



## GLOBAL GLORY

India's Sargam Koushal becomes Mrs. World 2022 to bring the title back to India after 21 years

LEISURE P2



## NK LAUNCHES MISSILES

North Korea test-fires a pair of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles with a range of striking Japan

INTERNATIONAL P10



## THUMPING WIN

Kuldeep Yadav achieves career-best figures as India defeat Bangladesh by 188 runs in the 1st Test at Chattogram

SPORTS P12

# MESSI, ARGENTINA, HISTORY

**Lusail, Dec 18:** Lionel Messi's once-in-a-generation career is complete. The Argentina superstar is finally a World Cup champion.

Messi scored two goals and then another in a shootout as Argentina beat France 4-2 on penalties Sunday to claim a third World Cup title despite Kylian Mbappé scoring the first hat trick in a final in 56 years.

Now there's no debate. Messi is definitively in the pantheon of soccer's greatest ever players, alongside Pelé — a record three-time World Cup champion from Brazil — and Diego Maradona, the late Argentina great with whom Messi was so often compared.

Messi has achieved what



Maradona did in 1986, dominate a World Cup for Argentina.

Messi put Argentina ahead from the penalty spot and played a part in Angel Di Maria's goal that made it 2-0 after 36 minutes.

Mbappé scored two goals in a 97-second span to take the game to extra time, and then Messi tapped in his second goal in the 109th minute. But there was still time for another penalty from Mbappé to take the thrilling game to a shootout. Gonzalo Montiel scored the clinching penalty kick after Kingsley Coman had an attempt saved by Emi Martínez and Aurelien Tchouameni missed for France.

More P12



ARGENTINA'S MESSIAH: 36-year wait ends as Lionel Messi and Argentine players celebrate after their historic FIFA World Cup win at Qatar

PHOTO-TWITTER

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Finally, PM spoke on the border issue...on interstate border clashes

WEATHER	
	BHUB CTK
TEMP MAX	28.6°C 27.0°C
TEMP MIN	13.6°C 13.4°C
Humidity	70% 73%
Rainfall	nil nil
	Fog very likely

## COP COMMITS SUICIDE OVER TIFF IN FAMILY

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 18:** In a tragic incident, the body of a police official was found hanging in his room at Pada Sahi village under Nandankanan police limits here late Saturday night.

The deceased, identified as Ashok Kumar Pradhan, was deployed as the Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) at Baranga police station in Cuttack district.

Sources said that Pradhan returned home after duty at around 10pm Saturday night. He reportedly spent some time with his children after freshening up and also queried about their studies.

Later, he went inside the bedroom telling his family members that he would like to take some rest before having dinner. Pradhan's wife after a long wait went to call him for the dinner but the room was found locked from inside.

Not getting any response despite knocking at the door, Pradhan's worried wife later informed other family members who broke into the room.

Contd...P4

## ₹2000 notes make up most fake notes seized in last 3 yrs



## THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CLAIMED TO CURB FAKE CURRENCY BY DEMONETISATION, WHEREAS STATISTICS REVEAL A STARKLY DIFFERENT REALITY

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 18:** Fake currency notes, with face value of crores of rupees are being caught every year, indicating an increase in their circulation in the country. This creates trouble for the common people and poses a big challenge for the government and the police.

According to sources, police and other security forces have seized fake currency worth the face value of ₹137 crore in the last three years. Interestingly, the counterfeit new notes of ₹2000 make most of the seized currencies amounting to crores in face value.

Fake currency is mostly traded or smuggled from Pakistan and is sent to India across the border among other routes, sources said.

The Border Security Force (BSF) and the police forces have been successful in seizing such notes to an extent, but a lot still remains to be done. According to data provided by the Union Home Ministry, fake

notes of face value ₹137.96 crore were caught from 2019 to 2021.

As many as 3.10 lakh fake notes were seized in 2021, whose face value was ₹20.39 crore.

A total of 8.34 lakh fake notes with face value of ₹92.17 crore were confiscated in 2020, apart from 2.87 lakh fake notes of face value ₹25.39 crore in 2019.

According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), fake currency of the denominations of ₹2000 and ₹500 were seized in large amounts in the last three years.

In 2021, the face value of seized fake notes of the ₹2000 denomination was ₹4.84 crore, while the seized notes of ₹500 had face value of ₹12.57 crore.

Apart from this, fake notes of ₹500 denomination have also been seized in lakhs from across the country over the years. The MHA apprised that the figures did not indicate any specific pattern regarding the circulation of Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN).

The government claimed that the intelligence and security agencies of the Central and state governments had been keeping a keen eye on the elements involved in the spread of FICN and took action against reported violations. Several steps are being taken by the MHA to thwart the same. According to the government, an FICN coordination group had been constituted by the Home Ministry for sharing information among the security agencies of the state and Centre to combat the problem.

Contd...P4

## INS Mormugao commissioned

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Dec 18:** Stealth guided missile destroyer Mormugao, the second of the four 'Visakhapatnam' class destroyers, was commissioned into the Indian Navy Sunday.

Speaking at the commissioning ceremony in Mumbai, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said INS Mormugao is evidence of India's excellence in warship design and development.

The aim is to make India the indigenous ship building hub, the minister said. Singh described INS Mormugao as one of the most powerful indigenously-built warships which will significantly enhance the country's maritime capabilities and secure national interests. Singh lauded the armed forces for protecting the borders and coasts with unmatched courage and dedication, terming them as the backbone of India's unprecedented growth.

## Maoists shoot contractor dead

The ultras, while leaving, left a poster at the crime site warning that five others in the area will meet a similar fate

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Phulbani/Kotgarh, Dec 18:** In broad daylight, Maoists shot a contractor dead dubbing him as a police informer Sunday during a weekly haat at Bondapipili village under Durgapanga panchayat in Kotgarh block of Kandhamal district.

The deceased was identified as Ramesh Nayak, a native of Andring village in Kalahandi district and a resident of Bondapipili village in Kandhamal district. The ultras, while leaving, left a poster at the crime site in which they warned that five other persons in the area will meet with a similar fate for working as police informers.

The posters were allegedly released by Communist Party of India (CPI-Maoists), Vamsadhara division which was mentioned at the bottom of the poster. The in-



cident sparked panic in the area as police were yet to arrive at the spot till the evening when reports last came in.

Notably the recent solemnisation of marriage of two surrendered women Maoists and death of an ultra in police firing in past in this district has not gone down well with the rebels. The ultras might have carried out the murder to avenge the insults, sources said.

The incident occurred during a weekly haat in the village Sunday. Ramesh was residing at a house in front of the haat after shifting from Kalahandi 10 years back. He was working as a contractor and was also into carpentry. Two gun wielding men arrived in the haat at around 12.30pm and searched for Ramesh. Noticing them, Ramesh tried to run away but they followed him and shot him dead from a close range.

The ultras left behind a poster at the site in which they warned that five others, namely Bibhuti Mandal, Chowkidar Tiki, Kapil, Pankaj Munda and Jugendra Munda, will meet a similar fate like Ramesh for working as police informers. In the posters, they alleged these persons of luring the Kutia tribals with some money and mobile phones to provide vital information to the police.

## If politics be the food of love, march on

■ That, to misquote Shakespeare, could well be the mantra for the octogenarian who joined the yatra from Ujjain and is defying age with his resolve of walking all the way till Srinagar to hoist the tricolour from Lal Chowk

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dausa (Rajasthan), Dec 18:** Marking the continuum of time and political history as he notches up mile after mile in the Bharat Jodo Yatra with a stick in one hand and the tricolour in the other, 88-year-old Karuna Prasad Mishra knits together old world idealism with steely pragmatism about the India of today.

If politics be the food of love, march on. That, to misquote Shakespeare, could well be the mantra for the octogenarian who joined the Rahul Gandhi-led yatra from Ujjain and is defying age with



I am used to this. I walked with Mahatma Gandhi from Jabalpur to Allahabad in 1935-36. I was also with Nehruji and Vinoba Bhajeji. I am used to walking

KARUNA PRASAD MISHRA | CONG WORKER

his single minded resolve of walking all the way till Srinagar to hoist the tricolour from Lal Chowk.

"I resolved at the Mahakaleshwar temple in Ujjain that I will travel till Kashmir... Congress workers asked me to sit in a car but I said no. I will take another resolution after I hoist the tricolour at Lal Chowk in Srinagar and I will undertake an east to west yatra," Mishra told PTI.

His family travelled to Kota in Rajasthan and requested him to

return to his home in Sidhi in Madhya Pradesh, but he refused, reminding them that he is an old warhorse of the Congress who has been with the party for over 60 years after being initiated into the ranks by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1960.

With his Gandhi cap and a little bent with age as he walks his political talk, the seemingly frail Mishra could well be an anachronism. But he is clearly not, script-

ing instead an inspirational tale for the younger generation of Congress workers.

Acknowledging his appeal, the party has put out several Twitter posts centred around Mishra, including a video of Rahul Gandhi solicitously putting a shawl around him during a concert in Jaipur to mark 100 days of the yatra December 16.

Talking about his initiation into the march, Mishra said, "From October 2, I took out a Bharat Jodo Yatra from my district in Madhya Pradesh's Sidhi. After covering the district, I took it to other districts in the state and ended in Sagar."

"I was then contacted and asked to join the main yatra November 29 in Ujjain. I have been walking continuously from Ujjain. I walk almost 15 kilometres daily," he said.

He said he joined the Congress in 1960 and never left. "I kept serving the party quietly according to changing circumstances. After Indira ji... Rajiv ji took some time to understand things. But just as soon as he began to make improvements, he was taken away in an assassination and the Congress has weakened since then." Contd...P4

# leisure



## BRITNEY'S DAD CLAIMS HE SAVED HER LIFE

Pop icon Britney Spears' father Jamie has opened up about his relationship with his estranged daughter and hints he has no regrets that she was placed under a conservatorship - saying that he thinks it saved her life.

## TOP IRANIAN ACTRESS TARANEH ALIDOOSTI DETAINED FOR CONDEMNING EXECUTION

Iranian actress Taraneh Alidoosti has been detained on charges of 'spreading falsehoods' regarding the country's ongoing protest movement. The BBC reported that Alidoosti condemned the country's recent execution of Mohsen Shekari for his involvement in protests. The actor made her statements through a now-deleted post on Instagram, reports *Variety*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

You will share wonderful moments with your beloved today. Go ahead and learn some musical instrument, suggests Ganesh: it's a beautiful way to convey emotions. And it provides a perfect means to woo someone anew. Join a class before the mood wanes.

#### TAURUS

This day could be full of surprises, mostly unpleasant, fears Ganesh. Nothing is likely to turn out as planned and expected. There will be sharp and sudden twist and turns, unexpected shocks and setbacks all day long. You will, however, with the grace and blessings of the Almighty, manage to stay steady and unruffled, and move ahead.

#### GEMINI

Your day will be spent indulging in activities that appeal to you. You may go out shopping with your family members, or go out to dinner with friends. A leisurely, entertainment filled, fun day awaits you, says Ganesh.

#### CANCER

People will be stunned at the swift pace of your work. All your pending tasks and projects will fructify. But Ganesh counsels you not to do anything haphazardly or in any careless manner. Ganesh thinks you as an extraordinary orator.

#### LEO

Long forgotten relationships may be renewed today. Old acquaintances, room partners, hostel mates and the like may bump into you today. You will be in a happy mood as a result. Marital life will be blissful, says Ganesh.

#### VIRGO

You will be the flag-bearer for people around you, spreading hope and inspiration. Ganesh advises you to be the ideal family man today. By doing this you will radiate affection and love. This will, in turn, work remarkably in cultivating positive relationships.

#### LIBRA

Ganesh advises you not to take stress about small issues or matters. To avoid tension and to gain mental peace it is advised you perform yoga or meditation. There will be pressure put on you regarding certain matters at the work-front. You should take decisions regarding critical matters only after carefully weighing the pros and cons.

#### SCORPIO

According to Ganesh, your family and friends top your priority list today. Life looks hunky dory on personal as well as professional front. Apart from business developments, romantic relations are on the bloom. And this is evident from your blushing cheeks. Creative indulgences may give a new dimension to your life!

#### SAGITTARIUS

Your business is likely to scale new heights, says Ganesh. You need to build up your confidence and move ahead with zest and enthusiasm. Rake in the moolah as the business yield profits.

#### CAPRICORN

You will walk down the memory lane, cherish those lost moments and later on feel an urge to meet or contact old friends, says Ganesh. Expectations of your near and dear ones, however, may seem burdensome. You will still see the brighter side of everything, and spending quality time with your sweetheart will certainly re-energise your powers to deal with difficulties.

#### AQUARIUS

If the Almighty loads you with pain, He will also bless you with pleasure, assures Ganesh. You will begin the day with a long list of things to be done, but luckily you will be able finish them off one by one.

#### PISCES

You are not by nature ill-tempered or jealous. However, you will need to be on guard against being both, today. Someone may try to sully your image or slander your name today. However, the best way to deal with provocation is not to loose your temper and to continue as usual, for they will take care of themselves soon enough, says Ganesh.



## Sargam Koushal wins Mrs World 2022 title

India's Sargam Koushal was named Mrs. World 2022, beating contestants from 63 countries to bring the title back to India after 21 years. Mrs. Polynesia was named the first runner-up, followed by Mrs. Canada as the second runner-up.

Mrs World 2021 Shaylyn Ford of the US presented the crown to Mumbai-based Koushal at a ceremony held at Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino on Saturday evening.

The Mrs. India pageant announced the winner on its official Instagram page Sunday. "The long wait is over, it's after 21 years we have the CROWN back!", read the post. "We've got the crown back after 21-22 years. I'm so excited. Love you India, love you world", the newly

crowned Mrs. World, who hails from Jammu and Kashmir, said in a video following the ceremony.

Aditi Govitrikar, the actor-model who brought the Mrs. India crown to India in 2001, also shared a congratulatory message on the unverified page of the Mrs. World pageant. Tagging Koushal, Govitrikar wrote, "Heartiest congratulations @sargam3 @mrsindiainc so happy to have been part of the journey. It was time the crown came back after 21 years."

For the unversed, Mrs. World is the first beauty pageant for married women, launched in 1984. It has been won the maximum number of times (8) by women from the United States and then, women from India, Sri Lanka, Peru, and Russia have won the title two times.

AGENCIES

## One got to have guts to marry me: Aahana

**Mumbai:** While professionally, she's beautifully pulled off the bridal look, in real life, Aahana Kumar says she would rather feel dreading in a heavy ensemble as her wedding trousseau. The actress who looks effortless every time she sashays down the ramp in a wedding outfit, says she prefers to do it differently when it comes to dressing up for her own wedding.

Ask her, what kind of bride would she make in real life and she says, "I would like to have some beautiful embroidery on my outfit. I hail from Lucknow and so, I would like to have some chikankari work on my trousseau."

So, now that she has an idea of what to wear for her wedding, is the big day coming up anytime soon? "One really got to have that guts to marry me. He really has to have it in him. Usko yeh jhelna padega ki... I wake up at 5 am and begin my adventure, call it a night at 10 pm so party mein jaana nahi milega. I am a workaholic so I will never be home. You see, he needs to have the patience to deal with someone like me," explains Aahana.

AGENCIES



## Sara plays freedom fighter Usha Mehta

**Mumbai:** Sara Ali Khan has wrapped up the shoot of her third film this year with *Ae Watan Mere Watan*. The *Kedarnath* actress plays the role of the Mumbai-based freedom fighter Usha Mehta in the movie.

Earlier in the year she was seen in the streaming movie *Atrangi Re*, and now she has completed the shoot of Laxman Utekar's untitled next project and *Gaslight* with Vikrant Massey.

The actress took to the stories section of her Instagram Sunday, and dropped a bunch of pictures from the sets. She kept her fans updated as she shot a late night schedule for *Ae Watan Mere Watan* after her fashion show, eventually wrapping in the morning by 10:44 am. She shared another photo after the wrap, with her team.

The actress has a packed slate for the next year with films from different genres including *Metro: In Dino* of Anurag Basu and Aditya Roy Kapoor.

IANS



## Pathaan is very patriotic: SRK

**Mumbai:** Top actor Shah Rukh Khan recently engaged in a virtual fan interaction session on Twitter with #AskSRK. Several fans asked him about his upcoming film *Pathaan*, which is currently facing boycott threats ever since the release of the song Besharam Rang.

Shah Rukh asked, "Come all let's do an #AskSRK for 15 minutes. Then work beckons."

Replying to the actor, a Twitter user wrote, "Why #AskSRK is always for 15 minutes?" Shah Rukh responded saying, "Because everyone needs 15 minutes for fame..." seemingly hinting towards the online trolls and criticism for the song.

Responding to another fan, the actor wrote, "#Pathaan is also very patriotic, but in an action way." When asked about his prediction of the box office for *Pathaan*, the actor wittingly replied, "I am not in the business of predictions... I am in the business of entertaining you and to make u smile..."

Shah Rukh even revealed that the next song in the film has been sung by Arijit Singh. "Arijit is a gem. Next song uski awaaz mein hai hope u will all like it. #Pathaan."

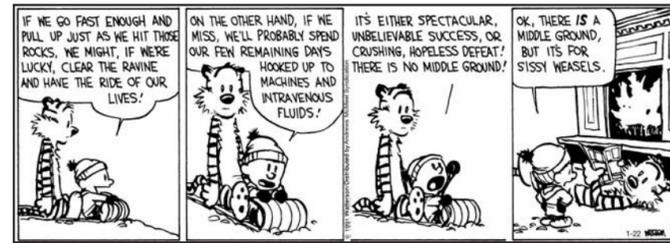
Speaking of *Pathaan*, the film also stars John Abraham in a pivotal role. Helmed by Siddharth Anand, the film is all set to have a theatrical release on January 25th, 2023.

AGENCIES

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

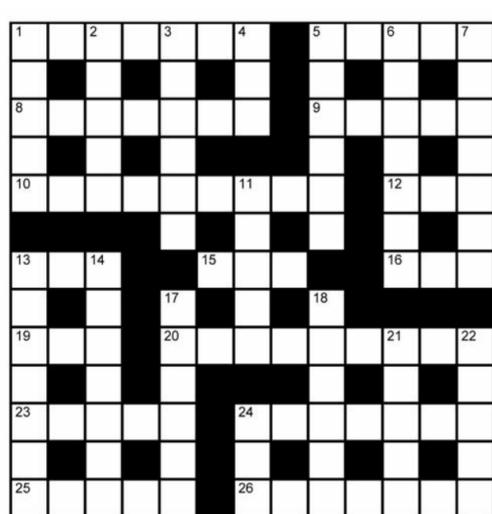


### BREVITY



### FUN post

### CROSSWORD



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#### Across

- 1 Gherkins
- 5 Evade
- 8 Historical record
- 9 Plant disease
- 10 Butcher
- 12 Roadhouse
- 13 Taproom
- 15 Colliery
- 16 However
- 19 Mythical bird of prey
- 20 Disassemble (4,5)

#### Down

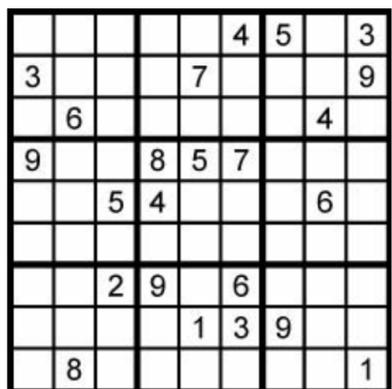
- 23 Olfactory sensation
- 24 Circus performer
- 25 Luxuriously elegant
- 26 Jungle knife
- 1 Baby buggies
- 2 Hot chocolate
- 3 Daybed
- 4 Congeal
- 5 Depressing

#### Crossword

- 6 Self-respect
- 7 Like the dinosaurs
- 11 Magician's offering
- 13 Sitting room
- 14 Retreat from a commitment (4,3)
- 17 Inflexible
- 18 Percalé, e.g.
- 21 Go on
- 22 Book starter
- 24 Fortify

### 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.

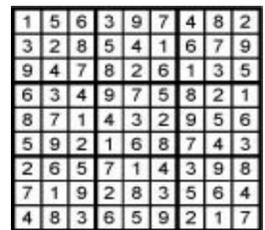


### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU

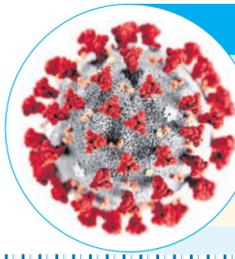


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



**DANCE FEST**

Artistes of Kala Vikas Kendra performed during the concluding day of '13th Sata Sahi Katak Nrutya Utsav' at Bali Yatra Ground in Cuttack, Sunday



**COVID-19 TRACKER**

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	65,76,77,046	63,13,65,169	66,71,707
India	4,46,75,952	4,41,41,728	5,30,672
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

# Six mineral blocks may go under hammer in Jan

The Centre aims at increasing the mining sector's contribution to the GDP to 5% from 2.5% at present

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 18: If things go well, the Centre will auction six mineral blocks, including five in Odisha, this January, an official in know of the development said, Sunday.

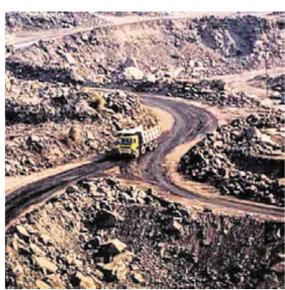
Of the six blocks, there are three bauxite mines and as many limestone blocks.

The three bauxite blocks – Ballada, Kutrumali and Sijimali – and two limestone mines – Garramura and Uskalabgu – in Odisha are virgin blocks, according to a latest report by the Ministry of Mines. The remaining mine is Nimana-Duniya limestone block in Rajasthan's Kota.

The notice inviting tender for all the six blocks was floated in November.

Since the amendment to Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation (MMDR) Act, 1957 in 2015, altogether 216 mineral blocks have been auctioned till November 30 across 10 states.

Three mineral blocks – two limestone and one iron ore – in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh were



The notice inviting tender for all the six blocks was floated in November

- Three bauxite mines and as many limestone blocks will for auction
- The 3 bauxite blocks – Ballada, Kutrumali and Sijimali – and 2 limestone mines – Garramura and Uskalabgu – in Odisha are virgin blocks
- The remaining mine – Nimana-Duniya limestone block – is in Rajasthan's Kota

successfully auctioned last month.

The government started the process of allocating mineral blocks through auctions in 2015-16.

The ministry has expressed hope of auctioning 500 mines by the end of 2024.

The Centre is aiming to increase the mining sector's contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to 5 per cent from 2.5 per cent at present.

During last few years, the government has introduced important reforms to open up the mineral sector to ensure its contribution in achieving the national policy goals.

Major reforms include enactment of the MMDR (Amendment) Act, 2015, which made the process of allocation of mineral concessions completely transparent by introducing public auctions with ac-

tive participation of state governments. In the federal set-up, states are owners of mineral wealth in their respective territories. For realising the benefits of mineral wealth, states have primary and significant role to come up with auctionable mineral blocks that can start production.

The mines ministry had earlier said that amendment in mineral auction rules will encourage more participation in sale of blocks.

The mines ministry had earlier notified the Minerals (Evidence of Mineral Contents) Second Amendment Rules, 2021, and the Mineral (Auction) Fourth Amendment Rules, 2021 to amend the Minerals (Evidence of Mineral Contents) Rules, 2015 and the Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015 (Auction Rules).

Vaishnav's Twitter post on Cuttack stn design gets huge response

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 18: A Twitter post by Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Cuttack railway station design drew huge response from the users of the micro-blogging site, Sunday.

The Union minister uploaded a proposed design of Cuttack Railway station on Twitter seeking public opinion. The design was based on the theme of Cuttack Barabati Fort architecture.

Vaishnav appealed to the public to give ratings to the design and promised that a decision will be taken on the basis of ratings.

About 74 per cent votes came out as 'Very Good' and 'Excellent', said an ECoR official, adding that the design has been finalised by the minister.

**POLITICKLE by MANJUL**



# NHRC issues reminder to Koraput Collector

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 18: Expressing displeasure over the dillydallying by the District Magistrate (DM) of Koraput in submitting the action-taken report (ATR) on the death of four minors after falling into a pit in the district in June this year, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued a reminder to Koraput administration in this regard.

Hearing a plea filed by rights activist Himanshu Sekhar Nayak, an irked commission asked the Koraput Collector to submit the report by January 23, 2023.

The rights activist had in-

**KIDS' DEATH IN ROAD CONSTRUCTION PIT**



formed the NHRC that four tribal children, including three girls, died after falling in a stormwater-filled pit dug up for road construction at Majhiguda village under Dasmantpur block under Sadar police limits of Koraput June 23, 2022. While two kids died on the spot, other two succumbed in the hospital, Nayak said. The four innocent children lost

their life due to the callousness and criminal negligence of the local administration, alleged Nayak, demanding compensation of ₹40 lakh each for the deceased's family and stringent action against erring officials.

The rights activist also urged the commission to direct the state government for blacklisting the firm involved in the road construction work.

Taking cognizance of the issue, the NHRC had earlier asked the Koraput Collector to submit an ATR by July 14, 2022.

The district administration, however, did not turn up, it was learnt.

# Naveen reaffirms pledge to protect minority rights

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 18: On the occasion of Minorities' Rights Day, Sunday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik reaffirmed his pledge towards safeguarding and promoting the rights of ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identities of minorities for a just and inclusive society.

Taking to Twitter, Naveen said, "On Minorities Rights Day, reaffirm pledge to safeguard and promote the rights of ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identities of minorities for a just and inclusive society (sic)."

Under the leadership of the CM, the state government has taken a host of measures to promote welfare of the minority community. The CM had sanctioned ₹16 crore for the development of religious institutions for minorities, it was learnt.

Although the ST and SC Development, Minorities and Backward Classes Welfare department deals with the minority affairs, those belong to the community have been demanding institution of a dedicated commission for a long.

# Sting menace: Drone flies in City to hunt mosquitoes



A drone engaged by Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation sprays larvicide in Niladri Vihar area of Bhubaneswar, Sunday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 18: In a bid to curb mosquito menace in Capital city, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Sunday started using drones to spray larvicide oil at Sector-3 of Niladri Vihar area.

The civic body has deployed a drone built with advanced technology to spray mosquito repellent oil over small stagnant water bodies and drains in Niladri Vihar area in the first phase. The anti-mosquito drive through the drone will subsequently cover the entire City.

The BMC will also adopt several other means like fogging and manual spray of mosquito oil in drains and small water bodies to help citizens heave a sigh of relief from the sting menace. Special teams of BMC have started identifying mosquito breeding spots in water bodies, plots, bushy areas and narrow

lanes which will be targeted first, said BMC commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange.

Sources said 10 litres of chemical is being sprayed in one sortie by the drone in inaccessible areas, which cannot be accessed by fogging vehicles and spraying machines.

In view of shortage of manpower and infrastructure, the civic body has adopted the technology to deal with growing mosquito menace. The BMC also plans to increase the number of vehicles engaged in fogging activities. At the same time, additional teams will be pressed into service to cut bushes. A technical team will also survey the areas troubled by alarming rise in breeding of mosquitoes.

The BMC team will identify mosquito breeding spots in water bodies, plots, bushy areas and narrow lanes and spray the chemicals using drones, sources added.

Earlier, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had staged a demonstration over the growing mosquito menace in the City. Members of Opposition BJP had wrapped themselves in a mosquito net and gheraoed the BMC office over the civic body's alleged failure in dealing with the crisis.

# UG books in 12 languages

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

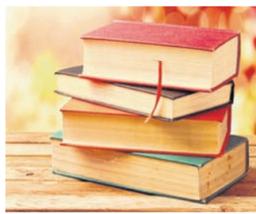
New Delhi, Dec 18: A nationwide change will take place in the higher education system, especially in undergraduate courses as language will cease to be a barrier in BA, B Com and B Sc courses. Students will now be able to graduate in their mother tongue.

In view of the same, preparations have begun to make the course books available in languages like Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Tamil and Telugu among others.

The University Grants Commission (UGC), under an initiative by the Union Ministry of Education, is engaging with publishers to translate English textbooks to various Indian languages.

Pearson India, Narosa Publishers, Viva Books, S Chand Publishers, Vikas Publishing, New Age Publishers, Mahavir Publications, Universities Press and Taxmann Publications are some of the major publications involved in the process.

Along with these, representatives of Oxford University Press, Orient Blackswan and Elsevier also participated in the high-level meeting.



Preparations have begun to make the books available in languages including Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Tamil and Telugu

fordable in the digital format.

He added that the Commission will proceed further in two ways, wherein popular textbooks of the programmes will be identified and translated and imultaneously, Indian authors will be encouraged to write the textbooks in Indian languages for non-technical subjects.

Kumar was all praise for the publishers who participated in the mission and said that the Commission intends to get several books translated within six to 12 months, for which it has constituted an apex committee to prepare a road map and work towards the goal.

Kumar said that the focus will be on the translation of existing textbooks which will later be extended to postgraduate programmes.

# High Court releases judicial calendar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 18: The Orissa High Court released the judicial calendar featuring paintings of school-children at Justice Gati Krushna Mishra auditorium of Odisha Judicial Academy Sunday.

The calendar was released by High Court Chief Justice S Muralidhar in the presence of other judges of the HC. Eminent artist Prafulla Mohanti, noted Odissi exponent and academician Priyambada Mohanty Hejmadi and acclaimed sculptor Rabi Rath were the special guests. Former judges of the High Court, Deputy Solicitor General of India for Odisha, office bearers of High Court Bar Association and government officials also attended the event. Among others, noted sculptor Padma Vibhushan Sudarshan Sahoo was present.

The painting competitions were held November 12, 2022 among the school children of Class VII to X across the state on the theme "Nature and Wildlife" by the district courts under aegis of the High Court. Altogether 1,477 children participated in the competitions and 3 paintings were selected from each district. A total of 90



THE CALENDAR WAS RELEASED BY HIGH COURT CHIEF JUSTICE S MURALIDHAR IN THE PRESENCE OF OTHER JUDGES OF THE HC

TWELVE CHILD ARTISTS WERE FELICITATED BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE, JUDGES AND GUESTS WITH CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION, MEDALS AND PRIZES

Twelve child artists were felicitated by the Chief Justice, Judges and guests with certificates of appreciation, medals and prizes.

Justice Sangam Kumar Sahoo, chairman of the Judicial Calendar Committee of the High Court welcomed the guests. Delivering the welcome address, Justice Sahoo highlighted the importance of literature, music and art in human life. He also stressed on the need for protection of nature and wildlife for human existence.

Delivering the key note address the Chief Justice said, the speciality of Odisha has been the proliferation of art and culture and the way it has been preserved. He further said versatility is found abundantly in Odisha. Mentioning about

children, Justice Muralidhar said, their experience with the courts are often not good as they visit courts in difficult circumstances, either being torn asunder by rival affections of the parents fighting custody battles or as witnesses to or victims of crimes, and therefore, with the objective of telling them that the judiciary cares for them such initiatives are being undertaken by the High Court. He said the endeavour has been to make things transparent and bring the institution closer to people.

This is for the second consecutive year that the HC has published calendar displaying art works of children. In 2021, the theme of the paintings was 'Family' while this year it is 'Nature & wildlife'.

# State witnesses spike in death by suicide

AS MANY AS 135 STUDENTS INCLUDING 33 GIRLS COMMITTED SUICIDE FOR FAILING IN EXAMINATIONS IN 2021



after she failed to clear the NEET exam. The girl took the extreme step just hours after the results were declared.

June 30, a medical aspirant allegedly died by suicide over the fear of NEET. The 19-year-old from Choolaimedu (Tamil Nadu) was preparing for the medical entrance examination.

Similarly, on April 30, two 17-year-old girls allegedly committed suicide in separate incidents after failing to clear Class 12 board examination in Balaghat and Tikamgarh districts of Madhya Pradesh.

As per the Union Ministry of Education, the government and the UGC have taken several initiatives to check the incidents of harassment and discrimination of students. University Grants Commission (Redressal of Grievances of Students) Regulations, 2019 have been formulated to safeguard the interests of the students.

The UGC has also notified 'UGC Regulations on Curbing the Menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions, 2009' and issued circular for strict compliance of the Regulations.

Further, the ministry has undertaken various steps such as peer assisted learning, introduction of technical education in regional languages for students in order to ease the academic stress. The government's Manodarpan initiative covers a wide range of activities to provide psychological support to students, teachers and families for mental and emotional well-being during the Covid outbreak and beyond.

According to the data, of total suicides committed by students, 14.0 per cent were reported in Maharashtra (1,834) followed by 10.0 per cent in Madhya Pradesh (1,308), 9.5 per cent in Tamil Nadu (1,246) and 6.5 per cent in Karnataka (855).

While the report doesn't mention any specific reasons behind suicides, it said that 'failure in examinations' was one of the reasons.

September 8, a 22-year-old medical aspirant ended her life by jumping from the nineteenth floor of a tower in her society as she could not clear the National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET)-UG examination. The incident was reported from at Greater Noida's JP Aman Society in Sector 151. As per reports, an initial investigation revealed that the girl was unhappy after the declaration of her NEET result.

In a similar incident, a 19-year-old Chennai girl allegedly died by suicide in Tamil Nadu's Ambattur



UP IN ARMS: Members of Odisha Works Department Workcharged, Regular Karmachari Association staged a protest at PMG in Bhubaneswar seeking fulfillment of their 5-point charter of demands, Sunday

## City to host BhuFeSto from Jan 14 to 17

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 18:** As the City is preparing to host the Hockey World Cup with all fanfare and pomp, multiple cultural events are being organised on the sidelines to further amplify the excitement. One such event is the Bhubaneswar Festival of Storytelling (BhuFeSto) 2023, which in its second edition is going to be held from January 14 to 17.

Bakul Foundation once again is taking the responsibility to curate the event as a part of .FEST, the city festival being organised by BDA, BMC and Odisha Tourism. This was announced at a curtain raiser to the festival, which was organised at the Bakul Library in Satyanagar Sunday.

BhuFeSto 2023 will be held from 2.30pm to 7.30pm everyday at four different parks and open spaces in different parts of the City:



Buddha Jayanti Park in Chandrasekharpur, Indira Gandhi Park in Unit 2, APJ Abdul Kalam Park near SUM Hospital and Kalabhooni in Pokharipur.

Sujit Mohapatra, founder of Bakul Foundation, said, "The idea is that people in the city could go to the nearest park to enjoy the performances. The storytellers would perform in different parks on different days. When BhuFeSto was proposed by Bakul Foundation before the last Hockey World Cup, the aspiration was to make it the iconic Storytelling

festival in India just as the Jaipur Literature Festival is iconic among literature festivals."

The first edition of the storytelling festival, which was held in December 2018, proved to be a success with more than 10,000 people enjoying the performances of some of the best storytellers. This time, the plan is to make it even bigger.

Sujit, also the festival director of BhuFeSto, said, "When we organised BhuFeSto in 2018, we had been organizing storytelling sessions in Odisha but we were new to the

international storytelling circuit. After BhuFeSto, particularly during Covid, when Bakul Foundation conducted the very popular virtual storytelling web series we got connected with the very best storytellers from around the world and India. We are very happy to announce that almost all the storytellers in our first list of the ones we most wanted to have, confirmed and are going to perform at BhuFeSto this time."

Nupur Agarwal, an internationally acclaimed storyteller, and the festival curator, narrated a wonderful story in the curtain raiser for the audience to give a glimpse of what the festival has in store. Prachi Tara, who became renowned as a storyteller post the first edition of BhuFeSto also regaled the audience with a story in Odia. Clips of the famous storytellers attending BhuFeSto was also shown.

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 18:** Centralised data on suicide released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) showed that Odisha is one of the five states where death by suicide has increased in recent years.

The NCRB report reveals that as many as 17 students died due to failure in various examinations across the state in 2020. Meanwhile, the state witnessed a sharp rise in the number of suicides by students due to examination failure in 2021. As many as 135 students including 33 girls committed suicide for failing in examinations in 2021.

With a total of 13,089 cases of suicide by students, the latest data shows that compared to 2020, the number increased by nearly 4.5 per cent in 2021. Nearly half of them were reported from the five states - Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Odisha.



ARTISTIC EXPRESSION: Children from BBC School For The Deaf staging a play during the state level Dibyanga Mahotsav in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

## Moot court competition held at XIM

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 18:** The First National Human Rights Moot Court Competition was organised by Xavier Law School, XIM University, from December 16 to 18. The competition was organised in collaboration with National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and in association with Abhinav Mishra, Solicitors and Chambers Law Firm. Imperial investors and beverage partners Hybrint Food and Retail and Nescafe sponsored the competition.

This premier event was designed to offer participants the chance to learn about the evolution of jurisprudence and significant developments in constitutional law and human rights law, as well as



to aim for the next generation of lawyers with research and oratory skills. The core themes of the moot proposition are constitutional law, human rights and associated laws.

The event was inaugurated by Biswajeet Dubey, partner at Cyril, Amarchand Mangaldas Co. Avnish Bhatt, Law, Department of Xavier Law School, XIM University, presented the vote of thanks. Nivedita Chauhan, Supreme Court advo-

cate, experienced in corporate litigation and advisory arbitration, real estate laws, and writ petitions, and co-founder of the chambers, Abhinav Mishra, prepared the moot court proposition.

The competition was attended by 16 teams and 54 students from several states. During the 3-day deliberations, four rounds of the competitions were organized, including the preliminary rounds I and II, the quarterfinals, the semifinals, and the final round on the third day. 35 judges from different fields of law from across the country adjudicated the competition over the course of the competition's three days.

The final round was presided over and adjudicated by a bench of five judges from across India.

## CONTINUED FROM P1 If politics...

Rahul Gandhi's march and his ideas have instilled new hope in him, he said, adding that he was troubled by growing intolerance in the country and decided to strengthen the march by walking with the former Congress president.

"I spoke with Rahul Gandhi and told him, 'Sau ke baad koi ginti nahi hoti aur haath jodne ke baad koi galti nahi'," Mishra said, stressing that mistakes will be forgiven if you are contrite. "So what if Congress made mistakes, the way you are walking from Kanyakumari to Kashmir; the results of this will be there to see."

## ₹2000 notes...

A Terror Funding and Fake Currency (TFFC) Cell has been constituted in the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to conduct focused investigation of terror financing and fake currency cases. The government claimed to have strengthened the international border security by deploying additional men for round-the-clock surveillance, by setting up surveillance posts along the border, erecting fences and intensive patrolling.

An MoU has been signed between India and Bangladesh to prevent and combat smuggling and circulation of counterfeit currency notes, while training programmes have been organised for state police officers as well as those of Nepal and Bangladesh to make them aware about the problem.

## Cop commits...

They were shell-shocked when they found Pradhan hanging from the ceiling fan of his room with a towel. Upon informed, Baranga police station IIC, Akash Rana along with Nandankanan police station staff reached the spot and sent the body to SCB medical college and hospital where the doctors declared him brought dead. Police has sent the body for post mortem after registering an unnatural death case.

# A childhood fracture is predictor of future fractures

Breaking a bone in childhood is not just a rite of passage. It could be a warning sign of future fracture risk and osteoporosis.

A history of prior fracture is one of the strongest predictors of future fractures, yet current guidelines used to determine osteoporosis risk ignore childhood fractures.

We investigated the history of fractures in a group of middle-aged people who are part of the Dunedin Study, a comprehensive longitudinal project that has continued for five decades.

We found people who broke a bone more than once in their childhood had more than double the odds of breaking a bone as an adult. In women, this also resulted in lower bone density at the hip at age 45.

The people in our study are young for investigating fracture risk and osteoporosis, but if lifestyle changes to improve bone density can be implemented earlier in life, it may have the greatest impact on lifelong bone health and the re-

duction of osteoporosis risk. Childhood fractures predict osteoporosis risk

About one in two children break a bone during childhood, with almost a quarter of boys and 15 per cent of girls suffering multiple fractures.

But we don't currently fully understand why some children repeatedly break bones or whether this will predict adult bone health.

There are several reasons why children fracture a bone. Previous research has shown that kids who fracture tend to live in poorer households, have high levels of vigorous exercise, are overweight or have a high body mass index, vitamin D insufficiency, low calcium intakes and may experience physical abuse.

Children who fracture repeatedly may also have especially fragile skeletons, they may be "accident-prone", or their bone fractures may occur during sport or physical activity.

But an important question is whether kids who break bones



have temporary reductions in bone strength during rapid growth, or if these bone weaknesses continue into adulthood.

The people we studied are all part of the unique Dunedin Study, which tracked the development of a thousand babies born in Otepoti Dunedin between April 1972 and March 1973.

Study members have been assessed repeatedly every few years since, on a wide range of topics including risk-taking behaviours, sport participation, physical abuse,

People who broke a bone more than once in their childhood had more than double the odds of breaking a bone as an adult

Kids who fracture tend to live in poorer households, have high levels of vigorous exercise, are overweight or have a high body mass index

child and adult deprivation, among others.

They've also repeatedly undergone face-to-face interviews asking about injuries, including fractures since they were children. This means we can compare their medical fracture history in middle age with their own recollections from childhood.

Importantly, because the Dunedin Study also collects comprehensive information about other factors that may explain why some children suffered repeated fractures, we

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## Alcoholic man stifles wife to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Digapahandi, Dec 18:** A man allegedly strangled his wife to death and later dumped the body on his farmland following a fight with her under the influence of alcohol at Jiura village under Patapur police limits in Ganjam district, Saturday night.

The deceased was identified as Jayanti Sahu, wife of Narayan Sahu. On being informed, police seized the body and detained Narayan for interrogation, Sunday. Preliminary inquiries indicated that the woman was strangled.

Police said that the deceased, the daughter of Dama Sahu in Radhadeipur village under Patapur police limits was married to Narayan, 15 years back. The couple has three children. The accused would often return home drunk and pick up a fight with his wife over various issues.

## 86 Mayurbhanj hamlets to get revenue village status



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, Dec 18:** Following a directive from the Board of Revenue (BoR), a total of 86 hamlets in Mayurbhanj district will soon be declared as Revenue Villages. The Revenue and Disaster Management department has prepared all the formalities for this purpose. Residents of these 86 hamlets had been demanding for a long time the Revenue Village status, in the absence of which they were deprived of various facilities.

With the addition of these 86 hamlets as Revenue Villages, the total number of such villages in the district will go up to 4,082. Currently, there are 3,996 Revenue Villages spread across 30 tehsils of the district. The geographical, demographic and other data of these hamlets will be uploaded in the 'bhulekh portal' of the Revenue and Disaster Management department. Besides, land pattas and land records of the new Revenue Villages will also be modified.

Sources in the ADM (Revenue) office said that the district administration had identified 252 hamlets and a detailed report had been forwarded to the Revenue and Disaster Management department for providing these with the status of revenue villages a few months back. However, 86 hamlets have got the approval while the remaining 166 have missed out.



**SPLENDID PERFORMANCE:** Girl students performed Odissi at the 15th annual function of Kendriya Vidyalaya at Rayagada

OP PHOTO

## Admin, executive officer face HC flak



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Beguniapada, Dec 18:** Sashmita Satpathy, the executive officer (also officiating as tehsildar) of Kodala NAC in Ganjam faced flak from the High Court for allegedly obstructing the council meeting of the civic body by throwing norms of the civic body to the winds. The High Court has also reprimanded the district administration on the issue.

In its order, the HC has made it clear that no official can interfere with the management of NAC meetings.

According to reports, chairperson of Kodala NAC Surya Narayan Nayak had issued a notice on September 30 to hold the meeting of the councillors. However, it was alleged that the executive officer (EO) of the NAC had deliberately obstructed the meeting.

The chairman had invited the local MLA and the MP to the meeting. But the EO told the district

administration that the MLA has not been invited to the meeting and hence the meeting cannot be held. Such interference by the EO left the councillors upset. The NAC chairperson and eight councillors produced evidence before the district administration about their invitation of the MP and MLA to the meeting and strongly objected to unnecessary interference of the EO. They accused the EO of violating rules of Orissa Municipal Act. As the district administration took no step in this regard, the NAC chairperson and councillors moved the High Court against the district Collector, the EO and the district urban project director. Hearing the case, the HC felt that the EO has thrown the rules of the civic body to the winds and reprimanded the district administration for such interference in the functioning of the civic body.

The HC made it clear that the NAC chairperson will only conduct the meetings of the civic body, but no official will meddle in it.

Moreover, the HC had directed the district Collector, the EO and the district urban project director to depose before the HC on January 30, 2023. Various quarters have condemned interference of the EO in the civic body matters.

Our correspondent tried to contact the EO over phone to know her reaction, but she could not be available.

## Jajpur Road-Dhamra railway project pushed to cold store

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur Town, Dec 18:** Implementation of an ambitious railway project is under cloud. For the last eight years, the file pertaining to the proposed Jajpur Road-Dhamra railway line project via Jajpur and Aradi is pending for approval with the Railway Board in New Delhi, a report said.

According to the report, a survey on the proposed Jajpur Road-Dhamra railway line via Jajpur and Aradi was conducted in 2014-15. The file has been sent to the Railway Board for approval. Though various political parties and outfits have been demanding for execution of the ambitious railway project, the Railway Ministry is taking no step towards its execution. The project has been estimated at a cost of ₹1,072 crore. It was learnt that the state government has been repeatedly reminding the Railway Board for approval to the project, but the Central government and the latter are allegedly paying no heed to the demand.

It is said that railway project bears significance to boost the tourism sector in both Jajpur and Bhadrak. Thousands of devotees and tourists visit Birajakshetra, Navigaya, Baitarani ghat in Jajpur and Akhandalamani, famous shivaite shrine at Aradi in Bhadrak district every day.

This railway line will facilitate



**A** survey on the proposed Jajpur Road-Dhamra railway line via Jajpur and Aradi was conducted in 2014-15. Its report has been sent to the Railway Board for approval

**T**he project has been estimated at ₹1,072 crore. The state government has been repeatedly reminding the Railway Board for approval to the project

faster communication for tourists and devotees to these places, locals observed. It is estimated that the project could be commercially viable for the Centre as it may generate high revenue. The survey report said that the Central government can claim about 31.15% of the revenue annually.

Various outfits have written in the past about the execution of the project to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and former Union Minister Pratap Chandra Sarangi. However, no effort is being made

## B.Plan graduates get HC relief

*B.Plan graduates despite holding higher qualification than the candidates having Diploma in Architecture could not apply for planning assistant posts*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, Dec 18:** The Orissa High Court has ruled that holders of Bachelor degrees in 'Planning' can also apply for the post of planning assistants along with the students who have Diploma in Architecture. However, the graduates in 'Planning' cannot apply online. They will have to apply with hard copies of the necessary documents to the Odisha Staff Selection Commission (OSSC). This was stated here by advocate P Bijaylakshmi Das, pleading for the petitioners and B.Plan graduates Sarthak Mohapatra and others in a case filed in the Orissa High Court.

The petitioners have mentioned in their petitions that OSSC had invited applications for the post of

planning assistants where it had mentioned the main eligibility criteria as 'Diploma in Architecture'. Accordingly, the OSSC had set up its web portal where candidates having Diploma in Architecture could apply for the post. As a result, B.Plan graduates despite holding higher qualification than candidates having Diploma in Architecture could not apply for the post.

The petitioners have mentioned that the course followed by B.Plan graduates has subjects like GIS and CADD which are required for the post of planning assistants. The petitioners approached the High Court praying for relief. After the ruling, the OSSC has extended the last date of receiving online application from its December 15 to December 18, 2022.



## Irregularities alleged in cashew plantation

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, Dec 18:** Locals have alleged massive irregularities in the plantation of grafted cashew saplings in Tentalapasi panchayat under Harichandanpur block of Keonjhar district. The plantation work was done under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). Sources said, an information plaque was set up near the plantation area, stating that it will be done on eight hectares be-

longing to 10 beneficiaries in the 2021-22 fiscal. The Horticulture department was assigned to implement the project. Locals alleged that the claim of the Horticulture department about plantation on eight hectares is completely false. One can assess how many saplings had been planted. The project cost has been estimated at ₹4 lakh. However, the major part of the fund has been misappropriated, they added.

It was stated that over ₹1.38 lakh has been spent towards mainte-



nance of the saplings in the first year. Locals however, refuted the an-

nouncement and alleged that the entire amount has been siphoned off. They have demanded an investigation into how the amount has been spent.

This correspondent tried to contact Monika Nayak, Assistant Horticulture officer of Harichandanpur block, over phone. However, the calls went unanswered. When contacted, deputy director of the Horticulture department Jayant Nayak assured that the matter will be investigated.

## Funds wasted as Gobari river renovation stopped midway

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Pattamundai, Dec 18:** Funds over ₹10 crore have gone down the drain, as the renovation works of Gobari river in Kendrapara district has been abandoned half-way, sources said Sunday.

The Gobari river renovation work was taken up as part of the Centre-sponsored river linking project and adopted by the Odisha government. It planned to renovate the river and link it with the Brahmani river. If the project had been completed, the water flow in the river systems of Odisha would have increased.

The construction of the Bhateni sluice gate in Benakanda and a discharge channel from Boitalu creek has also been stopped. It led to trading of barbs between political parties. Had the linking of the two rivers been completed it would have helped over three lakh farmers in Pattamundai, Mahakalapara and Kendrapara blocks, sources said.

Reports said that climate change has affected the rivers in Odisha also. They are in spate during the monsoons, but for the remainder of the year they go dry.

Keeping these things in mind, the Odisha government implemented the river linking project to help in increase of water flow during the dry season. As part of the plan, it decided to excavate the Gobari river flowing through Pattamundai town in the district. Locals have been demanding since long to link the Gobari river with the Brahmani as it will bring a change in the livelihood and social conditions of the people.



**Odisha Construction Corporation Ltd launched the Gobari dredging at a cost of ₹7 crore but it also stopped midway. All the political parties are silent on the issue while the consultancy agency is allegedly making money from the project**

Keeping this in mind, the then Rajnagar MLA Alekh Jena had laid the foundation stone for renovation of Gobari river at a plan outlay of ₹3 crore in 2010. However, the contractor who got the tender left work midway. Due to demands by the people, the Odisha Construction Corporation Ltd (OCC) launched the Gobari dredging work at a cost of ₹7 crore but that also stopped midway. All the political parties including the government and the Opposition are silent on the issue while the consultancy agency is only making money from the project, sources alleged.

In view of the 2024 elections, the BJP has adopted a new strategy to gain support of the people. It has launched an agitation demanding discharge of rainwater

from thousands of hectares of farmlands in this and Mahakalapara blocks. They have also demanded construction of a channel from Boitalu creek and reconstruction of Bhateni Benakanda sluice gate so that the farmlands in these two blocks get adequate water.

The Bhateni sluice gate was constructed at an expense of ₹6 crore. However, just before its inauguration, the sluice gate collapsed. However, none of the political parties are worried on this issue. Such is their callousness that they have not even demanded an investigation.

Educationist Profulla Dash, senior citizens Khirod Mallick, Ashok Bal and Debashis Panda have demanded immediate implementation of both the projects.



**SPORTS MEET:** Players participated in kabaddi match at a zonal-level sports meet on the premises of KM Bhalia Sahi High School under R Udayagiri block in Gajapati district

OP PHOTO

FOCUS CLIMATE ACTION

# JUSTICE TO LIABILITY



If climate change is the result of emissions – past and present – and if it is driving the increased incidence and severity of extreme weather, that means this year’s flooding in Pakistan and creeping desertification in North Africa can be attributed to those who caused the emissions

emissions, but the EU has made Chinese contributions a condition for its own participation. Hence, former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown warns that we could end up with a “fund without funders.”

But as real as that danger is, it should not diminish the importance of what governments agreed to at COP27. The developed world’s acceptance of responsibility for the impact of climate change establishes grounds for reparations, and indicates a degree of liability that will now be tested in courts around the world. “Climate justice” will evolve from a powerful slogan into a live legal issue. If climate change is the result of emissions – past and present – and if it is driving the increased incidence and severity of extreme weather, that means this year’s flooding in Pakistan and creeping desertification in North Africa can be attributed to those who

caused the emissions. But who, exactly, is liable? The developed world’s governments have accepted that they are partly accountable. But responsibility, and therefore liability, might also be attributed to the companies that have produced, sold, and profited from the sales of the products that generated the emissions. Energy companies can try to argue that until the 1980s and 1990s, there was no scientific consensus on the adverse climatic effects of burning hydrocarbons. But from the 1990s onwards, that defence cannot stand.

The age of potential liability thus began around 30 years ago, when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and others started creating a body of credible scientific research. And now, the age of real climate liability is upon us. For the companies involved – particularly those subject to the laws and political decisions of the

advanced economies – such liability is an existential threat. It is analogous to the Master Settlement Agreement that resolved the conflict between the tobacco industry and 46 US state attorneys general over responsibility for the medical costs associated with smoking.

But whereas that settlement required the companies to pay a total of \$206 billion over 25 years, climate change and its associated costs are much bigger. The risks are global, and they are still growing, because emissions continue to rise. In fact, the worst is yet to come, and the potential costs are almost beyond calculation.

There will be a ferocious legal battle, to be sure. But simply by accepting responsibility for the global costs of climate change, in principle, the parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change have let the genie out of the bottle. Fossil-fuel companies and their investors will not be able to claim that they weren’t warned.

True, COP27 left many participants and observers disappointed. Climate scientists, activists, and others are understandably dismayed that the urgency of climate change is being ignored, and that more immediate issues such as the cost-of-living crisis and Russia’s war in Ukraine are crowding out the attention of policymakers and the public. But the reality is that COP27 will likely be remembered as a watershed moment. Now that the developed world has finally accepted a degree of financial responsibility for the loss and damage caused by climate change, the broader climate debate will henceforth turn on the question of liability. And that, in turn, could fundamentally change the main protagonists’ incentives.

The writer is a visiting professor at King’s College London.  
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Nick Butler

‘CLIMATE JUSTICE’ WILL EVOLVE FROM A POWERFUL SLUGAN INTO A LIVE LEGAL ISSUE

Many have dismissed last month’s COP27 climate conference as a failure, owing to the lack of progress on pledges made at the COP26 summit last year, and to the absence of clear commitments to phase out fossil fuels. More broadly, the COP process itself has been criticised as inadequate and ultimately unworkable, given its reliance on unanimity among all the parties.

But COP27 did produce one notable breakthrough: the world’s advanced economies, including the United States and the European Union, finally accepted some responsibility for the “loss and damage” caused by climate change. In the bureaucratic language of the final communiqué, they agreed “to establish new funding arrangements for assisting developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in responding to loss and damage.” A special committee comprising 24 countries has been established to determine how the new fund will be financed, managed, and distributed. Their conclusions are due at the COP28 summit in the United Arab Emirates late next year.

Yet, given that the Republicans will soon have control of the House of Representatives, it is hard to believe that the US will be putting much cash on the table. There is also uncertainty about whether China will be a major contributor. Although it is now a leading source of emissions, the United Nations still considers it a “developing” country. Finally, while the EU has accepted, in principle, that the countries most responsible for climate change should help bear its costs, it is heading into a recession, which will most likely limit Europeans’ contribution.

China’s involvement is especially important. Not only does it generate almost one-third of global

SPECTRUM NATION

# The illusion of sustainable development

On December 11, addressing a gathering after launching and inaugurating various projects at Nagpur, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India needed sustainable development and not ‘shortcut politics’. The question arises: Is India on the path of sustainable development under his leadership? Is India’s path to prosperity rooted in sustainability? Probably, India is on reverse gear.

According to the Brundtland Report, “Sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The United Nations document “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” contains 17 goals and 169 targets, which provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet. Those 17 goals comprise -- no poverty; zero hunger; good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation, and infrastructure; reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; life below water; life on land; peace, justice, and strong institutions; and lastly strengthening global partnerships for the goals.

Countries are ranked by their overall score. The overall score

measures the total progress toward achieving all 17 SDGs. The score can be interpreted as a percentage of SDG achievement. A score of 100 indicates that all SDGs have been achieved. Out of 193 UN Member States, India with a score of 60.32 is abysmally placed at 121 out of the 163 countries. The disconcerting news is that India has slipped five spots from 2017. Finland with a score of (86.51) tops the list followed by Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Austria, Germany, France, and Switzerland. With the latest rankings, India is now behind all South Asian nations except Pakistan, which stands at 129. As far as Indian states and Union Territories are concerned, the Left-ruled Kerala emerged as the top state in 2021-22, while Bihar, Jharkhand, and Assam were the worst-performing states.

Another indicator of sustainable development is human development which measures progress on three key dimensions - a long and healthy life, access to education, and a decent standard of living. It is calculated using 4 indicators – life expectancy at birth, mean years of schooling, expected years of schooling, and the Gross National Income per capita. India ranks 132 out of 191 countries and territories in 2021-22 in the Human Development Index.

According to the Brundtland Commission, the three main pillars of sustainable development are economic growth, environmental protection, and social equality.

With India putting economic growth at the forefront of sustainable development, it is palpable that the other two pillars have been suffering, especially with the overall well-being of the environment in a perilously morbid state

Though India is stated to have a growth rate higher than most of other countries in the current fiscal, it is just a one-year affair. The euphoria of high growth evaporates when India is found to be behind 141 countries in terms of per capita GDP. India’s growth is not inclusive but rather driven by debt-spurred consumption of the rich leading to a concentration of wealth in a few hands with the impoverishment of the masses. India is home to the largest number of hungry, poor and homeless people in the world and it still continues to be a lower middle-income country.

Any development without protecting the environment is unsustainable and hits the poor the hardest. Rapid growth requires exhaustion and depletion of natural resources and leads to unsustainable growth in the long run. Development is not just GDP growth but a qualitative improvement in life, which is missing. India has a very poor record as far as protection of environment is concerned. The Environment Performance Index by researchers of Yale University and Columbia University provides a data-driven summary of the state of sustainability around the world. It ranks 180 countries on

40 performance indicators including climate change, environmental public health, and biodiversity, among others. India scored the lowest among 180 countries in the 2022 index. It has performed worse than Vietnam (178), Bangladesh (177), and Pakistan (176). In the 2020 index, India was ranked 168.

Social equality and equity are pillars of sustainable development that focus on the social well-being of people. The growing gap between the incomes of the rich and the poor is evident throughout the world with India being branded as a most unequal country. The Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index 2022 provides a detailed worldwide analysis looking at governments’ policies and actions of 161 countries to fight inequality during the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. India ranked 123 out of 161 countries.

India also features among the lowest performers on health spending again. India’s health spending is 3.64% of total spending. This is the lowest out of all BRICS and neighbouring countries. India has been reclassified as not having a minimum wage, given that a large number of workers, like domestic workers in many states, are not covered by minimum wages. Now is the time to tax the rich and spend more on health and education and increase minimum wages.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist. Views are personal.



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

ANY DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT IS UNSUSTAINABLE AND HITS THE POOR THE HARDEST

## Curriculum overhaul

Sir, In a major overhaul, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has released the detailed curriculum framework for the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP). As suggested under the New Education Policy (NEP), under the FYUP the students will be able to obtain an undergraduate ‘honours’ degree after completing a four-year course, instead of the current three-year course. The curriculum consists of major stream courses, minor stream courses, courses from other disciplines, language courses, and skill courses on environmental education. According to the new norms, students will be awarded academic recognition based on the number of years they complete in a course. Further, students will be able to get an undergraduate honours degree in four years on the completion of 160 credits (measured through the number of academic hours). A common undergraduate degree, however, can be obtained in three years on completion of 120 credits. If the students wish to go for a research specialisation, they will have to undertake a research project in their four-year course. This will get them an honours degree with research specialisation. Students, who enrolled this year, will be eligible to shift to the FYUP from the next session which allows greater flexibility with multiple entry and exit options within the programme. It is an advantage for the candidates with four-year undergraduate degrees to directly pursue Ph.D and they will not require a Master’s Degree. Prof. M. Jagadesh Kumar, who heads the UGC, said the new undergraduate structure is aimed at making students job-ready and enhance their employability, which was missing in the current structure.

Bhagaban Nayak, BERHAMPUR

## Setback for Bano

Sir, In a setback for Bilkis Bano, the Supreme Court has dismissed a plea filed by the gangrape survivor seeking a review of the top court’s May 13 verdict directing the Gujarat government to consider the premature release of the convicts under the state’s remission policy. Bano had argued that the remission policy of Maharashtra, where the trial happened, would have governed the case. Bano was 20-year-old and five months pregnant when she was gangraped and seven of her family members were massacred during the 2002 Gujarat riots. All the eleven convicts walked out of jail on August 15 after the Gujarat government allowed their premature release under its remission policy.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Let all circumstances, all happenings in life be occasions, constantly renewed for learning more and ever more.



THE MOTHER

# Wasted Opportunity

The unseemly spat between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Pakistani counterpart Bilawal Bhutto Zardari during a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) session has done no good to the cause for which the two attended the meeting in the US. On the contrary, it has only shifted the focus of the UNSC special briefing on ‘global counterterrorism approach’ that was convened by India. The remark of Bilawal describing Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the “butcher of Gujarat” who “lives”, while “Osama bin Laden is dead”, is being claimed by India as violating all canons of decent diplomacy. India’s MEA spokesman has called it the “new low”. But, the sad part of the development is that Jaishankar might only have invited this comment.

The agenda of the meeting is well timed as the global war on terrorism and the sanctions regimes launched since the Twin Tower mayhem of 9/11 are in shambles. Jaishankar rightly listed four obstacles that impeded the cooperation in counterterrorism operations. These are state support for financing terror, opaque multilateral mechanisms, double standards and politicisation of countering terrorism according to where terror groups belong and the ‘next frontier’ which is the use of emerging technologies such as drones and virtual currency by terrorists. The US dealt a severe blow to the sanctions regime by giving legitimacy to the Taliban through holding talks with them in the haste to exit Afghanistan in 2021. This not only helped the Taliban seize power in Afghanistan, but also let their handlers in Pakistan off the hook. As Jaishankar pointed out without specifically taking China’s name that a P-5 country continues to block the designations of Pakistan-based terrorists, including five named this year, from the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) to be declared as terrorists. India got the opportunity to highlight its concerns over terrorism at the end of its two-year UNSC tenure. But, Jaishankar’s needless reference to the hiding of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan till he was hunted down and annihilated by a special squad of the US helped Pakistan virtually dilute India’s efforts to get international support to the fight against terrorists and non-state actors from across the border. He seems to have played into Pakistan’s hand with his comments on Pakistan being the epicentre of terrorism.

Bilawal only lapped up the opportunity to launch his counter-offensive with glee. Responding to Jaishankar’s jab on Pakistan for helping Laden go into hiding on its soil, he said: “Jaishankar should remember that Osama bin Laden is dead, [but] the butcher of Gujarat lives and he is the prime minister of India.”

He would not have been able to distract the world’s attention from the main issue had Jaishankar not restated a fact that is known to the world. Bilawal did not even stop at that, but went on to condemn the attacks on Moslems in India and derogatory remarks on them during the current BJP rule at the Centre. He also likened the RSS to Hitler’s notorious organ of torture and killings, the SS.

It is unfortunate that the debate on terrorism at an international forum like the UNSC was thus reduced to immature Pakistan-bashing primarily because Jaishankar came across as incapable to handle international issues with political maturity. The overemphasis of India’s foreign policy under the current dispensation on Pakistan neglecting its other neighbours has already helped China encircle the country. The External Affairs Minister seems to have not yet come out of the fixation on Pakistan. Even while bringing global attention back to counterterrorism challenges, India is focusing heavily on Pakistan as the main sponsor of terrorism in South Asia. This could be a good formula for the BJP to win domestic elections. But, when it is being used at international forums, India’s adversaries outside the country cleverly and predictably use it to slam India back. They obviously are not cowed down the way the BJP manages to scare its opponents within the country. These diplomatic failures may not be understood by the uninitiated but the damage caused is huge and long lasting for the country.

## WISDOM CORNER

Be a yardstick of quality. Some people aren’t used to an environment where excellence is expected.

STEVE JOBS

If you love life, don’t waste time, for time is what life is made up of.

BRUCE LEE

Be brave. Take risks. Nothing can substitute experience.

PAULO COELHO

## WORDSWORTH

### Dracontology

Strictly speaking, dracontology should refer to the study of dragons, although it really means the study of lake animals unknown to science. It derives from Greek drakon, serpent (plus -ology from a Greek ending that indicated the study of a subject). It’s a kissing cousin to the almost equally rare adjectives draconiform and dracontine, both of which refer to a thing like a dragon. (Draconian, of some law or punishment that is excessively severe, comes instead from Draco, an Athenian legislator of the seventh century BC who made Attila the Hun look like a pussycat.) However, those enthusiasts who have an interest in this specialist branch of cryptozoology – the study of animals unknown to science – have hijacked the word for the investigation of such fabulous beasts as the Loch Ness Monster in Scotland and the serpent of Lake Memphremagog on the Quebec-Vermont border. A site devoted to the latter claims that the word was coined by “a monk at the monastery of St Benoit-du-Lac in response to a request by Jacques Boisvert, a Quebec monster enthusiast who needed a name for the specific study of lake monsters”. That small group of researchers who use dracontology for the study of dragons would wish that the good brother had found a less confusing term.

### Dude

Many people have come across references to dudes in connection with dude ranches, where urbanites could experience a sanitised version of Western life, and it is often assumed that this is the source of the term. However, dude ranch is relatively recent, with the first known examples being from 1921. The Oxford English Dictionary’s first example of dude is from 1883. It’s definitely an Americanism. So what was it doing, unremarked as a foreignism, in a British book as early as 1889? The cause was an extraordinary craze or fashion identified by that name which erupted in New York in early 1883. On 25 February, the Brooklyn Eagle noted an addition to the language: *It is d-u-d-e or d-o-o-d, the spelling not having been distinctly settled yet. Nobody knows where the word came from, but it has sprung into popularity within the past two weeks, and everybody is using it... The word “dude” is a valuable addition to the slang of the day.* The Brooklyn Eagle fleshed out this portrait by noting that a dude was as a rule a rich man’s son, was effeminate, aped the English, had as “his badge of office the paper cigarette and a bell-crown English opera hat”, was noted for his love of actresses (to the extent of carrying on scandalous “affairs”) but with no knowledge of the theatre. The Daily Northwestern reported that dudes had taken to wearing corsets, “in order to more fully develop and expose the beauties of the human form divine”. The Richmond Gazette of Ohio argued in July that the dude was useful “as an example of how big a fool can be made in the semblance of a man”; the Prince Albert Times of Saskatchewan noted the same month that “The dude is one of those creatures which are perfectly harmless and are a necessary evil to civilization.” The Manitoba Daily Free Press reported the story, “bearing evident marks of reportorial invention”, that a dude was seen being chased up Fifth Avenue, by a cat.

# Letters

## TO THE EDITOR

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

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

# national

## of the day quote

**Former Maharashtra chief minister and MLC Uddhav Thackeray will attend the winter session of the state legislature beginning Monday**

**AJIT PAWAR** | LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE MAHARASHTRA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**India's G-20 Presidency is an opportunity for Jammu and Kashmir to showcase its cultural richness and tourism potential across the world**

**MANOJ SINHA** | J-K LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

**The Centre is committed to improve trade facilitation for every stakeholder, including Customs Department personnel and those involved in the trading communities**

**NIRMALA SITHARAMAN** | UNION FINANCE MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### 4 killed, 2 injured

**Chhindwara:** Four men were killed and two others injured after they were hit by a speeding dumper truck in Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh, police said Sunday. The accident took place in Chandangan area close to Chhindwara city late Saturday night, they said, adding that the condition of one of the injured persons was critical.

### Naxalite killed

**Balaghat (MP):** A Naxalite carrying a reward of Rs 12 lakh on his head and wanted in at least three states was killed Sunday in an encounter with police in the forests of Balaghat district in Madhya Pradesh, an official said. The skirmish broke out between Naxalites and personnel of Hawk Force and the police conducting a search operation in Harratola forest under the Roopjhar police station limits in the morning on a tip-off about the presence of Naxalites, said Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sanjay Singh.

### Woman ends life

**Mumbai:** A 25-year-old woman allegedly committed suicide by jumping off a high-rise in Andheri West in Mumbai, a police official said Sunday. The incident took place late Saturday night in the limits of DN Nagar police station, he added. "She jumped off the eighth floor of the building and landed on top of a parked car. The complex's watchman alerted residents and police. She was declared dead on arrival at a nearby hospital," he said.

### Body found

**Jaipur:** A charred body of a man was found in an empty plot near a farm in Rajasthan's Sriganganagar district on Sunday morning, police said. The hands and legs of the man, aged around 40 years, were tied with a wire, SHO (Purani Abadi) Surjeet Kumar said. Prima facie, it appears to be a case of murder, he said, adding efforts are being made to identify the body.

### Man beaten to death

**Kota (Rajasthan):** A man was allegedly beaten to death by his relatives over an old enmity in Baran district, police said Sunday. The incident happened in Chardiya village under Anta police station area on Saturday evening, they said. The deceased has been identified as Mohammed Akhtar alias Akhtar Mirza, they said. The man was on his way to his field along with his son when some of his relatives attacked him with sticks and iron pipes, Circle Inspector (Anta) Ramlaxman Gurjar said.

## Woman's chopped body found, husband held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sahibganj (Jharkhand), Dec 18:** A man was Sunday arrested here after his wife was found chopped into pieces, with body parts dumped in different areas of the district, a police officer said Sunday.

The case, similar to the Shraddha Walkar murder in Delhi, has left the locals in shock, he said. The victim, a 22-year-old woman, was the second wife of 28-year-old Dildar Ansari, the officer said.

Local residents spotted the victim's body parts, which were being dragged by dogs, in Boria area of the district, and the police were subsequently informed about the matter. Sahibganj Superintendent of Police, Anuranjan Kispotta, said 18 pieces of her body could be recovered so far.

"The accused committed the crime with family members, who were yet to be arrested," the SP said. Earlier, Jagannath Pan, the officer-in-charge of Borio Police Station, said, "On inspection, it was found that the parts were of a 22-year-old woman, a resident of Donda Pahar in Boria area. Locals were left aghast at the incident."

Sub-Divisional Police Officer (Sahibganj) Rajendra Kumar Dubey said some of the body parts of the victim were found in an abandoned house in the district. After an initial probe, Ansari was arrested in connection with the murder, Dubey said, without divulging further details. Senior police officers are in the locality looking into the matter, the SDPO said.



**We welcome action against corruption. But if the action is politically motivated then it is wrong. Whenever I campaigned in elections in other states, raids were conducted in Chhattisgarh by the central agencies**

**BHUPESH BAGHEL** | CHHATTISGARH CM

## 'HAATH JODO ABHIYAAN'

The Congress has called a meeting of all its general secretaries, state in-charges, state chiefs and Legislative party leaders December 23 to prepare for the 'haath jodo abhiyaan' and the plenary session of the party slated to be held in February



## Crisis deepens in Telangana Congress

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad, Dec 18:** The crisis in the Congress' Telangana unit deepened on Sunday with 13 leaders, who had defected to the party from the TDP in the past, announcing their resignations from party posts.

Narender Reddy, Seethakka, Vijay Rama Rao, Erra Shekhar, and others said they would send their resignations to Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) Working President. This came a day after some senior leaders announced the launching of "save Congress in Telangana" movement to protect the party from leaders who came from other parties. They called a battle between the original Congress and migrants from the Telugu Desam Party (TDP).

This was seen as an open revolt against state chief A. Revanth Reddy, who came to the Congress from the TDP a few years ago. Meanwhile, the Revanth Reddy group is planning to counter the allegations made by senior leaders, who were unhappy with him over packing recently announced party executive with migrants from the TDP.

The group wants to highlight that the allegations made by the dissidents will weaken the organisation. In another development, the central leadership of the party has taken a serious view of the happenings in the state unit. AICC in charge Secretaries are reported to be in touch with dissident leaders. Some central leaders are likely to meet the dissident group on Monday



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with Goa Governor P.S. Sreedharan Pillai, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, CDS Gen Anil Chauhan, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral R. Hari Kumar and other navy officials during the commissioning ceremony of INS Mormugao at the naval dockyard in Mumbai

# Removed all obstacles thwarting NE growth: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Shillong/Agartala, Dec 18:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday asserted his government has removed all obstacles that came in the way of Northeast's development.

Launching a slew of development projects in poll-bound Tripura and Meghalaya, he said improved air connectivity to the region has increased agricultural exports, benefitting farmers. In Tripura, he said the northeastern state was earlier known for conflict but after the BJP came to power in 2018, it is now known for development, connectivity and cleanliness.

Addressing a public rally at Swami Vivekananda Maidan in Agartala, he said Tripura is becoming a logistics hub and is also emerging as the new gateway of trade in the Northeast, which would be connected with South East Asian countries such as Myanmar and Thailand. He said the 15-km-long Agartala-Akhaura railway project to connect Northeast with Bangladesh would be completed next year.

"Crores of rupees have been invested in infrastructure after the BJP came to power in Tripura. National Highways are getting a massive facelift," he said, adding new possibilities are beckoning the state after an international standard airport has come up. Lashing out at the Opposition, he alleged ration meant for the poor used to be looted before the BJP came to power in the state.

"Now, poor people are receiving their rightful ration without any



**Northeast was known for violence and separatism but during the last eight years, rebellious incidents have come down by 70 per cent. Attacks on security personnel have also been reduced by 60 per cent while civil casualties have come down to 89 per cent**

**NARENDRA MODI** | PRIME MINISTER

trouble. They have been getting free ration for the last three years," he said. Modi claimed that development had bypassed indigenous people for long.

The prime minister alleged that the Opposition is "masters in spreading negativity", pulling the reverse gear when the state needed an escalator. Earlier, he inaugurated a slew of development projects worth over Rs 4,300 crore in the poll-bound state.

Meanwhile, addressing a public meeting in Shillong, Modi said the NDA government has shown the red card to many obstacles that came in the way of development for Northeast. "Obstacles such as corruption, discrimination, violence and vote bank politics were removed," the PM said in his 26-minute speech. "Earlier, attempts were made to divide NE. Now, we are removing these divisions," Modi said at the meeting.

He also inaugurated, dedicated and laid the foundation stone for multiple projects. Among the projects inaugurated, one is the sprawling campus of the IIM-Shillong at the New Shillong Township.

The prime minister, who arrived in Shillong in the morning, attended the golden jubilee celebrations of the NEC at the State Convention Centre, along with Union Home Minister Amit Shah and several other Union ministers and dignitaries.

## GIRL GANGRAPED, EIGHT ARRESTED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Palghar, Dec 18:** A teenage girl was allegedly raped by eight men at a village in Palghar district of Maharashtra, following which the police have arrested all the accused, an official said Sunday.

The incident occurred during the intervening night of Friday and Saturday, in which the accused raped the girl at an unoccupied bungalow in their beach village before taking her to the seashore, where they again sexually assaulted her, he said.

A case of gangrape has been registered against the accused at Satpati police station, a spokesperson of Palghar district rural police said, adding that the victim was around 16 years old. "In her complaint lodged on Saturday, the victim said that her ordeal began at 8 pm on December 16 that continued till 10 am the next day, during which the accused took her to an unoccupied bungalow in Mahim village where they took turns to rape her.

Later, they also took her to the seashore where they again sexually assaulted her in the bushes," he said.

Based on her complaint, the police arrested the eight accused in the early hours of Sunday and registered a case against them under various Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections, including 376 (D) (gang-rape), 366 (A) (procurement of minor girl), 341 (wrongful restraint), 342 (wrongful confinement) and 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), and sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, he said. Further investigation is on.

## BORDER ISSUE

# Cong seeks PM's reply



**Debate should take place in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and answers have to be given by the prime minister and not the defence minister or external affairs minister. Several former prime ministers have answered in Parliament. He is the first prime minister who runs away from debate and he does not utter the word China**

**JAIRAM RAMESH** | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dausa (Rajasthan), Dec 18:** The Congress Sunday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "running away" from a debate in Parliament on the situation along the border with China and said he and not the defence minister must answer on this issue.

The opposition party also posed questions to the government on the Sino-India border issue, saying the nation demands and deserves answers to them. In a statement, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh asked after two years of a protracted "disengagement", what emboldened the Chinese to try taking over the Indian post in the Yangtse area of Tawang.

India has dominated Yangtse since PM Rajiv Gandhi deployed forces there in 1986 during the Sumdorong Chu confrontation, Ramesh said and asked how the Chinese dared to open a new front. The opposition party also alleged that the prime minister does not utter the word "China" and asked whether the government was "silent" due to its "close ties" with

that country. The attack on the government came days after Indian Army personnel clashed with Chinese soldiers in the Tawang sector in Arunachal Pradesh. At a press conference here after the morning leg of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, Ramesh said the BJP raises the 1962 war but forgets that in 1967, China and India fought a war in which China was defeated and India won, which is also part of history.

Ramesh said then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi went to China in 1988 "when we were strong at the borders and after that visit bilateral ties became stronger". But in April 2020 all this came to an end and a new chapter was opened, he claimed.

"The prime minister has given a clean chit to them (China) by saying 'no one has come and no one is inside our territory'. Due to this clean chit, our bargaining position has gone down," Ramesh claimed. The Congress leader said there should be a debate in Parliament and the prime minister should answer on the issue and discuss it with the opposition.

# BJP SET TO LAUNCH 2024 LOK SABHA CAMPAIGN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 18:** The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has taken a giant step in consolidating its position ahead of the next Lok Sabha elections in 2024. BJP has kick-started its preparation for the general elections with a series of meetings in Delhi and other states.

Under the direction of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to office bearers in the meeting held on December 5, BJP has started making strategies for booth strengthening for the said elections. BJP leadership has also formed a high-level team in preparations for the elections headed by five prominent leaders.

To strengthening booth at every

level, BJP is holding state-wise core group meeting in Delhi.

The party always gives importance to its karyakarta and booths. BJP left no stone unturned in motivating its workers by acknowledging their hard work in every election - be it corporation, state or Lok Sabha. The Prime Minister too always mentions the hard work and participation of BJP workers.

BJP works on detailed preparation to reach booth level. Earlier, the party ran the campaign 'mera booth sabse majboot'. This time too, booth strengthening is the mantra for the election in 2024.

Strategies and road maps are being prepared to centralise power. So far, a core group of two states has been held and the process is



going on for other BJP ruled states. BJP Uttrakhand in-charge Dushyant Gautam headed a meeting at former Chief Minister

Ramesh Pokhriyal's residence on December 12 in Delhi, along with BJP Uttrakhand MPs and Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhumi.

According to a source, "Meeting was all about the road map for General Assembly election 2024. Party is focusing on booths strengthening. There will be series of meeting on this agenda also, many ground level programmes will be run to connect with people."

Similarly, meeting for Uttar Pradesh has also held in Delhi. That was a high level meeting in which a 5-member committee was formed to prepare a road map for Lok Sabha election 2024.

According to sources, apart from BJP president J.P. Nadda, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, National Organisation Minister B.L. Santosh and U.P. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath have been given criti-

cal responsibilities.

The Bharatiya Janata Party will hold a meeting of its Bengal core group in Delhi on December 19 to prepare the road map for the Lok Sabha elections in 2024. According to sources in the BJP, Subhash Sarkar, Nishith Pramanik, Suwendu Adhikari, Dilip Ghose, Sukanta Majumdar, Lockett Chatterjee, all MPs and BJP organisation general secretary B.L. Santosh will attend the meeting. It will be held in the evening at the residence of Subhash Sarkar and will be chaired by B.L. Santosh and Sunil Bansala.

Agenda for the meeting will be Lok Sabha election 2024, booth strengthening programmes, and upcoming panchayat election in West Bengal.

# Cong promises to bring back farm loan waiver

It is widely believed that the grand old party's promise of farm loan waiver was one of the major factors behind its victory in the last Assembly elections



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhopal, Dec 18:** The Congress in Madhya Pradesh has promised that if it is voted to power in the state Assembly polls next year, it would reintroduce the farm loan waiver scheme which it had brought after forming a government in 2018.

The party's state unit president and former chief minister Kamal Nath made this announcement on Saturday evening, when he also said that the farm loan of every farmer in the state would have been cleared by now if his government was at the helm.

Ahead of the last Assembly polls, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had promised to implement a farm loan waiver scheme in the state if the party came to power. The party delivered on its promise as Kamal

Nath signed the file for waiving loans of up to Rs 2 lakh soon after taking oath as the chief minister in December 2018. It is widely believed that the grand old party's promise of farm loan waiver was one of the major factors behind its victory. Sharing the order of the loan waiver scheme issued on December 17, 2018, the day he took oath as Madhya Pradesh CM, Nath said in a tweet, "On this day, the order for loan waiver of the farmers of the state was issued. Had the democratically elected Congress government been in power now, the loan of each and every farmer of the state would have been waived by now." Nath assured that the loan of farmers would be waived

if the Congress returns to power in the state. "There is nothing to worry about. As soon as the Congress government is formed next year, this order will be issued again and the loan of each and every farmer brother will be waived," he said in another tweet.

Reacting to Nath's tweets, MP Home Minister Narottam Mishra, termed this announcement as "cheating."

"Not a single farmer got the benefit of farm loan waiver of up to Rs two lakh as stated in order (posted by Nath). This is cheating. This tweet is rubbing salt into the wounds of farmers, who have become defaulters due to this promise," Mishra said.

# In land of Malana cream, 'chitta' is the new fad

60 PER CENT OF DRUG ADDICTS ACTIVE IN THE STATE HAVE TAKEN TO 'CHITTA'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kasaul, Dec 18:** The state, known for widespread illegal cultivation of cannabis and its derivatives - hashish, charas and the very popular Malana cream - is being flooded by 'chitta' and pharmaceutical drugs, quite like its neighbouring state, Punjab.

According to the Himachal Pradesh Police, data analysis of 'Register 29' maintained in all police stations to keep a track of drug peddlers reveal that about 60 per cent of those active in the state have taken to 'chitta'. It has added a new dimension to the drug menace in the state, despite charas.

Data shows that out of a total of 2,307 active drug traffickers or peddlers in the state, 1,836 (80 per cent) are from Himachal, 422 (18 per cent) from other states and 49 (2 per cent) are foreigners.

Chitta consumption has increased manifold in the past five years, also reflected in seizures by the police - which registered a four-fold increase from 3.4 kg in 2017 to 14.9 kg in 2021. The growing market has seen many take to smuggling to afford the pricey drugs costing Rs 4,000 to Rs 6,000 per gram.

Once upon a time, the state drug headache was, for years, limited to illegal cannabis plantations in the Kullu Valley. According to sources, the demand is still high and the illegal business of the



A few pharmaceutical firms were in the recent past caught illegally producing and selling opioids, including 'chitta' in Himachal's Baddi near Solan, India's pharmaceutical hub

drug cartel is still booming.

Himachal's ancient Aryan village of Malana is known all over the world as a haven for those looking for a high in the hills. An oily and aromatic strain of hashish called Malana cream is considered to be the purest form of hashish and is derived by the locals from the cannabis grown illegally in the surrounding Parvati Valley.

The international popularity of the drug still brings thousands of tourists to the village. The economy

of the area has boomed following the explosion of the demand for Malana cream.

Malana cream is not limited to Himachal Pradesh because it is trafficked to other states across the country.

Just a few days ago, Delhi Police's Special Cell arrested a drug trafficker and seized 30 kg Malana cream valued Rs 18 crore from his possession in Alipur in the national capital.

The accused was identified as

Rajesh Kumar (30), a resident of Khanna Khurd near Ludhiana in Punjab.

With the arrest of the drug trafficker, the Special Cell claimed to have unearthed an interstate syndicate involved in smuggling drugs in Delhi and its peripherals. The police had said that the syndicate has sold over 45 kg of Malana cream worth over Rs 28 crore in Delhi-NCR and Uttar Pradesh in the last three months.

With an aim to curb the use of drugs and trafficking, Himachal Pradesh Police recently took to social media with a tongue-in-cheek message warning drug smugglers against indulging in illegal activities unless they were willing to spend nights in the state's 'extremely cold' prison cells.

A few pharmaceutical firms were in the recent past caught illegally producing and selling opioids, including 'chitta' (adulterated heroin) in Himachal's Baddi near Solan, India's pharmaceutical hub.

The police each year launch special drives to destroy cannabis cultivated illegally over hundreds of acres. But what's most worrisome is the increasing number of people, particularly youth, getting hooked on 'chitta'.

An official said addicts from affluent families were turning peddlers to manage their daily 'chitta' doses and chains were being formed by roping in new vulnerable targets.

# None knows how many opted for MBBS in Hindi

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhopal, Dec 18:** The BJP-led government in Madhya Pradesh with much fanfare became the first in the country to introduce an MBBS course in Hindi medium, but two months later it has no information on the number of first-year MBBS students who have opted for Hindi.

problems. Because, it is totally a research-based study and the entire research and books are in English," said a professor, requesting not to be named.

The three textbooks - Biochemistry, Anatomy, and Medical Physiology - that were translated from English to Hindi by three different writers - were released in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah October 16.

The process of translation had begun six months ago by a team of 97 medical doctors. To start with, the medical education department of the state government set up a separate - 'Hindi Prakoshtha' (department) in Gandhi Medical College. The department will continue to function to ensure the implementation of Hindi in MBBS courses, as the same will be introduced in 13 government-run medical colleges in Madhya Pradesh.

Translated books - Biochemistry, Anatomy, and Medical Physiology, as of now are available at only book centers in Bhopal. "Three volumes of each translated book are available and one book will cost around Rs 800 to Rs 900," said Manish Jain, owner of Jain Book Centre to IANS.

Now, the further question arises whether all these translated books would be available for students at the GMC's library, like English books. A professor in GMC said that first year's students would spend around Rs 30,000 to Rs 40,000 on books only.

"MBBS students need to study at least two-three writers' books for one search. They can't rely on just one book, therefore, students get books from the library. As of now, translated books are not available in the college library," said another doctor in Hamidia Hospital, who is also a GMC alumnus.

Replying to this issue, Dr Arvind Roy said, "I believe the state government has definitely planned to provide books in the college library. Things will be clear in the next few days. The college administration will act according to the direction received from the state government. If the system has been introduced with a larger plan, things will improve in that way."



# Vyapam scam inquiry may lead to BJP leaders

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhopal, Dec 18:** The political temperature in Madhya Pradesh is expected to rise over the probe into the Professional Examination Board (Vyapam) scam which is expected to affect many BJP leaders and former ministers.

The Vyapam scam has been in the limelight for the last decade with the death of more than 50 people linked to it and more than 2,000 being jailed.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) along with the Special Task Force (STF) has been probing the matter.

Many leaders associated with the Congress, the BJP and the RSS have come under the scanner in this case. Leaders of both the political parties, along with former minister Lakshmi Kant Sharma and two office-bearers of the RSS have been jailed in the case.

In the complaint given by former Chief Minister and Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh October 6, 2014, the STF had registered a case against eight students enrolled in the medical college.

It took around eight years for the STF to register the case which has raised questions on the timing of the FIRs. Singh, in his com-



plaint said that in the examinations conducted by Vyapam after 2006, people colluded with its officials, MP government ministers and senior BJP leaders to get financial benefits.

He added that the scam was perpetrated with the direct and indirect connivance of the leaders.

Singh's complaint states that possibilities of fraudulent admission existed with some students' residential address being identical, with cases of students passing Classes 10 and 12 from the Uttar Pradesh Board and their MP domicile certificate being doubtful.

Along with this, differences were also observed in the photo affixed

to the exam form and in the one affixed during seat allotment.

The probe revealed that the accused students made imposters sit in the exams of 2008-09 and procured admission in Gandhi Medical College, Bhopal, through the same.

It is being speculated that many BJP leaders and the names of those holding influential posts will also come up in the probe.

Political analysts believe that the complaint registered before the assembly elections to be held in 2024, will be used for political gains.

The content of the FIR has raised apprehensions of its large impact on the state's politics.

# No infighting within Himachal Congress: CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

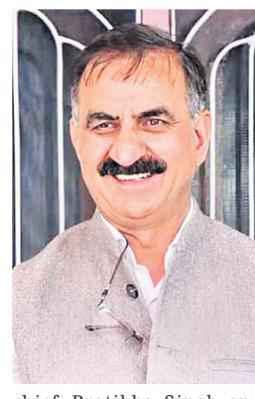
**New Delhi, Dec 18:** There is no infighting within the Himachal Pradesh Congress and the 'conflict' was only for chief minister-ship as there were three-four claimants, newly sworn-in CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has said, adding if something were wrong, there would have been a 'Rajasthan-like situation'.

He asserted that no Congress legislator in the state would defect to the BJP and the party's government was committed to work for the people and would fulfil the promise of restoring the old pension scheme for government employees in the first cabinet meeting.

In an interview with PTI, Sukhu said, "We have spoken to the finance secretary Under a strategy we know from where we have to generate money and where we have to invest. We have done the work on introducing the old pension scheme and we will introduce it in the first cabinet meeting."

Asked about the expansion of his cabinet, he said it will happen soon and denied reports about some MLAs lobbying for ministerial berths.

After the Congress wrested power from the BJP in the hill state winning 40 of the 68 assembly seats, the party picked Sukhu, 58, as its chief minister over some other claimants to the post, including state party



chief Pratibha Singh and Mukesh Agnihotri.

Sukhu, a four-time MLA from Nadaun in Hamirpur district and the son of a bus driver, was sworn in as the chief minister December 11. Agnihotri took oath as the deputy chief minister.

The chief minister dismissed reports about infighting within the Congress state unit, but admitted that there was jockeying for the post of CM.

"Conflict was for post, it's not party conflict. Three-four people were willing to occupy the post of chief minister. You can see till now we have not done the cabinet expansion. If something were wrong, a Rajasthan-like situation would have occurred," he said.

# In a first, Shinku La Pass open for vehicles in winter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Keylong/Shimla, Dec 18:** The 5,091-metre-high Shinku La Pass, which connects Lahaul and Spiti in Himachal Pradesh with Zaskar Valley in Kargil, remained opened for vehicles around this time of the year for the first time, officials said.

The road used to be closed during winters as it was unmetalled and risky for driving, especially in snow-bound patches.

The 17-km road between Ramjak in Lahaul and Kargyak in Zaskar Valley was built by Chultim Chonjo, a retired government employee, using his savings. With a little support from local residents, the road was constructed between May 2014 and June 2017.

Chultim Chonjo was conferred Padma Shri, the fourth-highest civilian award, for social service in 2021.

The road was later taken over by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and today it is a metalled road with a capacity to carry truck load of up to 18 tonnes.

Himachal Road Transport Corporation has started Padam Mini Bus service on the route for the benefit of people in the

## INSPIRING TALE

■ THE 17-KM ROAD BETWEEN RAMJAK IN LAHAUL AND KARGYAK IN ZASKAR VALLEY WAS BUILT BY CHULTIM CHONJO, A RETIRED GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE, USING HIS SAVINGS.

■ CHONJO WAS CONFERRED PADMA SHRI, THE FOURTH-HIGHEST CIVILIAN AWARD, FOR SOCIAL SERVICE IN 2021

■ THE ROAD WAS LATER TAKEN OVER BY THE BORDER ROADS ORGANISATION AND TODAY IT IS A METALLED ROAD WITH A CAPACITY TO CARRY TRUCK LOAD OF UP TO 18 TONNES



Zaskar area.

"All this has happened due to cooperation of BRO and we want that the road remains open around the year," 80-year-old Chultim Chonjo said.

Hailing from a far-off village in Stongde in Zaskar Valley, Chonjo

had for a majority of his life crossed the pass on foot. Having failed in his attempt to persuade the authorities to build the road, he took it upon himself in 2014.

BRO Chief Engineer Jitendra Prasad said efforts would be to keep the road open for vehicular

traffic round the year. "Challenges are there but the morale of our jawans is very high," he added.

The BRO will start the construction of a tunnel connecting Himachal Pradesh with Zaskar Valley in Ladakh by July this year under its 'Project Yojak' and

this tunnel would be completed by 2025.

It will change the economy of Zaskar Valley as, at present, one has to travel 101 km from Manali to Darcha on Leh Road and thereafter, take a turn towards Shinku La Pass to enter Zaskar Valley.



**“**  
The Congress has been applauded, criticised, praised, and reviled. What it means is that we were on the defensive, we were always reacting to what the BJP was saying or what it was doing but through the Bharat Jodo Yatra I think we have succeeded to a very large extent in being able to set the terms of debate and the narrative in the political discourse  
**”**  
JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS LEADER

## 2,000 HEPATITIS C CASES

More than 2,000 people have been reported to be suffering from Hepatitis C in a village in Shamli district in Uttar Pradesh due to contamination in the groundwater



## of the day quote

Rahul Gandhi's love for China and hate for India's Political Party and our Prime Minister has gone far beyond limits. The Indian Armed Forces are guarding the borders of India with valour and courage. The people of India love, respect and support the Armed forces by heart

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

There is no infighting within the Himachal Pradesh Congress and the 'conflict' was only for chief ministership as there were three-four claimants

SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU | HIMACHAL CM

India today has become the flagbearer of inclusive empowerment having crushed the curse of communalism

MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI | FORMER UNION CABINET MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### 3 children injured

**New Delhi:** Three children suffered injuries after they were hit by a speeding car in North Delhi's Roop Nagar on Sunday, said police. The children were standing on the footpath when the car hit them. According to the police, the incident took place at around 9 a.m. The police said that one Gajender (30), a resident of Pratap Nagar was driving his Brezza car. When he reached near the Lilawati school, he lost his control over the vehicle, and rammed into the three children who were standing on the footpath.

### 3 killed, 10 injured

**New Delhi:** At least three people died and ten others were injured after a collision between two buses on the Yamuna Expressway in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida Sunday morning. A senior police officer said they got a PCR call at about 5.30 a.m. about the accident. One bus was going towards Delhi from Uttar Pradesh's Pratapgarh while the second bus was on its way to Anand Vihar Terminal in Delhi from Madhya Pradesh's Shivpuri.

### 3 burglars held

**New Delhi:** Three wanted burglars and a stolen property buyer were held by the Crime Branch of the Delhi Police, officials said Sunday. The burglars were wanted in over a dozen robbery cases. A senior police officer said that the burglars were identified as Jyotish Kumar alias Chhotu, Anil alias Khappach and Manish. Rupesh Chauhan was the buyer of the stolen articles. The police said that on December 5, the accused broke the shutter of a mobile shop and stole all the articles in Outer Delhi's Sultanpuri.

### Swimming club gutted in Kolkata

**Kolkata:** Bhawanipur Swimming Club, the iconic swimming training center in Kolkata, which has traditionally gifted West Bengal with many talented swimmers, and counts Bengali matinee idol Uttam Kumar as one of its former members, was totally gutted by a devastating fire. The fire broke out late Saturday night. Equipment worth lakhs of rupees has been reportedly damaged by the devastating fire. However, there has been no report of casualty so far. Eyewitnesses said that the first spark of fire was witnessed a little after 11 p.m. However, because of the strong wind blowing last night the fire had soon spread.

# Measles surge: Kejriwal attacks Centre over LAC face-off

**New Delhi, Dec 18:** AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal Sunday lashed out at the Narendra Modi government over the recent face-off between Indian and Chinese troops in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh, asking it to show "some courage and respect" for the country's soldiers.



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Addressing the party's National Council meeting, Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal claimed that while Chinese aggression is increasing at the border, the BJP-led Centre says "everything is alright". Instead of "punishing" China, the Modi government is "rewarding" Beijing by allowing high volumes of imports from the country even though many Indian soldiers put their lives on the line while fighting Chinese troops, he charged.

"This is a very important issue which is causing pain to every person in the country for the last few days. For the last few years, China has been carrying out incursions. Soldiers of our country firmly fight with them and even sacrifice

missed their vaccines somehow due to Covid related disruption of the service. Or, they may have not got the vaccine because they were moving - especially the migrants," the ICMR scientist said.

On the question of whether the measles epidemic is returning to India, Bhatnagar said, "I don't think there is any specific issue with the return of measles or any changes in mutation in the viruses." He said that generally, it is a vaccination coverage issue.

Bhatnagar added that in the post-pandemic era, nothing has been in any ecosystem of the virus. "It is not that it has happened because of Covid, it was even present before Covid." The present surge was seen in places where there was poor vaccination coverage, and because of malnutrition especially in urban slum areas, he asserted.

The Union Health Ministry has deputed high-level multi-disciplinary three-member teams to Ranchi (Jharkhand), Ahmedabad (Gujarat), and Malappuram (Kerala) to take stock of the upsurge in measles cases. The teams will also undertake field visits to investigate the outbreak and assist the state Health Departments in terms of public health measures, management guidelines, and protocols to manage the increasing cases. It will coordinate with states to ensure active case searches.

**New Delhi, Dec 18:** The recent spurt in measles cases has emerged as a subject of concern for India, which made remarkable progress in its elimination between 2017 and 2020. Some states - Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kerala, and Jharkhand - last month reported a surge in measles cases. The country has adopted the National Strategic Plan for Achieving and Sustaining Measles and Rubella Elimination and has vaccinated over 324 million children between 2017 and 2020 through the MR (Measles-Rubella) vaccination campaign. And despite the challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic that overburdened health systems, India made remarkable progress in the elimination of MR.

On the recent spurt, Tarun Bhatnagar, Senior Scientist, ICMR, and National Institute of Epidemiology, said, "The measles outbreak has been seen usually in the places where the routine vaccine coverage has been low. Secondly, during the Covid time, the people migrated from one place to other which is also a reason for this surge."

"We have observed that in general, during the last two-three years - during the Covid time, overall there were problems with the vaccination... Some children may have

### Man kills step-daughter

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad, Dec 18:** In a shocking incident, a man in Hyderabad killed his step-daughter as he was angry with her for talking to someone on mobile phone at night.

The incident occurred at Bakaram under the limits of Musheerabad police station on Saturday night. After strangulating Yasmee Unnisa (17) to death, Mohammed Sadiq, an autorickshaw driver, went to the police station and surrendered.

The accused told police that his daughter used to be engaged on mobile phone till late in the night and despite his warnings she did not mend her way. On Saturday night, he scolded her and in a fit of rage, throttled her to death. Yasmee was alone at the house. The victim's mother Raheem Unnisa is said to be employed abroad.



### Don't take Kharge for granted

Congress party's president Mallikarjun Kharge should not be taken for granted. Though Kharge was hand-picked by the Gandhis, he is slowly and gradually establishing his authority. The first sign of his authority came when general secretary Ajay Maken offered to

resign as in-charge of Rajasthan affairs. Without blinking even for a second, Kharge relieved him from the responsibilities. Kharge also picked four advisers of his choice in his core team. If reports are to be believed, he also snubbed AICC's Communications Department head Jairam Ramesh during the first meeting of the 47-member strong Steering Committee. The meeting was being presided over by Kharge when he saw Ramesh was chattering and disturbing the deliberations. Kharge virtually scolded him, sending a clear signal that protocol has to be maintained.

### Sonia picked Sukhu

The Congress win in Himachal Assembly polls has elated Priyanka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

their lives in the line of duty. Yet, for the past few years, we keep hearing about China entering our territory," Kejriwal claimed.

However, the Modi government says "everything is alright and keep rewarding China" by allowing an increase in imports of Chinese goods instead of retaliating, he alleged.

The AAP national convener claimed that in 2020-21 India imported Chinese goods worth USD 65 billion. "Then China again showed a much bigger eye (to India)



Addressing the party's National Council meeting, Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal claimed that while Chinese aggression is increasing at the border, the BJP-led Centre says 'everything is alright'

and the BJP government let the import of Chinese goods further increase to 95 billion dollars next year," Kejriwal claimed. "Don't you have any respect for our soldiers? Is there no value of their lives?.... Show some courage. China will come to know its worth if India stops imports," he added.

Kejriwal appealed to the nation to boycott Chinese products. "They say Chinese products are cheap. We do not want Chinese products even if they are cheap. We are ready to buy made-in-

India products even if it costs us double." He also hit out at the Central government over rising inflation and unemployment, accusing it of having no intention to bring relief to the masses. The AAP national convener claimed that 90 per cent of goods imported from China can be produced in India. "But the BJP-led Centre has created such a situation that high-net-worth people, who could set up industries to make in India and create jobs for the country's youth, are leaving India," he claimed. Over the past five to six years, 12.5 lakh people have left India because the government does not let them work here and send ED and CBI after them, Kejriwal alleged.

## BORDER ROW

# Belagavi to witness action

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, Dec 18:** Starting Monday, for ten days the winter session of the state legislature is set for action in Belagavi, which is the centre of the dispute between Karnataka and Maharashtra.

With the Assembly polls due in April-May next year, this will be the last winter session in the northern Karnataka city for the present Bommai dispensation. Predictably, the BJP government plans to push crucial legislations while the opposition is waiting to corner it on several fronts, including corruption.

The BJP government is moving ahead with its plans to increase the Scheduled Caste reservation from 15 per cent to 17 per cent, and from 3 per cent to 7 per cent for the Scheduled Tribes exceeding the Supreme Court's 50 per cent cap on reservation.

Speaking to the media in Hubballi on Sunday, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said, "The SC/ST Reservation Ordinance Replacement Bill is one among a set of Bills to be introduced in the ses-



sion of the State Legislature at the Suvarna Soudha in Belagavi from tomorrow." In all, six draft laws are slated to be discussed ahead of the approval. While four are new Bills, two had been tabled in the previous session in Bengaluru. Meanwhile, the opposition parties are preparing to corner the government on the corruption issue, voter list data theft scam, the crumbling civic infrastructure in Bengaluru among others. The recent auto rickshaw blast case in Mangaluru is also a major flash-point that is expected to dominate the session proceedings. Especially after Congress state president D.K. Shivakumar alleged that the BJP

government used the incident to divert public outrage from the Bengaluru voters list data scam. The recent flare up of the border issue with Maharashtra, is expected to raise temperatures over the state government's handling of the issue.

Over the past 16 years, Suvarna Vidhana Soudha - the stately edifice - has been the venue of Karnataka's winter session of legislature nine times. Constructed more as a symbol of the state's ownership of the border district which is claimed by Maharashtra, the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha remains idle for the entire year, except for around two weeks when the session convenes for the winter.



Visitors at the 'Chennai Heritage Auto Show 2022', organised by Madras Heritage Motoring Club, in Chennai

PTI PHOTO

## Now, calendars have no takers

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, Dec 18:** After wall clocks, it is now the calendars that are vanishing from the walls.

December used to be a month known for distributing and buying calendars. The business slumped during the pandemic when people avoided getting calendars printed and distributed but this year, people seem to have given up on calendars.

"First the mobile phones took away wall clocks and watches and now it is the calendars. The pandemic slump has weaned people off calendars," says Surendra Kumar, who owns a card and calendar shop in Aminabad.

He explains, "The pandemic has changed the habits of people. People prefer to watch the date and time on their phone and are not inclined to look at wall clocks or calendars. Even this wedding season has been very dull for us because people are not getting invites printed - they are getting them designed and sent on WhatsApp which saves the money and effort."



According to wholesalers, the main reason for this is that business establishments, banks, etc., no longer get tax concessions for calendars and diaries and hence have almost stopped the practice of gifting these to customers.

Ashraf Ali, another wholesaler in the card and calendar market, says that if the trend continues, he and others may have to look for other business options. "We have been selling cards and calendars for almost five decades but the slump that began with the pandemic is continuing and we cannot remain in the business for long," he says.

Most of the bookshops have stopped stocking calendars this year. "Good calendars are expensive and customers do not want to buy them," says a leading bookshop owner.

### Opposition unity a far cry

The BJP lost power in Delhi MCD polls after ruling it for 15 years and came a cropper in Himachal Pradesh. The Opposition parties prevented the BJP a clean sweep in all three states and except for Gujarat where it created history, the BJP has no reason to rejoice. Himachal Pradesh may be a tiny state but results showed that the state did not buck the trend. Himachal Pradesh is known for changing governments every five years for several decades. Yet, the BJP has reasons to be happy as the victory of AAP in Delhi and Congress in Himachal Pradesh would not lead to unity among the Opposition parties.

### An unusual meet

Details of a close-door meeting between Sonia Gandhi and Bihar Chief Minister

Nitish Kumar and RJD leader Lalu Prasad Yadav at 10 Janpath have now surfaced. It emerged that it was not a close-door meeting at all. The meeting did take place after five long years some time ago and was sought by Nitish Kumar. The purpose of this meeting was to break the ice as the JD (U) leader had walked out of RJD-Congress alliance in 2017 to join hands with the BJP. It now transpires that it was Lalu Prasad Yadav who called up Sonia Gandhi to request a meeting at a short notice. Lalu and Nitish came in their respective cars and by the time they reached 10 Janpath, Sonia Gandhi was already out of her room. It transpires that she talked to Lalu and Nitish Kumar for barely 10 minutes. She exchanged pleasantries and was apologetic for not being able to host them properly as the notice was too short.

# international

## of the day quote

Courts will correct any mistakes in an appeal process after Istanbul's opposition mayor was given a jail sentence, and in the meantime, Turks had no right to ignore legal rulings

Solving the Ukrainian crisis through political means is in the best interest of Europe and the common interest of all countries in Eurasia

I came to power with the people's power not because of the establishment

## SHORT TAKES

### 4 killed in Pak terrorist attack

**Peshawar:** At least four Pakistani policemen were killed and as many as injured in the terrorist attack on a newly-constructed police station in the country's volatile Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province Sunday. The Bargai police station in Laki Marwat bordering the south Waziristan tribal district was attacked by terrorists carrying lethal weapons, including hand grenades and rocket launchers, police said. The suspected terrorists fled the scene after a fierce exchange with the police, it said.

### Explosion in Iraq kills 9 policemen

**Irbil:** An explosive device went off in northern Iraq Sunday, killing at least nine members of the Iraqi federal police force who were on patrol, Iraqi security officials said. Among the fatalities was an officer with the rank of major, according to a tweet from a military spokesman, Yahya Rasool. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack in the village of Ali al-Sultan in the Riyadh district of the province of Kirkuk.

### IMF grants \$3bn loan to Egypt

**Cairo:** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said that its executive board had approved a loan to Egypt of about \$3 billion over 46 months. The decision enables an immediate disbursement of about \$347 million to Egypt, "which will help meet the balance of payments need and provide support to the budget", the IMF said in a statement.

# Peru's 'forgotten people' rage against political elite

**Lima, Dec 18:** Leopoldo Huamani, 60, a farmer from Chalhuanca in southern Peru, traveled for three days to reach the capital Lima and march in support of ousted and jailed leader Pedro Castillo, whose fall has sparked deadly protests around the country. Huamani is one of Peru's "forgotten" people, marginalised, rural groups Castillo tried to represent - often falling short - whose anger has been fired up by his arrest, threatening to derail a fragile new government and a reviled Congress. In the South American nation, voter anger has long bubbled close to the surface over years of tumultuous politics that has seen six presidents in five years. Most former leaders have been jailed or investigated for corruption. The situation has exploded in the last two weeks. Protesters have blocked highways, set buildings on fire and taken over airports in the wake of Castillo's December 7

# NK launches ballistic missiles

This year, the North has fired more than 60 ballistic missiles, marking a single-year record

**Seoul, Dec 18:** North Korea test-fired a pair of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles with a range of striking Japan Sunday, in a possible protest of Tokyo's adoption of a new security strategy to push for more offensive footing against North Korea and China. The launches also came two days after the North claimed to have performed a key test needed to build a more mobile, powerful intercontinental ballistic missile designed to strike the US mainland. The two missiles travelled from the country's northwest Tongchangri area about 500 kilometers (310 miles) at a maximum altitude of 550 kilometers (340 miles) before landing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, according to the South Korean and Japanese governments.

South Korea's military said both missiles were launched at a steep angle, suggesting the weapon could have travelled farther if fired at a standard trajectory. North Korea usually tests medium- and longer-range missiles at a high angle to avoid neighbouring countries, though it fired an intermediate-range missile over Japan in October, forcing Tokyo to issue evacuation alerts and halt trains. In an emergency meeting, top South Korean security officials deplored North Korea's continued provocations that they said came despite "the plight of its citizens moaning in hunger and cold due to



a serious food shortage." They said South Korea will boost a trilateral security cooperation with the US and Japan, according to South Korea's presidential office. Japanese Vice Defense Minister Toshiro Ino separately criticized North Korea for threatening the safety of Japan, the region and the international community. The US Indo-Pacific Command said the launches highlight the destabilising impact of North Korea's unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. It said the US commitments to the defense of South Korea and Japan "remain ironclad."

Kwon Yong Soo, a former professor at Korea National Defense University in South Korea, said North Korea likely tested its Pukguksong-2 missile, a solid-fueled, land-based variant of its Pukguksong family of missiles that can be fired from submarines. Kwon said that flight details of the weapons tested Sunday were similar to those of the Pukguksong-2's two known tests in 2017. Kwon said the Pukguksong-2 can fly about 1,200-2,000 kilometers (745-1,240 miles) if it's launched at a normal trajectory, a range enough to strike key facilities in Japan, including U.S. Military installations there. "North Korea staged an armed protest with a land version of a submarine-launched ballistic missile that it can

fire quickly in response" to the Japanese national security strategy, Kwon said. Some observers say North Korea might have tested a newly developed medium-range missile that can still reach Japan. On Friday, the Japanese government adopted a national security strategy that would allow it to carry out preemptive strikes and fire powerful cruise missiles to give itself more offensive footing against threats from neighboring China and North Korea. That was a major break from its strictly self-defense-only postwar principle. The Japanese strategy names China as "the biggest strategic challenge" — before North Korea and Russia — to Japan's efforts to ensure peace, safety and stability for itself and the international community. Sunday's launch is the North's first public weapons test since it launched last month its developmental, longest-range liquid-fueled Hwasong-17 ICBM capable of reaching the entire US homeland. Earlier this year, North Korea test-launched a variety of other missiles at a record pace. North Korea has defended its weapons testing as self-defense measures to cope with the expanded US-South Korea military drills that it views as an invasion rehearsal. But some experts say North Korea likely used its rivals' military training as an excuse to enlarge its arsenal and increase leverage in future negotiations with the US to win sanctions relief and other concessions.

# Nepal Prez calls political parties to form new govt within 7 days

The President's call comes following the submission of a report by the Election Commission of the final results of the election of members of the House of Representatives (HoR) and Provincial Assembly held November 20

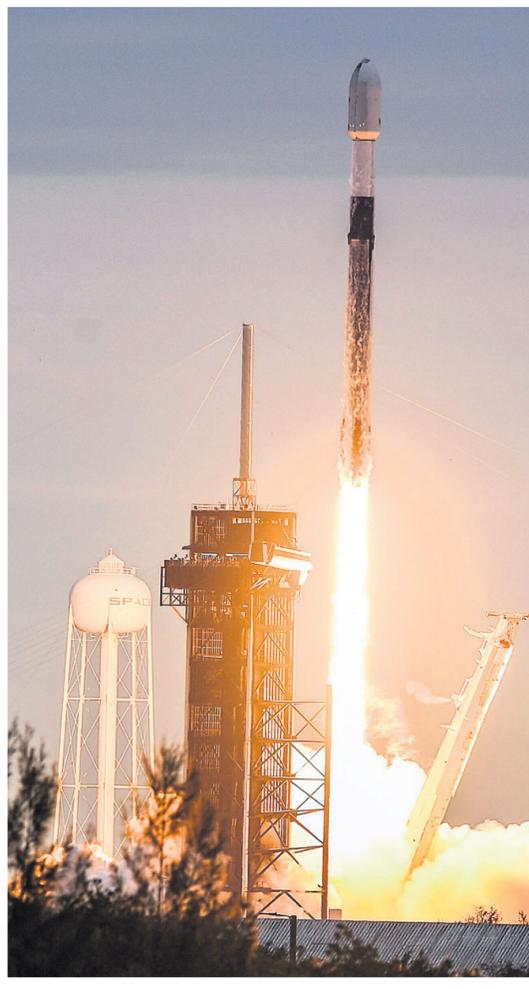
**Kathmandu, Dec 18:** President Bidya Devi Bhandari Sunday called on all the political parties of Nepal to form a new government within seven days, as Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba discussed power sharing deal with the coalition partner Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'.

As no single party got a majority in the HoR election, the President has called for submitting a claim by a member of the HoR who can garner a majority with support from two or more parties, as stipulated in the Article 76 clause 2 of the Constitution. The deadline for submission of the claim is 5 pm December 25, according to a statement issued by the Office of the President. No party in the 275-member House of Representatives has 138 seats required to form a government.

The Nepali Congress (NC) led by Deuba emerged as the single largest party in the election with 89 seats followed by opposition CPN-UML with 78 seats and CPN-Maoist Centre led by Prachanda secured



32 seats. The newly-formed Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) has 20 seats, Rastriya Prajatantra Party 14, Janata Samajwadi Party (JSP) 12 and Janamat Party six seats. CPN (Unified Socialist) has 10 seats, Loktantrik Samajwadi Party (LSP) has four; and Nagarik Unmukti Party has three seats. Rastriya Janamorchha and Nepal Workers and Peasants Party have one seat each. There are five independent members in the Lower House. The Nepali Congress along with the other ruling alliances has the combined strength of 136 seats, two seats short of forming the majority government. The President's call to form the new government comes at a time when political parties have engaged themselves in hectic consultations. Prime Minister Deuba met Prachanda at the PM's official residence Baluwatar Saturday and discussed formation of the new government and power sharing among others, according to party sources. According to a report in the Kathmandu Post newspaper, Nepali Congress spokesperson Prakash Sharan Mahat said Prachanda in his meeting with Deuba has formally sought his support to become prime minister in the first half of the five-year term. While forging an electoral alliance ahead of the November 20 polls, Deuba and Prachanda had reportedly struck a 'gentleman's agreement' on leading the government by turns. Asked if Prachanda sought Deuba's support to become the new prime minister, CPN-MC leader Narayan Kaji Shrestha said he asked Deuba how he wanted to proceed, to which he replied all coalition partners should decide within their respective outfits, the Himalayan Times newspaper reported.



A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket lifts off from Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The rocket is carrying 54 Starlink satellites

# Sunak uses troops to tackle Xmas strikes

London, Dec 18: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak Sunday hit out at trade unions for causing misery for millions with "particularly cruelly timed" strikes over the Christmas holiday period as the government announced plans to use around 1,200 troops to cover for striking workers to keep key services going.

There is a wave of winter strikes planned over the course of the next few weeks, including railway workers, healthcare workers, and border security staff, who are all demanding better pay and working conditions. Writing in "The Sun on Sunday", Sunak said the workers have been offered "deals that are fair and affordable" and accused the unions of unleashing a "class war". "The unions are causing misery for millions, with transport strikes in particular cruelly timed to hit at Christmas," writes Sunak. "Rail workers and border officers have been offered deals that are fair — and affordable to taxpayers. An increasing number of union members want a deal. They are tired of being foot soldiers in [Railway RMT Union chief] Mick Lynch's class war," he said.

The government has repeatedly warned that giving in to union demands for massive pay rises will kick Britain into an "inflation spiral", which in turn would hit the poorest the hardest. "Even [Opposition] Labour have admitted the unions' demands are unaffordable. But they'll still take union money and undermine the interests of the travelling public. Labour back the Grinch who want to steal Christmas for their own political ends. We are doing everything we can to ensure people get the Christmas they deserve," said Sunak.



# 'Heating restored in freezing Kyiv'

**Kyiv, Dec 18:** Heating has been fully restored to Kyiv after the latest Russian bombardment that targeted water and power infrastructure, the capital's Mayor Vitali Klitschko said Sunday. "The city is restoring all services after the latest shelling," Klitschko said on the Telegram messaging app. "In particular, the capital's heat supply system was fully restored. All sources of heat supply work normally," Ukrainian officials said Russia fired more than 70 missiles on Friday in one of its heaviest barrages since the Kremlin's February 24 invasion, forcing emergency blackouts nationwide and cutting access to heat and water. Temperatures in Kyiv and many places across Ukraine were below freezing on Sunday morning, with forecasts expecting them to dip to minus 6 degrees Celsius (21.2 °F) in the capital by the evening.

# Russian shelling targets heart of city of Kherson

**R**ussian military forces Sunday shelled the centre of Kherson, the major city that Russian soldiers retreated from last month in one of Moscow's biggest battlefield setbacks in Ukraine. Three people were wounded in the attacks, said presidential deputy chief of staff Kyrylo Tymoshenko. The southern city and its surrounding region have come under frequent attack since the Russian pullback. Kyiv is by far the largest city in Ukraine with an estimated population of about 3 million, with up to two million more in the Kyiv region. As of late Saturday, a third of the city remained without power. Sergei Kovalenko, chief executive of YASNO, which provides electricity for Kyiv said late on Saturday that access to power has been increasing with each hour.



Demonstrators carry a sign reading "Closure of the coup Congress," amid violent protests following the ousting and arrest of former President Pedro Castillo, in Ayacucho, Peru

with the status quo and what they saw as a corrupt Lima-based political elite. "I was chosen by the forgotten men and women of deep Peru, by the dispossessed who have been neglected for over 200 years," Castillo said in a handwritten letter from jail. He is serving 18 months of pretrial detention while being investigated for alleged crimes of rebellion and conspiracy, which he denies.

He thanked his supporters for coming out on to the streets and accused the military and police of conducting what he called "massacres". A political rookie, he had won support with pledges to reform the constitution, redistribute huge copper riches and empower marginalized indigenous groups. On many of these promises he failed, his star waning before his ouster. He and his associates faced a spate of corruption probes and he went through five Cabinets and over 80 ministers in just 17 months. But his arrest has erased some of the disappointment. Hundreds of people from Peru's Amazonian jungle, mountain and rural regions

Protesters have blocked highways, set buildings on fire and taken over airports in the wake of Pedro Castillo's ouster, hours after he illegally tried to shutter Congress to avoid an impeachment vote he feared losing

have flocked to Lima in his support, including to the jail where he is being held. Castillo, who ran for the socialist Peru Libre party but later shifted towards the right, faced a hostile and fragmented legislature, where the conservative party of the candidate he narrowly defeated held the largest single bloc. He was impeached three times, the final time being voted out of office by a large majority after his attempt to dissolve Congress sparked resignations by ministers and accusations of a coup by former allies and constitutional officials. Most Peruvians, however, still blame the country's political woes on Congress. Seen as corrupt and self-serving, the parliament has an approval rating of only 11%, according to pollster Datum. Castillo's had been 24% before his removal. In a recent poll some 44% of Peruvians said they supported Castillo's attempt to dissolve the legislature, even though he tried to do it outside constitutional bounds.

# business

## of the day quote

The Budget should provide a mechanism for waiver of electricity duty for the units that are exporting more than 50 per cent of their production.

**SK SARAF** | CHAIRMAN, THE BOMBAY TEXTILE RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

Increase in price always has a certain negative impact on sales. But we still do not know how much the prices will go up and what will happen to input cost and foreign exchange

**RC BHARGAVA** | CHAIRMAN, MARUTI SUZUKI INDIA

We are aggressively focusing on the marketing campaigns in order to increase brand loyalty. Till September 2022, we have clocked around Rs 1,200 crore and expect close to Rs 2,400 crore

**ARNAV KISHORE** | FOUNDER & CEO, FIRE-BOLT

## SHORT TAKES

### Mcap of 9 of top-10 valued firms erode

**New Delhi:** Nine of the top-10 most valued firms faced a combined erosion of Rs 1,22,092.9 crore in market valuation last week amid weak trend in equities, with Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest laggard. Last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark declined 843.86 points or 1.36 per cent. Barring HDFC Bank, rest nine companies, including Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, ICICI Bank and Hindustan Unilever, witnessed decline in their market valuation. The valuation of Reliance Industries tanked Rs 29,767.66 crore to Rs 17,35,405.81 crore. Reliance Industries remained the most valued domestic firm followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, ICICI Bank, Hindustan Unilever, State Bank of India, HDFC, Bharti Airtel and Adani Enterprises.

### YouTube restricts Pornhub's channel

**San Francisco:** Video-sharing platform YouTube has banned the adult website Pornhub's channel due to multiple community guidelines violations. According to Google, Pornhub's account violated YouTube's external link policy, which forbids users from linking to content that is not allowed on the platform such as pornography, reports The Verge. "Upon review, we terminated the channel Pornhub Official following multiple violations of our Community Guidelines," YouTube spokesperson Jack Malon told The Verge. The adult website "vehemently denies" charges that it posted or linked to pornographic content.

### Microfinance loans up 11% in Q2 FY23

**New Delhi:** Microfinance loans in the country grew by nearly 11 per cent to Rs 71,916 crore during the second quarter of the current fiscal, industry data showed. Microfinance loans worth Rs 64,899 crore were disbursed during the same period a year ago. In terms of volume, a total of 1.81 crore loans were disbursed during Q2 FY2022-23, as against 1.85 crore loans in Q2 FY2021-22, as per the latest report by Microfinance Institutions Network (MFIN). According to the report, the country's microfinance loan portfolio stood at over Rs 3 lakh crore at end-September 2022, serving 6.2 crore unique borrowers with 12 crore loan accounts. Of the total micro loans outstanding, the largest share of 37.7 per cent is held by 13 banks, amounting to Rs 1,13,565 crore.



**Petrochemical market size is currently in India about \$190 billion, whereas the per capita consumption of petrochemical segments is significantly lower, compared to that in developed economies**

**HARDEEP SINGH PURI** | OIL MINISTER

## COSTLIEST TEA SOLD AT AUCTION

A special tea named 'Manohari tea' in Assam's Dibrugarh district has been sold for Rs 1.15 lakh per kg at a private auction, officials said. The proprietor of the tea estate, Rajan Lohia said that 'Manohari Gold Tea' fetched the price at an auction on the private portal 'Tea Intech'. "It is the highest price fetched for tea at such auctions anywhere," he said



## TWITTER CHAOS

# Escape intellectual assassination, shift to Koo: CEO

*Koo, which allows users to express views in Indian languages, has already crossed 50 million downloads and is now flying into the rival's nest*

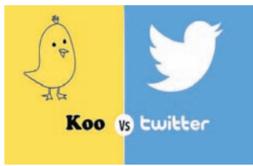
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 18:** Koo -- the Made-in-India rival of Twitter -- has offered to migrate all historic tweets of any Twitter user willing to shift to its platform that will continue to not charge users for verification badge, its co-founder and CEO Aprameya Radhakrishna said.

Since taking over Twitter in a \$44 billion deal in October, Elon Musk has sacked its employees, overhauled its moderation policies, put a price for account verification, and restored previously banned accounts including that of former US President Donald Trump.

In recent days, he suspended the accounts of several prominent journalists without warning who had been covering him, but had to reinstate the accounts following strong criticism from government officials, journalist organisations, and advocacy groups.

Koo has started a campaign to woo Twitter users, offering self-verification and a free-of-cost-vel-



low verification tag for eminent persons. And now, it has offered to migrate any tweet, excluding replies, likes or resharing of someone else's tweet, to Koo to escape "intellectual assassination" resulting from Twitter account suspension, he said.

The debacle of suspension of accounts of several prominent journalists, including reporters

**A lot has happened in the 45 odd days since the world's town square became one man's megaphone. Twitter is now a personal property of the world's smartest and richest man**

**APRAMEYA RADHAKRISHNA** | CO-FOUNDER & CEO, KOO

from The New York Times, CNN, and The Washington Post, and the subsequent reinstatement, brings sharp focus on a very important point especially for journalists and creative folks, he said.

"If you are someone who speaks

their mind and engages with others in discussion and debate - a suspension essentially means that you lose access to years of creativity, ideas, connections and insights," he said.

And all this because a new rule came in yesterday and no one understands it fully. "There is just a blank screen to show for all the intellectual hard work of several years," he said.

Radhakrishna said Koo has devised a simple and elegant solution to escape this "blackhole". "Just migrate to Koo! Within the settings, a simple and elegant button allows you to migrate all your Tweets to Koo."

## 17% of total 756 projects delayed by over 5 years

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 18:** As many as 132 out of the 756 delayed projects or 17.4 per cent projects are running behind schedule by five years and more.

Delay in land acquisition and forest clearances, lack of infrastructure support and linkages, delay in tie-up for project financing and lack of infrastructure support and linkages are some of the other reasons for these projects running behind schedule.

Out of the 756 delayed projects, 144 have overall delays in the range of one to 12 months, 117 have been delayed for 13 to 24 months, 363 projects for 25-60 months and 132 projects have been delayed for 61 months and above.

Apart from this, as many as 364 infrastructure projects, each worth Rs 150 crore and above, have been hit by cost overruns of more than Rs 4.52 lakh crore, according to official data of the ministry of statistics and programme implementation, released for the month of November 2022.

It further stated that out of 1,476 projects, 364 reported cost overruns and as many as 756 projects were delayed.

## FPIs invest ₹10,555cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 18:** After investing over Rs 36,200 crore last month, foreign investors continued their positive momentum and have injected a net Rs 10,555 crore in Indian equities so far in December amid stabilisation in oil prices and moderating US inflation.

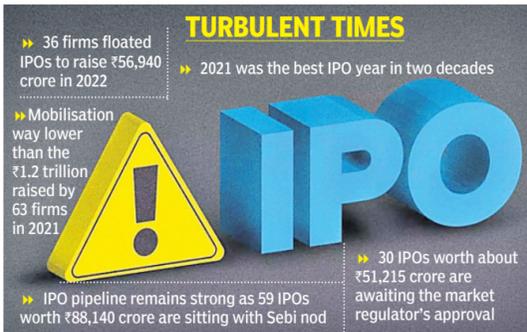
According to data with the depositories, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) invested a net sum of Rs 10,555 crore in equities during December 1-16.

This comes following a net investment of over Rs 36,200 crore in entire November, primarily due to weakening of the US dollar index and positivity about overall macro-economic trends.

## QUIETER NEW YEAR

# IPOs in 2022: Fund mobilisation halves

*Investors remained jittery throughout 2022 on recessionary fears and rising interest rates amid soaring inflation*



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 18:** Meltdown in shares of Dalal Street debutants and volatility triggered by geopolitical tensions soured the sentiments for the primary markets, with fund mobilisation through IPOs halving to nearly Rs 57,000 crore in 2022 and the New Year is expected to be even quieter.

The overall collection would have been much lower had it not been for the Rs 20,557-crore LIC public offer, which constitutes as much as 35 per cent of the total amount raised during the year.

"The year 2023 will be tough, with growth slowing down globally, we are bound to see some repercussions in India. I expect a slower or quieter market in 2023, and I suspect money garnered through IPOs next year will be lower than or on the same level as 2022," said Nikhil Kamath, co-founder of True Beacon and Zerodha.

According to data provided by Prime Database, as many as 36 companies have floated their initial public offerings (IPOs) to raise Rs 56,940 crore in 2022 (till December 16). This figure would increase as the initial share sales of two firms -- KFin Technologies and Elin Electronics -- are set to kick-off next week to cumulatively raise Rs 1,975 crore.

Apart from IPOs, there was one follow-on public offer by Ruchi Soya, which mopped up Rs 4,300 crore.

The war between Russia and

Ukraine in February turned the environment bleak for investors, making the stock markets worldwide, including in India, nervous. To add to the misery, central banks across the globe raised interest rates to restrict the soaring inflation. This led to the squeezing of liquidity, which in turn disturbed the sentiment of the primary market, affecting the pricing of stocks and discouraging companies from opting for listing.

While the LIC issue was the largest ever in the country at Rs 20,557 crore, this was followed by Delhivery (Rs 5,235 crore), Adani Wilmar (Rs 3,600 crore), Vedant Fashion (Rs 3,149 crore) and Global Health (Rs 2,205 crore).

Barring LIC and Delhivery, the big size issues were missing in 2022, with an average ticket size of less than Rs 1,000 crore as the weak performance of secondary as well as primary markets reduced the appetite for large offers.

The overall market response to issues moderated with only 14 IPOs receiving a mega response of over 10 times. Harsha Engineers International was the top performer with a subscription of close to 75 times, followed by Electronics Mart India (around 72 times) and DCX Systems (almost 70 times).

Technology firms, particularly profitable ones, consumer, banking and financial, select manufacturing and infrastructure companies will largely raise funds through IPOs next year.

# Direct tax records 26% growth

BUDGET HAD ESTIMATED TAX COLLECTION OF ₹14.20 LAKH CRORE THIS FY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 18:** The gross direct tax collections have grown 26 per cent to over Rs 13.63 lakh crore so far this fiscal, aided by TDS deductions and healthy corporate advance tax mop-up, as per an official statement.

After adjusting for refunds, the net direct tax collection so far this fiscal stands at Rs 11.35 lakh crore, which is about 80 per cent of the full-year gross Budget target.

Tax on corporate and individual income makes up for direct taxes.

Refunds worth about Rs 2.28 lakh crore have been issued till December 17, 2022, a growth of 68 per cent over the year-ago period.

The gross collection of Rs 13,63,649 crore includes Corporation Tax (CIT) at Rs 7.25 lakh crore and Personal Income Tax (PIT) including Securities Transaction Tax (STT) at Rs 6.35 lakh crore, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said in a statement.

The robust tax mop-up shows the economy rebounded from pandemic lows with rise in earnings of both companies and individuals.

The mop-up includes advance tax collection of Rs 5.21 lakh crore, Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) of Rs



6.44 lakh crore, and self-assessment tax of Rs 1.40 lakh crore.

The advance tax collection for the first, second and third quarters of the current fiscal at Rs 5.21 lakh crore showed a growth of 12.83 per cent. This includes CIT at Rs 3.97 lakh crore and PIT at Rs 1.23 lakh crore.

As per the CBDT statement, so far this fiscal, the net collections from income and corporate taxes are at Rs 11.35 lakh crore, 19.81 per cent higher than the Rs 9,47,959 crore collected in the corresponding period of the preceding fi-

nancial year (2021-22).

This includes Rs 6.06 lakh crore and Rs 5.26 lakh crore of CIT and PIT collections, respectively.

The CBDT further said there has been a remarkable increase in the speed of processing of income tax returns filed during the current fiscal, with almost 96.5 per cent of the duly verified ITRs having been processed till December 17.

"This has resulted in faster issue of refunds with almost a 109 per cent increase in the number of refunds issued in the current financial year," it said.

# 58% of Indians cut 'Make in China' buys: Survey

*The survey came as the trade deficit between India and China is widening. It touched \$51.5 billion during April-October so far this fiscal as against \$73.31 billion during 2021-22 fiscal year and \$44.03 billion in 2020-21*

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 18:** About 58 per cent of Indians have reduced their 'Make in China' purchases due to the current geo-political situation while 26 per cent said they found Indian alternatives to be better in price and quality when it comes to fashion, apparel, vehicle accessories and gadgets categories, a new survey has shown.



About 59 per cent of Indians surveyed said they do not have any Chinese app on their phone while 29 per cent still have one or more, according to data compiled by social community engagement platform LocalCircles. The survey received over 40,000 responses from consumers located in 319 districts.

According to it, 28 per cent found "Indian alternative was better in price-quality combination as also

customer service, 11 per cent opted for better quality Indian products, 8 per cent preferred an alternative foreign product due to a combination of factors including better price, quality and customer service".

In addition, 8 per cent stated that their choice was determined by the fact that they "didn't find many 'Make in China' products in the markets, stores or online". Around 35 per cent shared gad-

gets and electronic goods and accessories as the top category of Chinese products they bought in the last 12 months, followed by 14 per cent indicating festive celebration articles like lightings, lamps, etc.

With health concerns over quality of paints and other material used, Chinese toys and stationery were purchased by only 5 per cent, as well as Chinese gifts finding favour with only 5 per cent respondents and their families.

As against 11 per cent admitting to buying Chinese fashion products in 2021, the 2022 survey found only 3 per cent are buying 'Make in China' bags, apparels, accessories, etc.

"In summary, the current geo-political equation between the two countries -- the Galwan valley clash in June 2020 and the faceoff a few days ago along 'Line of Control' in Arunachal Pradesh -- is likely to lead to more Indians staying away from 'Make in China' products," said the survey.

# Important points to know about long-term health insurance

**T**oday, it is a well-established fact that having comprehensive health insurance is an absolute necessity. Like any other insurance plan, health insurance too requires timely renewal to keep the policy active and reap its benefits. While many people buy annual health insurance coverage, which requires a yearly renewal, multi-year health insurance plans are also becoming increasingly popular of late. Listed below are the points to understand what a multi-year policy is all about.

**What is multi-year or long-term health insurance?** As the name suggests, a multi-year policy offers coverage to the insured for more than one year or for multiple years. Usually, the multi-year health insurance policy shields the insured for two to three years, unlike the annual policy where the coverage is valid for only one year. The insured can pay the premium for the entire period of two or three years at the onset and enjoy the perks of the cover. Let us look at the advantages of these plans.

**Enjoy discounts on premium by opting for a multi-year policy:** Insurers offer lu-

crative discounts on a long-term plan, the discount rates vary from insurer to insurer and usually ranges around 5% to more than 10%. This leads to substantial savings for the insured, particularly in case of higher premiums. A quick cost-benefit analysis will show you that long-term plans are more pocket-friendly than annual plans.

**Shield from the premium hike:** Insurers revise the price of their health insurance products every few years, to keep up with the soaring inflation and increased cost of medical expenses. However, when one opts for a two or three years policy, their premium gets locked during the onset of the policy, and it remains fixed for the entire term of the contract. Such policies hence shield the insured from any premium fluctuations for a considerable period.

**Protection in distress times:** If the insured has any health episode which needs more resources, they may miss on the health insurance premium in such critical time which is most required then. A multi-year premium gives that extra protection for seamless renewal.

**Saves the hassle of yearly renewal:**

Since the annual policies necessitate a yearly renewal to keep the policy effective, one has to renew the contract each year. A long-term plan saves the insured from this yearly exercise; it is only every two or three years that the insured has to renew the contract. This not only saves time and energy but also brings immense peace of mind.

Apart from the advantages that a long-term plan offers, you must be aware of a few key points pertaining to these policies.

**Proportionate Tax Benefits:** Like the annual health insurance plan, multi-year plans also offer tax exemption under Section 80D of the Income Tax Act, 1961. However, the tax exemption will be spread proportionately over the tenure of the plan. To give an example, suppose the premium for a three-year policy is Rs 30,000, the tax exemption will be available for each year (in this case three years) and will be spread across the period. You need not burden yourself with these computations, the insurers do give the 80D certificate which explicitly states the amount that the insured can claim year on year for tax exemption.

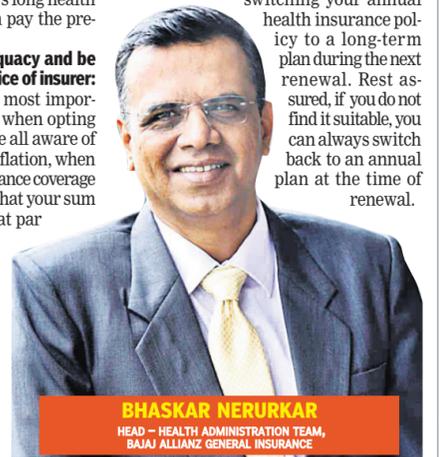
**EMI Availability:** As is the case with the

annual health insurance plans, the EMI payment option is available for multi-year plans as well. This frees the insured from the worry of arranging the premium amount of two or three years long health coverage in one go. You can pay the premium in easy instalments.

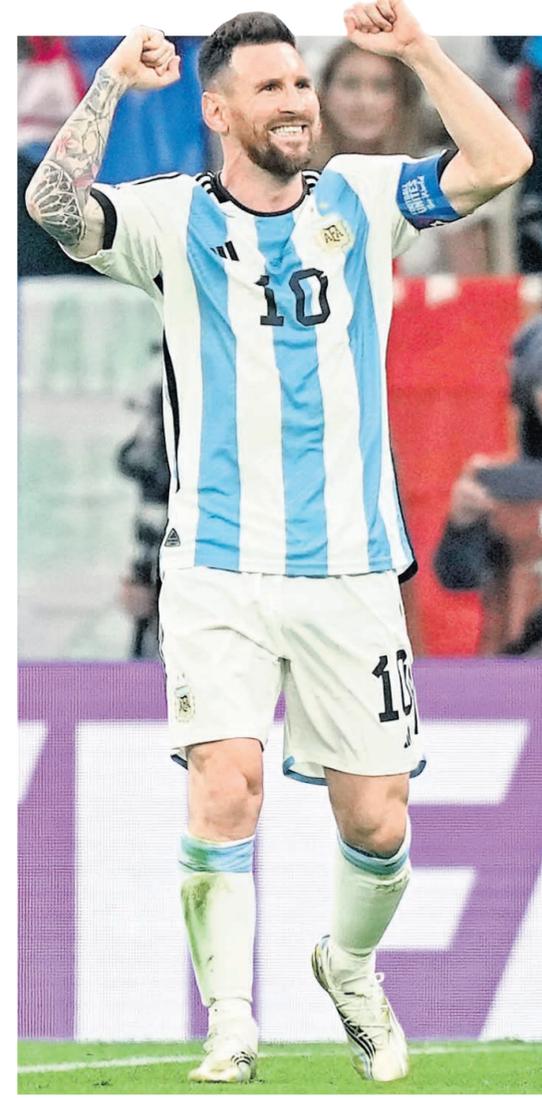
**Look at sum insured adequacy and be extra cautious with your choice of insurer:** This is probably one of the most important points to keep in mind when opting for a multi-year plan. We are all aware of the sky-rocketing medical inflation, when you are choosing health insurance coverage for three long years, ensure that your sum insured is adequate and is at par with the rising medical cost.

It is also important to be diligent about the insurer you are choosing since you won't be able to port your policy to a different insurer until the policy term. Choose an insurer that is known for its claim settlement capabilities and customer services. Multi-year health insur-

ance plans bring immense ease and are pocket friendly in the longer run, and now that you have a better understanding of such policies, you may want to try switching your annual health insurance policy to a long-term plan during the next renewal. Rest assured, if you do not find it suitable, you can always switch back to an annual plan at the time of renewal.



**BHASKAR NERURKAR**  
HEAD - HEALTH ADMINISTRATION TEAM,  
BAJAJ ALLIANZ GENERAL INSURANCE



# Football World in Messi's Cup

ARGENTINA WIN WORLD CUP FOR 3RD TIME BEATING FRANCE IN THE SHOOTOUT, DESPITE KYLIAN MBAPPE'S HAT-TRICK

AGENCIES

Lusail (Qatar), Dec 18: Finally Leander Paes would be happy. India's tennis legend has always admired Lionel Messi and he was in the gallery here to witness the football legend's final homecoming of glory. The one trophy that Messi always wanted, the one trophy that prevented him from being placed on the same pedestal with Diego Maradona, finally is his. In a pulsating final played here Sunday, Argentina finally exorcised the ghosts that have prevented them from winning the World Cup for 36 years. Finally, Messi and his teammates will be able to hold the trophy that they so desperately wanted to.

Stories usually do not have such an ending. Argentina started the World Cup with a shocking loss to Saudi Arabia. They lost a two-goal advantage against the Netherlands, but progressed on the back of penalties. It was a repeat act Sunday also. For a while it seemed that Kylian Mbappe would spoil Messi's party. But then the football gods had destined otherwise. Yes, Mbappe would have his chance again, but not Messi, who had announced earlier that this would be his last World Cup.

Messi scored three goals including the penalty in the shootout and one from the spot in regulation time. The 2nd one gave Argentina the lead in extra time. Each time Mbappe, spoiled Messi's party with



Emi Martinez celebrates after saving a shot from France's Kingsley Coman

a hat-trick that probably can easily be taken as a sign of 'greatness in the making'. It was the first hat-trick in a World Cup final in 56 years.

If Messi was Argentina's miracle man, Emi Martinez was the saviour. Like he did against the Netherlands, the tall Argentina shot-stopper danced his way into history saving two shots in the shootout. While Argentina converted all the four of

their shots in the shootout, Martinez saved two from France and helped Argentina win the World Cup for the third time after 1978 and 1986. He must have had the blessings of 'Hand of God' looking from somewhere up in the heaven.

Finally Messi's once-in-a-generation career is complete. The Argentina superstar is finally a World Cup champion.

Now there's no debate. Messi is

SHARP SHOOTERS		
Kylian Mbappe	France	8 goals
Lionel Messi	Argentina	7 goals
Julián Álvarez	Argentina	4 goals
Olivier Giroud	France	4 goals
Goncalo Ramos	Portugal	3 goals



Kylian Mbappe's hat-trick was not enough to save France from defeat

definitively in the pantheon of soccer's greatest ever players, alongside Pelé – a record three-time World Cup champion from Brazil – and Maradona, the late Argentina great with whom Messi was so often compared.

Messi put Argentina ahead from the penalty spot and played a part in Angel Di Maria's goal that made it 2-0 after 36 minutes. Mbappe scored two goals in a 97-second

span to take the game to extra time, and then Messi tapped in his second goal in the 109th minute. But there was still time for another penalty from Mbappe to take the thrilling game to a shootout.

Gonzalo Montiel scored the clinching penalty kick after Kingsley Coman had an attempt saved by Emi Martinez and Aurelien Tchouameni missed for France.

## Andy donates year's earnings to Ukraine

London: Former World No. 1 Andy Murray has informed that as promised he has donated all his season's prize money worth USD 6,30,000 as humanitarian relief to war-ravaged Ukraine. Three-time Major winner Murray decided in February that his on-court earnings in 2022 would be donated to UNICEF projects in Ukraine following the Russian invasion. The 35-year-old has been named recipient of the 'Arthur Ashe Humanitarian Award' in recognition of his gesture. "When Russia invaded Ukraine everyone was very worried about what it would mean. When all the images on the news showing what was happening to families began pouring in, it was devastating," Murray wrote in an essay posted on 'atptour.com'. "I wasn't sure what I could do to help, so I decided to donate my year's earnings. This is the only way I thought, I could do something for the people of Ukraine," he added.

## La Albiceleste have their Messi-ah finally



MOMENT FOR POSTERITY: Argentina footballers are over the moon after their victory in the FIFA World Cup final Sunday

AGENCIES

Lusail, Dec 18: In a sport that produces superstars every year, what does it take to get immortalised as one of the greats for posterity? The answer could be very simple and yet quite complicated. In today's day and age, when every move and tackle made, every pass completed and every goal scored makes it to the handsets of millions of football fans within seconds, it sure could be easy to become popular in the world's most popular sport.

Over the years, there have been several stars who have produced greatness on the greens, from Alfredo de Stefano to Johan Cryuff, Ferenc Puskas to Lev Yashin, Zico to Mitchel Platini, there are a plethora of names that one can recount. But when it comes to the list of the greatest of them all, they are all dwarfed by two names, Brazil's Pele and

Argentina's Diego Maradona. This is because apart from the exemplary skills and achievements that the two could boast of, leading their respective countries to the World Cup title ensured that their names have been written in the annals of football history in golden letters.

Another name joined that rare and elite list of all, who else but Lionel Messi. Not that his silken dribbling skills, innumerable goals at club and international level were not enough to earn him a legendary status, but a World Cup win was just the stamp that he needed to become an all-time great. Messi and his great rival Cristiano Ronaldo have now bedazzled football loving masses for close to two decades now and whenever the 'GOAT' debate was raised for either, the only contention was the lack of a global trophy.

Not any more though. Argentina's Messi-ah has finally arrived.

## Spinners fashion massive victory

INDIA KEEP QUALIFICATION HOPES OF WTC FINAL ALIVE WITH CONVINCING WIN OVER BANGLADESH

AGENCIES

Chattogram, Dec 18: Wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav registered his career-best figures (8/113) as India quickly wrapped up Bangladesh's second innings for a comprehensive 188-run win in the opening Test, here Sunday. Needing four wickets to pocket the win, India finished the job in 11.2 overs, bowling the hosts out for 324 after they resumed at their overnight score of 276 for six.

Left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep (3/73) scalped two of the remaining four batters while Mohammed Siraj (1/67) and Axar Patel (4/77) took one wicket each.

Kuldeep had also taken five wickets in the first innings. "I love bowling with Kookaburra balls, it gives me better grip and control, compared to the SG ball," said Kuldeep after the win.

"If I were not playing cricket, it would have been very challenging but I have played a lot of white ball matches. I have played IPL and with red ball India A matches, so I had my rhythm. Hence I could bowl with an aggressive approach and it paid off," he added.

With this win, India have climbed to the third place in the World Test Championship points table, pushing



MEMORABLE MOMENT: Teammates congratulate Kuldeep Yadav (without cap) after the end of the game in Chattogram, Sunday

ing Sri Lanka to the fourth position. India now have 87 points with 55.77 percentage (PCT) while Sri Lanka have 64 points and 53.33 PCT. Australia lead the table with 75 PCT and are followed by South Africa (60 PCT)

Resuming at the overnight score of 276 for six, Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan (84, 108b, 6x4, 6x6) came all out attacking, knowing very well it would not be easy to just survive the whole day. But the

Indians played the patience game and reaped rich results as KL Rahul, registered his first Test win as skipper. The first to fall was Mehidy Hasan Miraj (13) who was dismissed by Siraj. Shakib however, brought up his 30th Test fifty with a straight six off Patel.

However, the introduction of Kuldeep changed the game on its head. He picked up two wickets in consecutive overs, while Patel picked another as India ended

Bangladesh's dogged resistance. Kuldeep first cleaned up Shakib as the batter went for another slog sweep and then had Ebadat Hossain caught by Shreyas Iyer in the covers. Axar completed the formalities by going through the defence of Tajul Islam.

**Brief scores:** India 404 and 258 for 2 declared; beat Bangladesh 150 and 324 (Shakib Al Hasan 84, Axar Patel 4/77, Kuldeep Yadav 3/73) by 188 runs.

## Aussies triumph

Brisbane: Australia's bowlers ripped through South Africa's brittle batting lineup for the second consecutive day as the hosts stormed to a six-wicket victory in the first Test in a wild opening to the three-Test series that saw 34 wickets fall inside two days. Australia were bowled out Sunday for 218 on a grassy pitch at the Gabba here and they had a 66-run first innings lead. In the second innings, the hosts skittled out South Africa for 99 with skipper Pat Cummins taking five wickets. Mitchell Starc took two wickets and in the process reached the 300-wicket milestone in Tests. However, Australia also made heavy weather of the 34 runs chase losing four wickets. Kagiso Rabada (4/13) took all four wickets to fall in Australia's second innings.

## Modric to continue

Doha: Croatian playmaker Luka Modric partially ended speculation about his future after helping his side to a third-place finish in the FIFA World Cup finals. Modric said he will continue playing for another six months before taking a call on his career. "I will continue until the end of the Nations League final and then we'll see," Modric told the press after Saturday's game against Morocco which Croatia won to finish third in the World Cup. The 37-year-old has so far played 162 games for his country. "This could be my last World Cup, but I can't say anything now. I am very happy with my career with Croatia," Modric added.

## Sneha shines

Cartagena (Spain): Sneha Singh emerged as the top Indian at tied-14th after the first round of the Final Qualifier at LET Q-School here Sunday. Of the eight Indians in the field of 146, Sneha, playing at the par-73 South Course, shot 2-under 71. She is five shots behind the leader, 18-year-old Danish amateur, Amalie Leth-Nissen, who fired a bogey-free opening round of 64.

## RAHUL LAUDS TEAM EFFORT

Indians still in the dark about Rohit's thumb injury

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chattogram, Dec 18: Injured Rohit Sharma's availability for the second Test against Bangladesh starting December 22 in Mirpur will be known in a day or two, stand-in India captain KL Rahul said Sunday. Rahul had gone back to India after hurting his left thumb while fielding December 7 in the second ODI against Bangladesh at Mirpur.

"About Rohit, we may be able to know (his status) in the next day or two, even I am not aware of it," Rahul said at the post-match press conference after India's victory over Bangladesh here. Rahul termed the first Test win against Bangladesh as a complete performance. He said the team did well in all departments and played as a unit.

"Everything stood out. We batted really well, bowled also well. In fielding, we took most of the catches that came our way. That is the way you win Test matches. Only one or two people cannot win matches, this is for all formats," Rahul asserted.



"Hard fought Test match and we had to really work hard for this win. Really happy we did that"

KL RAHUL

"Kuldeep (Yadav), (Mohammed) Siraj bowled really well in the first innings (of Bangladesh) but others supported them well. In the second innings, Axar (Patel) bowled really well but Kuldeep and Ash (R Ashwin) kept the pressure on. Umesh (Yadav) and Siraj bowled some really good spells, kept it tight and beat the bat many times but were unlucky," added the stand-in skipper.

## Gareth to remain with the 3 Lions

AGENCIES

London, Dec 18: Gareth Southgate will remain as England's manager until the European Championships in 2024, the Football Association (FA) confirmed Sunday. After England's quarterfinal exit at the FIFA World Cup 2022, Southgate had said he was conflicted about his future in the role. His current contract is due to expire in December 2024 and he will now remain in charge of England for what will be his fourth major tournament at the helm. The 52-year-old, who was appointed in 2016, led the Three Lions to the World Cup semifinals in 2018 and a first Euros final in 2021.

"We are delighted to confirm that Gareth Southgate is continuing as England manager and will lead our Euro 2024 campaign," said FA chief executive Mark Bullingham in a statement. "Gareth and Steve Holland (assistant manager) have always had our full support, and our planning for the Euros starts now," he added.

## Brook century puts England in command

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, Dec 18: Harry Brook (111, 150b, 8x4, 3x6) smashed his third successive Test century before England's tail-enders frustrated Pakistan and grafted a 50-run first innings lead in the third and final match of the series here Sunday. In reply to Pakistan's first innings score of 304, England were bowled out for 354. In the second innings the hosts were 21 without loss.

Wicketkeeper-batter Ben Foakes, playing his first Test on tour, made a resilient 64 and added 117 runs for the sixth wicket with Brook to help England recover after they were tottering at 145 for five. Then Mark Wood (35) and Ollie Robinson (29) played cameos to edge England ahead of Pakistan's total.

Left-arm spinner Nauman Ali (4/120), one of the four changes Pakistan made for the final Test, and leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed (4/150) picked up the bulk of the wickets.



Harry Brook celebrates after reaching the three-figure mark Sunday

Both Brook and Foakes showed plenty of grit on a slow turning wicket with a century-stand before Wood and Robinson added meaningful runs. The 23-year-old Brook raised his runs tally in England's first Test tour to Pakistan in 17 years to 468 and bettered his countryman David Gower's record of 449 runs in Pakistan during the 1983-84 tour. **Brief scores:** Pakistan 304 and 21/0; England 354 (Harry Brook 111, Ben Foakes 64). Match to continue.