Kolkata air pollution levels worse than Delhi this week

Kolkata's iconic Victoria Memorial Hall, which is favourite place for morning walkers is the worst affected on this count, says an environmentalist

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Dec 15: The air pollution levels in Kolkata have turned to be worse than that of New Delhi during the first two days of the current week, Monday and Tuesday

On Monday (December 12), the air quality index (AQI) was recorded at 307, which is considered as "hazardous", as against the national capital's figure of 218, which is in the "very unhealthy" category.

The difference in the air quality levels in the two cities further increased Tuesday (Dec 13). While the AQI for Kolkata was 314 or "hazardous" on that day, the figure for New Delhi was 177 or "unhealthy".

Environment activist and green technologist, Somendra Mohan Ghosh said that Kolkata's iconic Victoria Memorial Hall, which is

favourite place for morning walkers is the worst affected on this count. "The AQI in this heritage zone is quite high. So the shine of marbles of the heritage building is being affected because of the high level of pollution in the area. At the same time, the air quality in the zone is not safe in the morning and evening hours," he said.

He said that it is unfortunate that the Makrana marbles of this heritage structure in the city are getting exposed to and affected by the air pollution. According to him, all concerned including the West Bengal Heritage Commission and the heritage wing of Kolkata Municipal Corporation should take immediate steps on this count to save this iconic heritage structure.

Environmental experts feel that during the winter time, the pollution level increases because of natural reasons, when the concentration of the polluting particles in the air increases. However, activists like Ghosh feel that the human negligence like effecting the ban on polluting vehicles beyond a certain age, barring street-food vendors from using coal and kerosene gas ovens while cooking on the streets, among others aggravate this menace.



before the French got Chandannagar back. Thereafter, it remained under the political control of the governor general of Pondicherry (now Puducherry) till 1950.

In May 1950, the process to hand over Chandannagar to India started after a plebiscite by the French government revealed that 97 per cent of the town's residents wished to join the Union of India. At that time, several residents of the town held French passports and were given an option to remain French citizens.

"Oh, we are as much Indian as anybody else in the country. But we harbour some sentiments for France, particularly during football matches. We also held peace rallies and memorial services after the terror strikes in Paris in 2015," Sumit added.

of the day quote

As many as 1.47 lakh new appointees were inducted by various central government departments, autonomous bodies and banks among others through 'Rozgar Melas'. Vacancies are being filled up in mission mode

JITENDRA SINGH
UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR PERSONNEL

The number of MBBS seats has increased by 87 per cent and that of PG by 105 per cent in the last eight years

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

This squabble has been going on. First, Pakistan attacked, then our External affairs Minister responded to that. These things go on. The NC has been saying that we want good relations with our neighbouring countries, be it India's relations with China, or Pakistan, or Nepal, or Bangladesh, or Sri Lanka

OMAR ABDULLAH | NC VICE PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Ansari convicted

Ghaziपुर : The MP/MLA court in Ghaziपुर Thursday convicted and sentenced Mukhtar Ansari to ten-year imprisonment in a 1996 case under the Gangsters Act. His aide Bhim Singh has also been awarded a ten-year sentence by the court. The court has also imposed a fine of Rs 5 lakh each on the two. This is the first case in which Ansari has been convicted by the court. It relates to the murder of Avadesh Rai, brother of Congress zonal president Ajai Rai, in 1996.

Spy arrested

New Delhi: A well-trained spy, who had been working for the 'Sikhs for Justice' and Pakistan's ISI for a long time, was arrested by the Punjab Police in Chandigarh following intelligence inputs, sources said Thursday. A team of Operation Cell led by Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Gurcharan Singh and Inspector Manpreet Singh arrested the spy. The spy was identified as Tripender Singh, 40 who had been living in Sector 40 of Chandigarh for a long time. The accused had been sending information to Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Sikhs for Justice for last many years.

6 school kids hurt

Bhopal: At least six school children were injured after a bus carrying them overturned in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district Thursday. The incident occurred between 9.30 a.m. when the bus carrying around 30 children overturned near a petrol pump in the Barvah area of the district.

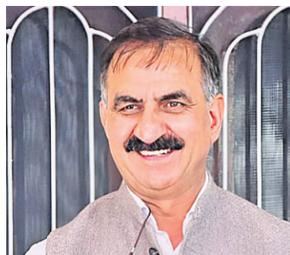


The entire country stands with the government on Chinese aggression on the border but the Centre must take the opposition into confidence

SACHIN PILOT | CONGRESS LEADER

NEW CABINET AFTER ASSEMBLY SESSION: SUKHU

The new cabinet in Himachal Pradesh would be formed after the Vidhan Sabha session which will be convened soon, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said Thursday



BIHAR TOXIC LIQUOR DEATHS

If you drink, you will die, says Nitish

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Dec 15: After Bihar's hooch tragedy toll climbed to 26, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Thursday warned that if people drink spurious liquor, they will die.

The chief minister's blunt comments came as his policy of prohibition came under attack from many quarters including from his former political strategist turned activist Prashant Kishor, who demanded scrapping of the prohibition law.

"Jo piyega woh marega" (those who drink spurious alcohol will die), thundered Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar as he stood his ground maintaining that prohibition was "not my personal wish but a response to the cries of the women of the state".

Kumar when he brought in prohibition had won praise from many women's groups who felt it would save their men-folk from the "curse of drunkenness and save homes from financial ruin." He also expressed displeasure over criticisms from the opposition BJP which has raised the issue "even inside Parliament".

Civil surgeon and medical officer in charge Dr Sagar Dulal Sinha who confirmed that the number of people dead from consuming the illicitly brewed liquor has increased to 26 from 21 on Wednesday, said deaths were being reported from those homes who had not reported hooch-related illness earlier out of fear of landing on the wrong side of the law.

While the opposition BJP continued to create a ruckus inside the assembly for the second consecutive day over the Saran hooch tragedy

"Jo piyega woh marega" (those who drink spurious alcohol will die), thundered Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar as he stood his ground maintaining that prohibition was "not my personal wish but a response to the cries of the women of the state"

The chief minister's blunt comments came as his policy of prohibition came under attack from many quarters including from his former political strategist turned activist Prashant Kishor, who demanded scrapping of the prohibition law

the CPI(M) Liberation which supports the "Mahagathbandhan" government staged a demonstration outside before the commencement of proceedings, demanding a "review" of draconian provisions of the prohibition law and monetary compensation to bereaved family members.

Kishor, a former confidant of the chief minister, demanded that the prohibition law be scrapped, terming it as a "stupid" step and suggested allowing "regulated" sale of alcohol besides sustained social awareness campaigns to dissuade people from consuming all types of intoxicants.

"Bihar has become a laughing stock because of prohibition. The law should be repealed forthwith. It is high time that all political parties, be it Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the BJP which shared power with him for years, and the RJD of Deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav gave up their hypocrisy and took a decision without worrying about votes," Kishor fumed at a press conference in Sheohar district.



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee looks on as actors Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan exchange greetings during inauguration of the 28th Kolkata International Film Festival, in Kolkata

UNION HOME SECY REVIEWS CROWDING AT AIRPORTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 15: The issue of crowding at airports, particularly Delhi and Mumbai, was discussed threadbare at a meeting chaired by Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla here on Thursday, officials said.

Bhalla convened the meeting to discuss with stakeholders continuous complaints from passengers the rush at the entry gates, luggage dropping, and security check areas. The meeting discussed the issue of crowding and how to fix the problems faced by the passengers, an official said.

Representatives of key stakeholders such as the Civil Aviation Ministry, CISF, and Bureau of Immigration attended the meeting, an official said. Over the last two weeks, passengers have been posting pictures and videos of long queues and crowding at the IGI in Delhi and the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai prompting authorities to take note and asking airlines and airport operators to ease the traffic.

The CISF has formed a pool of more than 100 personnel to man additional security counters expected to be handed over to it to ease the congestion at large airports of Delhi and Mumbai, official sources said.

The central paramilitary, designated as the national aviation security force, has informed airport operators, airlines, and the Union civil aviation ministry that while it can bring on board some more security personnel, there can be "no compromise on security protocols and standard operating procedures followed by it for regular frisking of passengers and scanning of cabin baggage apart from fliers required to undergo extensive search due to specific profiling."

The civil aviation ministry had on Tuesday asked airlines to deploy adequate manpower at all check-in and baggage drop counters, besides requesting the scheduled airlines to update their social media feed with real-time numbers on the waiting time at airports' entry gates.

Circumstantial evidence okay to convict babus of graft: SC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 15: The Supreme Court Thursday said a public servant can be convicted for illegal gratification in a corruption case on the basis of circumstantial evidence when there is no direct oral or documentary evidence against them.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice S A Nazeer said complainants as well as the prosecution should make sincere efforts so that corrupt public servants are brought to book and convicted so that the administration and governance be-

come unpolluted and free from corruption.

"In the absence of evidence of complainant (direct or primary), it is permissible to draw an inferential deduction of culpability," the bench, also comprising justices B R Gavai, A S Bopanna, V Ramasubramanian and B V Nagarathna, said.

The top court said that even if direct evidence of the complainant is not available, owing to death or other reasons, there can be conviction of the public servant under the relevant provisions.

"In the event the complainant

The top court said that even if direct evidence of the complainant is not available, owing to death or other reasons, there can be conviction of the public servant under the relevant provisions

turns hostile or has died or is unable to let in his evidence during the trial, the demand of illegal gratification can be proved by letting in the evidence of any other witness either orally or documentary evidence or the prosecution can prove the case by circumstantial evidence.

"The trial does not abate nor does it result in an order of acquittal of the public servant," the bench said. The apex court's verdict came while examining the issue whether in the absence of direct or primary evidence of demand of bribe, inferential deduction of guilt of a public servant can be drawn based on other evidence.

Man stuck between rocks for 3 days rescued

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, Dec 15: A 36-year-old man precariously stuck between rocks in a forest area in Kamareddy district after a slip spent three harrowing days between the boulders, all the while surviving on liquid diet, before a 24-hour operation that included controlled blast by authorities led to his rescue.

C Raju of Reddypet village got stuck in a narrow space between rocks and the coordinated rescue effort involving different government departments ensured he was pulled out on Thursday. Raju slipped into the gap between the rocks and got trapped, without being able to move his body on Tuesday while trying to take out his cell phone which had fallen inside the rocks. He was walking on a hillock in that area



along with a friend when the incident happened.

Soon his family members tried to rescue him and when they could not, they alerted the police. Police along with officials from other departments launched a rescue operation on Wednesday at around 4 PM after receiving information.

Controlled blast was done on Thursday to break the rocks as part of efforts to rescue the man, a police official, who supervised the rescue operation said. Initially, the rescue effort started with the help of earth-moving equipment to shatter the boulders besides men trying to break the rocks manually.

Godhra convict granted bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 15: The Supreme Court Thursday granted bail to a convict serving life imprisonment in the 2002 Godhra train coach burning case, noting that he has been in jail for the last 17 years.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha took note of the submission of a lawyer, appearing for one of the convicts Faruk, that he be granted bail considering the period undergone till now.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Gujarat government, termed the offence as the "most heinous" in which 59 people, including women and children were burnt alive and sought hearing of the appeals of the convicts at the earliest.

The top law officer opposed the bail plea and said usually stone pelting is an offence of minor nature, however, in the instant case, the train coach was bolted and stones were pelted to ensure that passengers cannot come out.

Moreover, stones were thrown at fire tenders also, he added. "He (the convict seeking bail) instigated others and pelted stones and injured the passengers. Under normal circumstances, pelting of stones may be a lesser offence... But this is different," he said.

"In the facts of the case, the application of bail made by Faruk... is granted. The applicant was convicted of offences punishable under Section 302 (murder) of the IPC and sentenced to suffer imprisonment for life. "The High Court had dismissed his appeal on October 9, 2017. The applicant has sought bail on the ground that he has been in custody since 2004 and has undergone imprisonment for about 17 years."

IAF begins exercise in Northeast amid row with China

In a tweet, the IAF said the last of the 36 Rafale jets joined the force. The IAF inducted the Rafale aircraft into its 101 Squadron of the Eastern Air Command at the Hasimara in July last year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 15: The Indian Air Force, bolstered by its full complement of Rafale combat jets, on Thursday launched a major exercise covering the Northeastern region amid a fresh spike of border tension with China along the Line of Actual Control in Arunachal Pradesh.

The two-day mega exercise involving almost all its frontline fighter jets and other assets deployed in the region, people familiar with the drill said. In a tweet, the IAF said the last of the 36 Rafale jets joined the force. The IAF inducted the Rafale aircraft into its 101 Squadron of the Eastern Air Command at the Hasimara in July last year.

The first Rafale squadron with around 18 jets is based in Ambala air base. "FEET DRY! The Pack is Complete! The last of the 36 IAF Rafales landed in India after a quick enroute stop from a UAE Air Force tanker," the IAF said.

Sources said the French-manufactured jet joined the second Rafale squadron in Hasimara that increased its strength to 18 aircraft. They said the second



squadron of Rafale jets was to be part of the mega air exercise along with other key assets such as Sukhoi-30MKI aircraft under the

Eastern Air Command. An IAF official said the exercise was planned well in advance and it is not associated with recent de-

velopments in the Tawang sector. On Monday, the Indian Army said troops from the two sides clashed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Tawang sector and the face-off led to "minor injuries" to a few personnel from both sides.

The face-off took place amid the over 30-month border stand-off between the two sides in eastern Ladakh. All frontline air bases and some key Advanced Landing Grounds in the Northeast are set to be involved in the exercise, said a source.

The Army and IAF have been maintaining a high state of operational readiness along the LAC in the Arunachal Pradesh and the Sikkim sector for over two years following the eastern Ladakh row. The IAF scrambled fighter jets last week following China's in-

creasing air activities on its side of the LAC in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh.

The deployment of some aerial platforms including drones by China in the region preceded the Chinese attempts on December 9 to unilaterally change the status quo in the Yangtse area of the Tawang sector, the sources said.

They said a number of Chinese drones flew close to the LAC prompting the IAF to scramble the jets and increase the overall combat readiness. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday told Parliament that the Indian troops bravely thwarted the attempt by Chinese PLA from "unilaterally" changing the status in Yangtse area of the Tawang sector and there were no fatalities or serious casualties to the Indian troops in the scuffle.

international



France supports the candidacy of Germany, Brazil, India and Japan as permanent members. It also wishes to see a stronger presence of African countries, among both permanent and non-permanent members
NICOLAS DE RIVIERE | FRENCH AMBASSADOR, UN

HISTORIC MOMENT FOR PELOSI
Outgoing Speaker Nancy Pelosi's portrait was unveiled at the US Capitol, a traditional honor bestowed on a tradition-breaking leader who was not just the first woman to hold the gavel but among the most consequential House speakers in American history – one who "got it done"



of the day quote

No enemy could do what General (ret'd) Bajwa did to Pakistan
IMRAN KHAN | EX-PM, PAKISTAN

The Indo-Pacific concept is created by the US to contain China. In fact, there is no such concept as 'Indo-Pacific' in geopolitics
LU SHAYE | CHINA'S AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE

So the challenge that China and other countries still have is: are the people that need to be vaccinated, adequately vaccinated, with the right vaccines and the right number of doses and when was the last time those people had the vaccines
MIKE RYAN | EMERGENCIES DIRECTOR, WHO

SECRETS SPILLED UK royal family feud turns uglier

The British royal family may appear prim and proper to the public, but they've faced their fair share of controversies over the years. Couple of months back the royals were criticised over racism allegations in the castle and now the spotlight has shifted to sibling rivalry between Prince William and Harry



The potentially explosive new episodes come at a crucial moment for the monarchy as King Charles III tries to show that the institution remains alive and vibrant after the death of Queen Elizabeth II, whose personal popularity damped criticism of the crown during her 70-year reign

London, Dec 15: Prince Harry and his wife Meghan piled fresh criticism on the British royal family in new episodes of their Netflix documentary series released Thursday, accusing his elder brother Prince William of being part of media attacks.

William, now heir to the throne, had screamed at him when he discussed leaving his official royal role almost three years ago, Harry said, while he also added he believed the press were responsible for Meghan having a miscarriage. In the first tranche of episodes released last week, the royals had escaped relatively unscathed. But in the final three, Harry accuses his relatives of not just failing to prevent negative coverage in the press, but actively encouraging it. "It is a dirty game. There's leaking but there's also planting of stories," said Harry. He said he and elder brother William, the heir to the throne, had seen what had happened with the office of their father King Charles and agreed never to repeat it.

Harry accuses Prince William of screaming at him, his aides of leaking stories

Palace officials have said will not be commenting on documentary

Prince Harry describes bust-up at royal crisis summit

Harry blames wife's miscarriage on press intrusion

Accuses royal aides of 'trading' negatives stories with press

Senior royals due to attend London carol service later

Duke and Duchess of Sussex, as Harry and Meghan are officially known, stepped down from royal duties in March 2020, saying they wanted to forge new lives in the United States away from media harassment, which the couple said had threatened to destroy their mental health. Both Buckingham Palace and William's office, Kensington Palace, have said they would not be commenting on the documentaries. A royal source also said neither the palace nor representatives of William or other royals had been approached for comment for the series itself, contradicting a Netflix statement that said they had declined to comment.

In his evidence the former aide, Jason Knauff, who had also worked for the couple, suggested Meghan had been aware at the time that the letter could leak. "It's your brother. Not gonna say anything about your brother, but it's so obvious," Meghan said. Harry's 2018 marriage to the former Meghan Markle, a biracial American actress, was once seen as a public relations coup for the royal family, boosting the monarchy's effort to move into the 21st century by making it more representative of a multicultural nation. But the fairy tale, punctuated with a horse-drawn carriage ride and massive wedding at Windsor Castle,

'IT'S YOUR BROTHER'
In another scene from the documentary, the couple were shown talking about a former senior aide to William, who provided evidence

What Harry, Meghan said in Netflix episodes

HARRY ON TIES WITH HIS FAMILY
On a family meeting to discuss Harry's royal departure: "It was terrifying to have my brother scream and shout at me, and my father say things that just simply weren't true, and my grandmother quietly sit there and sort of take it all in."

so much of how they operate is about what it looks like rather than what it feels like. And it looked cold, but it also felt cold."

MEGHAN, HARRY ON MEDIA, PRESSURE
Meghan on royals and the media: "You would just see it play out. Like a story about someone in the family would pop up for a minute and they would go: 'got to make that go away'. But there is a real estate on a website home page, on a newspaper front cover, and something has to be filled in there about someone royal."

Harry on pressure to show off son Archie after birth: "The amount of abuse we got... for not wanting to serve our child up on a silver platter was incredible."

On the royal household and the media: "It is a dirty game. There's leaking but there's also planting of stories. So if the comms team want to be able to remove a negative story about their principal, they will trade and give you something about someone else's principal. So the offices end up working against each other. William and I both saw what happened in our dad's office and we made an agreement we would never let that happen to our office."

Harry on Meghan's miscarriage: "I believe my wife suffered a miscarriage because of what the Mail did," he said, referring to the British tabloid newspaper. "I watched the whole thing. Now do we absolutely know that the miscarriage was caused by that? Of course we don't, but bearing in mind the stress that that caused, the lack of sleep, and the timing of the pregnancy - how many weeks in she was, I can say from what I saw, that miscarriage was created by what they

On ties with William: "The saddest part of it was this wedge created between myself and my brother so he is now on the institution side. Part of that, I get. That is his inheritance. To some extent that is already engrained in him, that part of his responsibility is the survivability and continuation of this institution."

Harry on support in the family: "The issue is when someone who's marrying in, and should be a supporting act, is then stealing the limelight or doing the job better than the person who was born to do this. That upsets people, it shifts the balance."

On his feelings towards his family: "I felt really distant from the rest of my family, which was interesting because

Meghan on feeling suicidal: "I was like, all of this will stop if I'm not here. And that was the scariest thing about it because it was such a clear thinking." "I wanted to go somewhere to get help but I wasn't allowed to, they were concerned about how that would look for the institution."



soon unraveled amid relentless media attention, including allegations that Meghan was self-centered and bullied her staff. "I wasn't being thrown to the wolves, I was being fed to the

wolves," Meghan says in one clip included in the trailer. The series is Harry and Meghan's latest effort to tell their own story after the couple stepped back from royal life in early 2020 and moved

to the wealthy Southern California enclave of Montecito. Their life on an estate overlooking the Pacific Ocean has been partly funded by lucrative contracts with Netflix and Spotify.

SHORT TAKES

2,500-yr-old puzzle solved by Indian

London: A grammatical problem which has defeated Sanskrit scholars since the 5th Century BC has finally been solved by an Indian PhD student at the University of Cambridge. It emerged as his thesis was published Thursday, Rishi Rajpopat made the breakthrough by decoding a rule taught by Panini, known as the father of linguistics, and is now encapsulated in his thesis entitled 'In Panini, We Trust: Discovering the Algorithm for Rule Conflict Resolution in the Astadhyayi'. According to the university, leading Sanskrit experts have described Rajpopat's discovery as "revolutionary". The 2,500-year-old algorithm decoded by him makes it possible, for the first time, to accurately use Panini's so-called "language machine".

UK nurses strike

London: National Health Service nurses in Britain staged a strike Thursday, their first ever national walkout, as a bitter dispute with the government over pay ramps up pressure on already-stretched hospitals at one of the busiest times of the year. An estimated 100,000 nurses will strike at 76 hospitals and health centres, cancelling an estimated 70,000 appointments, procedures and surgeries in Britain's state-funded NHS. Britain is facing a wave of industrial action this winter, with strikes crippling the rail network and postal service, and airports bracing for disruption over Christmas.

Nirav loses appeal

London: Diamond merchant Nirav Modi, accused in the Punjab National Bank fraud and money laundering case, suffered another setback in his legal battle against his extradition to India. The High Court in London denied Nirav Modi permission to appeal against his extradition order in the UK Supreme Court. In his appeal, Nirav Modi argued that there was a high risk of suicide if he was extradited to India.

India announces candidature for UNSC seat for '28-29 term



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, Dec 15: India has declared its candidature for non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council for the 2028-29 term, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said here Thursday. India December 1 assumed the monthly rotating Presidency of the Security Council, the second time after August 2021 that India is presiding over the Council during its two year tenure as elected UNSC member.

India has asserted that the Council, in its current form, does not reflect today's geo-political realities and its credibility is at risk if nations such as developing powers like India do not have a permanent seat at the horse-shoe table. India has strongly hit back at Pakistan for raking up the Kashmir issue in the UN Security Council (UNSC), arguing that a country that hosted slain al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and attacked a neighbouring Parliament does not have the credentials to "sermonize" before the powerful UN organ. Jaishankar's strong remarks came after Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto raised the Kashmir issue while speaking in the Council open debate on reformed multilateralism Wednesday. He said the credibility of the UN depends on its effective response to the key challenges of our times, be it pandemics, climate change, conflicts or terrorism.

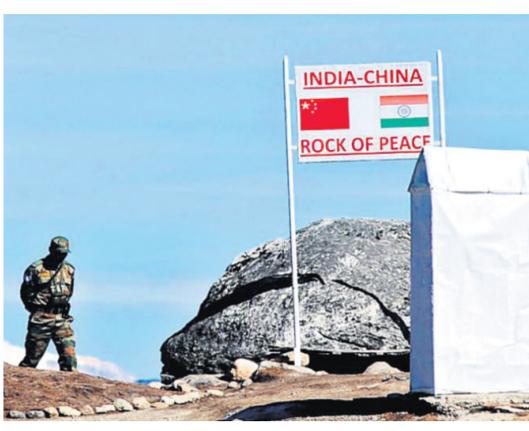
BORDER ROW WITH INDIA

Pentagon flags China concerns

CHINA CONTINUES TO AMASS FORCES AND BUILD MILITARY INFRASTRUCTURE ON BORDER WITH INDIA, PENTAGON SAID

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Washington, Dec 15: The US Pentagon has said that China continues to amass forces and build military infrastructure across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India. Addressing a briefing, Brigadier General Pat Ryder, Press Secretary of the Department of Defense (DoD), said the DoD continues to closely watch developments along the line of actual control at the India-China border. "We have seen the PRC continue to amass forces and build military infrastructure along the so-called LAC. But I would defer you to India in terms of their views."



spokesperson was: "How much is the Pentagon concerned that this clash could lead to a bigger military confrontation? Is the Pentagon willing to provide more military support to India to help them handle China's military threats at the border?"

in Yangtze area of Tawang sector in Arunachal Pradesh and change the status quo. But, Rajnath Singh said, the Chinese troops were sent back by the Indian soldiers. The face-off between the Chinese and the Indian troops led the physical scuffle but no deaths were reported. Singh said that "our forces are committed to protecting our territorial integrity and will continue to thwart any attempt made on it".

"It does reflect though, and it's important to point out, the growing trend by the PRC to assert itself and to be provocative in areas directed towards US allies and our partners in the Indo Pacific. And we will continue to remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring the security of our partners. And we fully support India's ongoing efforts to deescalate this situation," he added. Ryder's remarks came as a response to a series of queries on the recent clashes between Indian and Chinese soldiers along the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh. The queries posed to the

On December 9, troops from China's People's Liberation Army of the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh, but Indian soldiers firmly contested their way, leading to a clash between the two. India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh informed that China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops tried to transgress the LAC

The India-China clash along the LAC in Tawang sector took place amid over 30-month border stand-off between the two sides in eastern Ladakh in August 2020.

ANTI-ZERO-COVID PROTESTS

China blames stirs on 'foreign forces'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Dec 15: Nearly a fortnight after China lifted the much-despised 'zero-Covid' restrictions following a spate of protests, the country is reeling under a massive coronavirus wave, with a Chinese diplomat blaming "foreign forces" for the anti-government demonstrations. Videos circulating in China's social media showed clinics in Beijing and some other cities flooded with patients with queues extending onto footpaths with people patiently waiting for their turn in the cold winter. While many with heavy fever waited outside the clinics, the Omicron virus is having a field day with most of the apartment blocks, which were earlier under the cover of zero-Covid reported fast-increasing cases.

The virus is not sparing anyone, including Chinese Foreign Ministry officials, Beijing-based diplomats and journalists. Meanwhile, a senior Chinese diplomat has alleged that last month's anti-zero covid protests, which included slogans against President Xi Jinping and the ruling Communist Party, were caused by the local government's failure to manage the epidemic but were soon "taken advantage of" by "foreign forces". The remarks by Lu Shaye, China's Ambassador to France, were the first by a Chinese official after rare protests erupted in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong, and other cities, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported Thursday. A transcript of Lu's comments made at a reception December 7 was published on the Chinese embassy's website. "In the beginning, I think the Chinese public initiated the protests to express their dissatisfaction (with) how local governments have failed to fully implement the central government's policies. But the protests were soon being taken advantage of by foreign forces," Lu said. "I think the 'real protests' only happened on the first day. Foreign forces came into play already on the second day," said Lu, whose fiery remarks in the past have made him one of the high-profile "wolf warrior" diplomats of China, the report said.

115 media workers killed in 29 nations this year

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Geneva, Dec 15: Since January, 115 media workers have been killed in 29 countries so far, while Ukraine and Mexico topped the list for the most dangerous nations for mediapersons, a Geneva-based rights body said in a report. By region, Latin America topped the list with 39 journalists killed, followed by Europe with 37 victims, Asia 30, Africa seven and North America two, according to the Press Emblem Campaign (PEC).

Yugoslavia from 1992 to 1999, said the EC report. There has been at least 34 victims since the beginning of the Russian invasion February 24, with eight journalists killed in the line of duty. Mexico came in second with 17 victims, the highest annual death toll in the country since at least the beginning of the century. They were the target of criminal gangs in a climate of violence and impunity. At the third place with eight victims is Haiti, followed by Pakistan (six), the Philippines (five), Colombia (four) and India (four). Bangladesh,



Honduras, Israel/Palestine and Yemen reported three media fatalities each. Two media fatalities were registered each in Brazil,

The number of journalists killed increased by 45 per cent compared to last year (79 victims). It is the highest number of casualties since 2018 with a brutal deterioration in Europe due to the war in Ukraine
BLAISE LEMPEN | PRESIDENT, PEC

Kenya, Paraguay, Russia, Sweden, Turkey and Vietnam. Meanwhile, there was no casualties among mediapersons in Afghanistan so far this year, compared to the 12 in 2021. However, many journalists have fled the country. In the last five years, Mexico has recorded the greatest number of victims (69), ahead of Afghanistan (44), then India (37), Ukraine (36), Pakistan (34), Syria (24), the Philippines (21), Yemen (17), Honduras (13), Somalia (13), Brazil (12) and Haiti (11).

The countries with just one victim each were the Central African Republic, Chile, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guatemala, Kazakhstan,

From 2013 to 2022, 1,135 journalists were killed, or 113 per year, 2.2 per week, according to figures from the PEC.

business

of the day quote

Six States – West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala and Jharkhand – have not reduced the VAT in petroleum products, leading to higher prices of petrol and diesel there

HARDEEP SINGH PURI | PETROLEUM MINISTER

Boosting consumption by leaving more money in the hands of the consumers is a low hanging fruit for a further recovery in economic growth

DEEPAK SOOD | SECRETARY GENERAL, ASSOCHAM

In India, a departure from international best practices will not only blur the well-established variance between games of skill and games of chance, but also eventually lead to value erosion for more than 500 Indian startups currently valued over \$20 billion, which have attracted more than \$2.5 billion in investments and FDI

L BADRI NARAYANAN | EXECUTIVE PARTNER, LAKSHMIKUMARAN & SRIDHARAN

SHORT TAKES

IRCTC stock slips 6.5% post govt offer

New Delhi: Shares of IRCTC fell more than 6.5 per cent in morning trade on the BSE Thursday as the sale of the government's up to 5 per cent stake in the company kicked off. The government's offer-for-sale (OFS) of up to 5 per cent stake in Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) at a floor price of Rs 680 a share opened for institutional investors Thursday. The OFS includes base issue size of 2 crore shares or 2.5 per cent stake, with an option to retain over-subscription of another 2.5 per cent, taking the total issue size to up to 4 crore shares or 5 per cent stake. The sale got over-subscribed on the first day of the offer, with institutional investors putting in bids worth Rs 3,800 crore.

BoE again hikes interest rates

London: Britain's central bank Thursday raised its key interest rate again but toned down the pace as inflation shows signs of easing, mirroring action by the US Federal Reserve and ahead of an anticipated identical move by European policymakers. The Bank of England raised the benchmark rate by half a percentage point, to 3.5 per cent, the highest level in 14 years. It was the ninth consecutive increase since December 2021 and follows last month's outsized three-quarter point hike, the biggest in 30 years. This time, officials opted for less aggressive action after data this week showed inflation slipped from a 41-year high, but they warned that more hikes are likely to come.

Japan trade deficit soars on weak yen

Tokyo: Japan's trade deficit surged to over 2 trillion yen (\$15 billion) in November as higher costs for oil and a weak yen combined to push imports sharply higher. It was the 16th straight month of red ink and a record high for the month of November. The country will likely post a record deficit for the year. The deficit for November was double that for the same month the year before. Exports rose 20 per cent to 8.8 trillion yen (\$64 billion) while imports surged 30 per cent from a year earlier to 10.9 trillion yen (\$80 billion). The world's third-largest economy has been recovering after Japan gradually loosened anti-virus precautions in the second half of the year and reopened its borders to foreign tourists in October.



G-20, under India's presidency, can make concrete progress on three critical areas: debt relief, regulations of crypto currency and climate finance

GITA GOPINATH | FIRST DEPUTY MD, IMF

HYUNDAI CARS TO GET DEARER

Hyundai Motor India Ltd said it will increase prices of its vehicles across models from next month citing rising input cost. The company joins the likes of market leader Maruti Suzuki India, Tata Motors, Mercedes-Benz, Audi, Renault, Kia India and MG Motor, who have also made the year-end announcements to hike prices from next month to partially offset the impact of rising input costs



BLS International Services becomes unicorn

The firm's stock price has more than doubled in the past six months, shooting up 110%, compared to the S&P BSE Sensex's 14% increase during the same period

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 15: Tech-enabled services provider BLS International Services (BLS) Thursday said it has become the latest unicorn in the country with its market capitalisation crossing \$1 billion this week. "BLS -- one of the top three global tech-enabled services providers for governments and citizens -- crossed the \$1 billion market cap benchmark this week to become the latest unicorn in India," it said.



Since 2005, BLS has been a service provider for governments and embassies around the world with regard to outsourcing visas, passport, consular, attestation and citizen services.

This new milestone that BLS has crossed is the latest feather in our cap

SHIKHAR AGGARWAL | JOINT MD, BLS INTERNATIONAL

They work with India's largest bank, State Bank of India (SBI), as a national business correspondent to provide financial services in India's urban, semi-urban and rural areas. Its revenue increased by 70.6 per cent year-on-year to Rs 630 crore in the first half of the current financial year and consolidated profit after tax increased by 71 per cent to Rs 81.69 crore. The company works with over 46 client governments including diplomatic missions, embassies and consulates. BLS has a network of more than 27,000 centres globally having 20,000 employees and associates. It has processed over 62 million applications to date globally. BLS shares closed at Rs 198.45 apiece on the BSE Thursday down 1.59 per cent from previous close.

D-st drops over 1% as hawkish US Fed floors global mkts

A DEPRECIATING RUPEE ADDED TO THE GLOOM



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 15: The Sensex plummeted 879 points while the Nifty crashed below the 18,415 mark Thursday, in tandem with a global sell-off after the US Federal Reserve increased the interest rate and signalled more hikes in its fight against inflation.

Reversing its two-day winning run, the 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 878.88 points or 1.40 per cent to finish at 61,799.03. The broader NSE Nifty plummeted 245.40 points or 1.32 per cent to end at 18,414.90.

The rupee declined by 27 paise to close at 82.76 (provisional) against the US dollar.

Tech Mahindra was the biggest laggard among Sensex components, tumbling 3.98 per cent, followed by Infosys, Titan, HDFC, ITC, HDFC Bank, Tata Steel and TCS. Only Sun Pharma and NTPC managed to close in the green, rising up to 0.08 per cent.

"The Fed has startled the market by maintaining its hawkish tone, as investors were expecting a softer approach after the release of better-than-expected inflation numbers. IT stocks led to pessimism in the domestic market as recession fears grew in the global economies following the Fed's comments. The market now awaits the BoE (Bank of England) and ECB (European Central Bank) decisions, which are likely to follow a half-point hike," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Elsewhere in Asia, equity markets in Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and

The US Fed Wednesday increased interest rates by 50 basis points on expected lines and signalled more hikes ahead to fight inflation even as the world's largest economy stares at a possible recession. The US central bank raised the interest rate to 4.25-4.50 per cent to the highest level in 15 years

Hong Kong ended lower. Equity exchanges in Europe were trading in the red in mid-session deals. The US markets had ended in the negative territory Wednesday. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 1.05 per cent and smallcap index fell by 0.61 per cent. Among sectors, IT tumbled 2.06 per cent, followed by teck (1.92 per cent), metal (1.82 per cent), consumer durables (1.37 per cent), services (1.28 per cent), relaty (1.25 per cent), financial services (1.19 per cent), bankex (1.18 per cent) and commodities (1.17 per cent). Oil & gas ended higher.

International oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.77 per cent to \$82.06 per barrel. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in capital markets on Thursday as they sold shares worth Rs 710.74 crore, according to exchange data.

Exports flat at \$32bn in Nov; trade deficit rises

India's trade exhibited a phenomenal performance in 2021-22 attaining unprecedented exports in merchandise and services such that exports reached an all-time high. The global economy poses tremendous challenges in the current year as it continues to navigate an increasingly turbulent and uncertain environment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 15: India's exports recorded a flat growth of 0.59 per cent to \$31.99 billion in November, even as trade deficit widened to \$23.89 billion during the month, according to the data released by the government Thursday. Exports stood at \$31.8 billion in November last year. Imports rose by 5.37 per cent to \$55.88 billion in November as compared to \$53.03 billion in the corresponding month a year ago, the data showed.

During April-November 2022, exports rose by 11 per cent to \$295.26 billion as against \$265.77 billion in the same month last year.

Imports however rose by 29.5 per cent to \$493.61 billion during the eight months period of this fiscal. It was \$381.17 billion during April-November 2021, as per the data.

The merchandise trade deficit for April-November 2022 has increased to \$198.35 billion as against \$115.39 billion in April-November 2021.

India's exports entered negative territory after a gap of about two years, declining sharply by 16.65 per cent to \$29.78 billion in October, mainly due to global demand slowdown, even as trade deficit widened to \$26.91 billion. The exports exhibited a positive



Exports moving to positive territory, after a drop in October is on expected line though the challenges continue

AJAY SAHAI | DG, FIEO

Sectors which recorded positive growth include electronic goods (54.48%), gems and jewellery (4.61%), RMG of textiles (11.70%), pharmaceuticals (8.66%), rice (19.16%), and leather (8.68%)

There is a decline in exports in chemical sector in dyes and organic chemicals due to slowdown in demand in traditional textile markets such as China, Turkey, Bangladesh

World Trade Organisation has projected that the global trade growth will rise by 3.5% in 2022 but only 1% in 2023

growth in 15 out of 30 key sectors in November as compared to the same period last year. "As a thriving economy with close integration into the global value chain, certain sectors do face the challenges of the slowing global demand more severely than others," an official statement said.

It said that the 15 per cent export duty on steel weighed on engineering exports but its removal

now should improve the situation. Textile exports fell due to global demand slowdown as high inflation across the developed world has reduced consumers' purchasing capacity. Moreover, pressure from persistently high global inflation despite accelerated monetary tightening has also raised the import bill for essential commodities like crude petroleum, coking coal that need to be imported, it said.

Next tranche of SGBs from Dec 19-23

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 15: The Reserve Bank will issue two tranches of Sovereign Gold Bonds, which will open for public subscription in December and March.

Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGBs) 2022-23-Series III will open for subscription during December 19-December 23 and 2022-23-Series IV during March 06-10, 2023, the finance ministry said in a statement Thursday.

These bonds are issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on behalf of the government.

The SGBs will be sold through Scheduled Commercial Banks (except Small Finance Banks, Payment Banks and Regional Rural Banks), Stock Holding

Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL), Clearing Corporation of India Limited (CCIL), designated post offices, and stock exchanges -- NSE and BSE.

The tenor of the SGB will be for a period of eight years with an option of premature redemption after 5th year to be exercised on the date on which interest is payable, the ministry said.

"The investors will be compensated at a fixed rate of 2.50 per cent per annum payable semi-annually on the nominal value," it said.

The maximum limit of subscription is 4 kilogram for individual, 4 kg for HUF and 20 kg for trusts and similar entities per fiscal year. The bonds can be used as collateral for loans.

RELIANCE FORAYS INTO FMCG SPACE

Under the 'Independence' brand, the company will offer a range of products under several categories, including staples, processed foods and other daily essentials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 15: Reliance Retail Thursday announced the launch of its consumer packaged goods brand 'Independence' in Gujarat, with plans for national rollout as part of its ambition in the FMCG segment.

The brand has been launched by Reliance Consumer Products Ltd, the FMCG arm and subsidiary of the country's leading retailing firm Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL).

This comes after RRVL Director Isha Ambani August 29 announced



the launch of its FMCG goods business during the AGM of Reliance Industries.

The company also plans to develop Gujarat as a "go-to-market" state to create excellence in exe-

cution for its FMCG business, as it prepares for a national rollout for the brand, it added.

Isha Ambani said the FMCG brand brings a wide choice of affordable products including edible oils, pulses, grains, packaged foods and other daily need products.

"The brand stands for 'truly Indian solutions for real Indian problems' which is articulated as - 'Kan Kan Mein Bharat', thereby evoking emotional attachment and instilling a sense of inclusiveness amongst Indians," she added.

In the coming months, the company plans to cover FMCG retailers across Gujarat, which will be supported with sampling activities and complemented with outdoor and print, radio and local tel-

evision advertisements.

Earlier, as part of its entry into the FMCG segment, Reliance had acquired home-grown soft drink brand Campa. According to some reports, it was also in talks to acquire Garden, Lahori Zeera and Bindu Beverages, among others.

RRVL is the holding company of all the retail businesses under billionaire Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries. RRVL, through its subsidiaries and affiliates, operates over 16,500 stores and partners with over 2 million merchants.

It also operates a network of omnichannel businesses through Jio Mart, Ajo, Netmeds, Zivame and other online channels. In FY22, its consolidated turnover was Rs 1.99 lakh crore.

Germany's half-a-trillion dollar energy bazooka may not be enough

Europe's preeminent economy, long a byword for prudent planning, now finds itself at the mercy of the weather. Energy rationing is a risk in the event of a long cold spell this winter. Germany's first in half a century without Russian gas

REUTERS

Frankfurt, Dec 15: Germany is bleeding cash to keep the lights on. Almost half a trillion dollars, and counting, since the Ukraine war jolted it into an energy crisis nine months ago.

That's the cumulative scale of the bailouts and schemes the Berlin government has launched to prop up the country's energy system since prices rocketed and it lost access to gas from main supplier Russia, according to Reuters cal-

culations. And it may not be enough.

The money set aside stands at up to 440 billion euros (\$465 billion), according to the calculations, which provide the first combined tally of all of Germany's drives aimed at avoiding running out of power and securing new sources of energy.

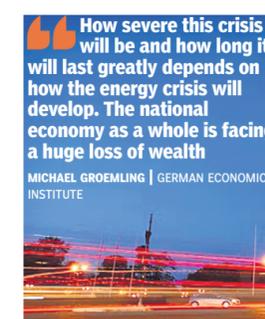
The country has turned to the pricier spot, or cash, energy market to replace some of the lost Russian supplies, helping drive inflation into double-digits. There's no security in sight either, with the push to build up of two alter-

natives to Russian fuel - liquefied natural gas (LNG) and renewables - years away from targeted levels.

"The German economy is now in a very critical phase because the future of energy supply is more uncertain than ever," said Stefan Kooths, vice president and research director business cycles and growth at the Kiel Institute for the World Economy. "Where does the German economy stand? If we look at price inflation, it has a high fever."

The more costly power will be painful indeed for an economy already forecast to shrink the most among G7 nations next year, according to the International Monetary Fund.

Germany's energy import bill will grow by a combined 124 billion



euros this year and next, up from growth of 7 billion for 2020 and 2021, according to data provided by the Kiel Institute, presenting a major challenge for the country's

energy-intensive industries. The country's chemicals sector, the most exposed to rising power costs, expects production to fall by 8.5% in 2022, according to industry

association VCI, which warns of "huge structural breaks in Germany's industrial landscape".

The money includes four relief packages worth 295 billion euros, including the 51.5 billion euro bailout of power firm Uniper and a 14 billion rescue package for Sefo, formerly known as Gazprom Germania; up to 100 billion in liquidity for utilities to secure their sales against default; and around 10 billion on infrastructure to import LNG.

The 440 billion euros earmarked to fight the energy crisis is already near the roughly 480 billion euros that the IW says Germany has spent since 2020 to protect its economy from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

LES BLEUS THROUGH TO FINAL



FRANCE SET UP FIFA WORLD CUP TITLE DATE WITH ARGENTINA BEATING GIANT-KILLERS MOROCCO AS MBAPPE GOES UP AGAINST MESSI FOR THE SPORT'S GREATEST CROWN

STUNNING STRIKE: Theo Hernandez volleys for France's opening goal Wednesday as his teammate Olivier Giroud and anxious Moroccan players watch closely

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Al Khor, Dec 15: Kylian Mbappe vs Lionel Messi. Football's latest superstar against perhaps the sport's greatest player in the World Cup final just about everyone was hoping for.

France and Mbappe are headed back to the biggest game in football, and to a much-anticipated matchup with Argentina, after ending Morocco's historic run at the World Cup Wednesday.

In front of the country's president, Emmanuel Macron, France beat Africa's first ever semifinalist 2-0, with Mbappe playing a part in goals by Theo Hernandez in the fifth minute and substitute Randal Kolo Muani in the 79th.

Mbappe became a global phenomenon by leading the Les Bleus to the title in Russia in 2018 and has a chance to emulate Brazil great Pele as a champion in his first two World Cups when he comes up against the 35-year-old Messi, who has dominated the game with Cristiano Ronaldo for the past 15 years.

It's the dream final for many, with France looking to become the first team to retain the title since Brazil in 1962 and Argentina on a mission to win football's ultimate prize for the third time in what is likely to be Messi's last World Cup.

There will be no team from the Arab world in the final of the first World Cup in the Middle East, a



END OF DREAM RUN: Morocco coach Walid Regragui (C), along with other team members, applauds Moroccan fans for their support after their loss, Wednesday

prospect that seemed nigh impossible before the tournament yet nearly happened in Qatar.

Morocco have been widely lauded for breaking ground for Africa and generated an outpouring of pride among Arab nations after topping a group containing Croatia and Belgium and eliminating two more European powers — Spain and Portugal — in the knockout stage. Their players gave France a far-from-easy ride, too, before collapsing on the ground in despair after the final whistle.

Remarkably, Hernandez's early goal was the first scored against Morocco by an opposition player in

the tournament — the other had been an own-goal in the group stage — but the team responded to that and injury issues in its defense with a fearless performance in front of tens of thousands of fans who dominated the 60,000-seat Al Bayt Stadium.

France were forced into some last-ditch defending at times but have developed a knack of pulling out victories despite not playing their best. The country will be playing in the final for the fourth time in the last seven World Cups, more than anyone else.

Mbappe failed to add to his five goals in the tournament but helped

create the opener for Hernandez when his shot deflected off a defender and into the path of the left back. Hernandez let the ball bounce before driving a downward effort into the net from a tight angle.

Typically a defense-first team, Morocco were forced to come out and play even though they were reeling from losing Nayef Aguerd to injury in the warm-up and another center back, captain Romain Saiss, after only 21 minutes because of a hamstring injury.

Roared on by their red-and-green-clad fans, Morocco came closest to scoring when Jawad El Yamiq hit the post with an overhead-kick in the 44th minute and forced France to defend in numbers, with Antoine Griezmann — the team's playmaker — effectively playing as a deep-lying midfielder and often clearing balls from inside his box.

However, Mbappe enjoyed more space as Morocco tired late in the second half and he was moved into a central position. After dribbling past two defenders, he took a shot that deflected toward Kolo Muani, who tapped in having been on the field for less than a minute.

The World Cup trophy isn't the only thing at stake Sunday. Messi and Mbappe are tied as the leading scorers with five goals as they chase the Golden Boot award. Morocco's World Cup isn't over: The team will play the third-place playoff match against Croatia Saturday.



We need all our strength, all our energy to face a very competitive team with one of the legends in the sport with Messi

HUGO LLORIS | FRANCE CAPTAIN

We are disappointed for the Moroccan people — we wanted to keep their dream alive. We felt we could have gone further but we have given a good image of Morocco and of African football. That was important to us

WALID REGRAUI | MOROCCO COACH



Car hits, kills teen as fans celebrate World Cup victory

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, Dec 15: A car in the southern French city of Montpellier "violently hit" and killed a boy as crowds celebrated France's victory in the World Cup semifinal, according to local regional authorities.

The driver fled the scene, but the vehicle was found nearby and police were investigating what might have caused the vehicle to strike the child, Herault authorities said.

Video emerged on Twitter showing a car being driven dangerously near crowds in the street following the Les Bleus' Wednesday night win over Morocco.

The boy, whose name was not made public, was rushed to a hospital and died of his injuries. French media said he was 14 years old. French lawmaker Nathalie Ozol expressed her "immense sadness (that a) sporting event ends in absolute tragedy."

Elsewhere in France, crowds in Paris and other cities erupted in shouts of joy as France advanced to the World Cup final. The displays were relatively restrained. Disappointed Morocco fans mingled with the exuberant supporters of the winning team, paying tribute to the African country's unprecedented achievement.



Morocco make strong statement despite loss



ACROBATIC SHOW: Jawad El Yamiq goes for an overhead-kick, only to hit the post, against France, Wednesday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Al Khor, Dec 15: Yassine Bounou stretched out his arm with everything he had, desperately trying to get something, anything, in the way of the ball. It was no use.

France substitute Randal Kolo Muani had come on only seconds earlier and with his first touch assured the defending champions of a second straight World Cup final, putting an end to Morocco's proud fight once and for all.

But it wasn't until that moment, in the 79th minute of an enthralling semifinal match at Al Bayt Stadium Wednesday that the two-time champions could breathe easily.

"My players gave everything," Morocco coach Walid Regragui said. "They've gone as far as they could. It's difficult for them to take now. They wanted to rewrite the history books, but you can't win a World Cup with miracles, you have to do it with hard work and that's what we are going to do, keep working."

The team that has provided the most improbable story of this year's World Cup got off to a terrible start. Morocco lost two players from their starting lineup and conceded a goal to an opposition player for the first time in the tournament — all by the 21st minute.

The sea of red shirts in the stands still dominated the atmosphere, overpowering the massively outnumbered France supporters even after Theo Hernandez's fifth-minute strike.

As inspiring as Morocco have been in becoming the first African nation to reach the World Cup semifinals, the fans who have cheered them all the way have felt fundamental to an unforgettable journey.

The tone had been set even before kickoff as the now familiar deafening whistles greeted France's

players as they emerged for their pre-match warm-up. It got even louder as the French national anthem was played, coming close to drowning out the stadium's loud-speaker system.

When Morocco's anthem played, the noise reached yet new levels. The theme of Morocco's run has been that anything is possible. Not even the prospect of facing the defending champions and superstar forward Kylian Mbappe could quell the sense of anticipation.

Things weren't going well — with the team lying a goal behind, but a team that had made it this far by defying the odds was not ready to give up on the chance to become the first nation from outside of Europe or South America to make it to a World Cup final.

Morocco had already made history by joining the United States and South Korea as the only teams from outside football's two dominant continents to get this far. It is also the first Arab nation to play in the semifinals.

The team topped a group that contained 2018 finalists Croatia and second-ranked Belgium, and then progressed past 2010 champions Spain and Portugal in the knockout stages.

Morocco have developed a reputation for their strong defense under Regragui. But giving up a goal so early required the team to push forward and take risks at the back. And right up until Kolo Muani's goal, it still felt like anything was possible.

"I'm proud because I grew up in France and I learned my trade there. Sometimes you criticize French coaches and French football, but they have the best players and the best coaches, the best team in the world. If France won (the final) it would be great because we could say we lost to the World Champions," said Regragui.

T20 WORLD CUP FOR THE BLIND Ramesh, Reddy show propel India into final



PNN, AGENCIES

Bangalore, Dec 15: Impressive displays by Sunil Ramesh and Ajay Kumar Reddy enabled India to beat South Africa by 207 runs in the first semifinal of the 3rd T20 World Cup for the Blind at the Samprasiddhi Sports Estadio Cricket Stadium here, Thursday.

Ramesh (110 ret'd, 47b, 17x4, 3x6) smashed his second ton of the tournament and also chipped in with a wicket (1/15) while captain Reddy scored a quick fire 81 (ret'd) and also took 3/13. India will face Bangladesh who beat Sri Lanka in the other semifinal by 64 runs in the summit clash Saturday.

Put into bat, India lost openers Lokesh and A Ravi inside four overs when the score was 50. Sujit Munda was dismissed in the sixth over. Ramesh and Reddy then put on a 144-run partnership for the fourth wicket.

Ajay was especially playing some aggressive shots. He raced to his half century with the help of 12 boundaries. He retired his innings while

on 81 off just 29 balls (17x4).

Ramesh who had earlier scored his first century of the tournament against Nepal was in the mood as he raced to his century and retired his innings after facing 47 deliveries. Vice-captain D Venkateswara Rao and wicket-keeper Prakash Jayaramaiah scored quick runs to take the score past 300 for India as India finished the innings on 337/6.

In reply, South Africa hardly posed any threat to Indian total. They were pinned back by the Indian bowling attack and lost wickets at regular intervals. They slumped to 67/8. The Indians were also good in the field as they inflicted three run outs in the South African innings.

Bhule Bhidla and Lwande Bhidla put on some resistance in the ninth wicket but it was too little too late. They put on a partnership of 53 runs as SA were bowled out for 130.

Brief scores: India 337/6 (Sunil Ramesh 110, Ajay Kumar Reddy 81) beat South Africa 130 (Bhule Bhidla 33, Lwande Bhidla 23; Ajay Kumar Reddy 3/13) by 207 runs.

Kuldeep show puts Bangladesh on mat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chattogram, Dec 15: Kuldeep Yadav sizzled with an all-round performance as he put India in the driver's seat on day two of the opening Test against Bangladesh here Thursday.

Playing his first Test after more than 22 months, Kuldeep continued his 'birthday' party a day after turning 28, in his sensational run with the bat and ball.

Batting at No.9, the left-hander first came up with a career-best 40 (114b, 5x4) in a 92-run eighth wicket partnership with veteran Ravichandran Ashwin (58, 113b, 2x4, 2x6) to push India to 404 in their first inning from an overnight score of 278/6.

Coming into bowl in the 25th over, the left-arm wrist-spinner struck off his second ball as he flummoxed the Bangladesh batters with his wrong ones to end the day with figures of 10-3-33-4, a performance that is certain to regain his confidence.

At stumps on day two, Bangladesh were 133/8, trailing India by 271 runs. With two wick-



Indian players, including Kuldeep Yadav (L), eagerly look at the big screen following a DRS call, Thursday

ets in hand, the hosts still need 72 runs to avoid a follow-on.

First, it was Indian quick Mohammed Siraj (3/14) who was on a song, as he rattled the Bangladesh top-order, dismissing the left-handed opening duo of Najmul Hossain Shanto (1), Zakir Hasan (20) and Litton Das. Siraj struck in the very first ball when he induced an edge off Shanto with

an away going delivery.

Leading the pace department in absence of Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah, Umesh Yadav then reduced Bangladesh to 5/2 inside the fourth over after inducing an inside edge off Yasir Ali.

Litton (24) showed glimpses of his form with some fluent drives but Siraj had the last say. Both teams were also involved in a bit of ban-

Odisha FC play out goalless draw with ATK Mohun Bagan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: Odisha FC remained unbeaten at home as they played out a goalless draw against ATK Mohun Bagan in an ISL match here Thursday. Odisha FC moved to the fourth place on the table with 19 points. ATKMB remained third with 20 points.

The Juggernauts kept more possession yet again but could not get the decisive touch as the Mariners kept their fourth clean sheet on the trot. This was the first 0-0 draw of the ISL 2022-23 season.

Odisha FC had their best opportunity in first half stoppage time when Raynier Fernandes floated a promising ball in from a free-kick. It came straight to Carlos Delgado, who headed it over the bar from close range.

In the second half, two minutes past the hour-mark, Narender Gahlot's attempt from outside the box flew just wide of the far post.

It was one-way traffic from there on as the Juggernauts applied the pressure. In the 69th minute, Raynier's shot from the edge of the box was headed straight at Vishal Kaith before McHugh headed it over the bar.

In the 88th minute, Odisha FC came agonisingly close to breaking the deadlock. Isaac played the ball in from the left flank towards the far post, where Gahlot headed it back across goal before Osama Malik's header from close range was tipped onto the cross-bar by Kaith.

RAWAT, MOLIYA CENTURIES PUT BARODA IN COMMAND

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 15: Shashwat Rawat (135, 198b, 20x4) and Priyanshu Moliya (113 batting, 185b, 14x4) struck timely centuries to put Baroda in control of their Ranji Trophy Elite Group A match against Odisha at the Vikas Cricket

Ground here, Thursday.

Moliya joined Rawat at the middle when the visitors were struggling at 177/4 on the third day of the match. The duo stitched together 224 runs for the fifth wicket guiding Baroda past 400. Abhishek Raut (63, 108b, 8x4, 1x6). He then sent back Akshay More (2) in the same over to reduce Baroda to 104/2. The

play left for the day's play Baroda were 416/5 at stumps, with Ninad Rathva (11 batting) giving Moliya company.

Earlier, Basant Mohanty (2/31) broke the 102-run opening partnership dismissing Jyotsnil Singh (63, 108b, 8x4, 1x6). He then sent back Akshay More (2) in the same over to reduce Baroda to 104/2. The

hosts then got rid of Pratyush Kumar (44) to reduce the hosts to 124/3, courtesy Suryakant Pradhan (1/86).

Then a 53-run fourth wicket stand between Rawat and skipper Vishnu Solanki (36) took the Baroda total past 170. However, Subham Nayak (1/78) broke the stand with the wicket of Solanki.