



## AT THE RECEIVING END

Actor Rashmika Mandanna is being trolled by a section of netizens for 'forgetting and looking down upon her roots'

LEISURE P2



## NETANYAHU'S FEAT

Benjamin Netanyahu sworn-in as Israel's Prime Minister, thus emerging leader for the 6th time in the state's history

INTERNATIONAL P10



## KARTIK PROPELS ODISHA

Kartik Biswal scores a wonderful century to give Odisha an edge over Haryana in their Ranji Trophy Elite Group A match

SPORTS P12

## SHORT TAKES

### Casino fire kills 19 in Cambodia

**Phnom Penh:** A massive fire that lasted more than 12 hours in a Cambodian hotel casino killed at least 19 people and injured about 50, while other victims were apparently not yet accounted for Thursday, as neighbouring Thailand sent fire trucks to help fight the blaze in a bustling border town. More than 30 of those injured may not survive, doctors at the hospital informed. Videos posted on social media showed people falling from a roof after they were trapped by the fire at the Grand Diamond City casino and hotel in the border town of Poipet. Many of those inside, both customers and staff, were from neighbouring Thailand.

### 5G services in state by R-Day: Vaishnav

**Bhubaneswar:** Asserting that the Centre has sanctioned ₹5,600 crore for telecom services in Odisha this fiscal, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said Thursday that 5G services will be launched in the eastern state before the Republic Day celebrations in 2023. In an apparent reference to the ruling BJP in the state, the minister also said during a programme here that 'now, no one can make an allegation that the Centre is neglecting Odisha's telecom sector'. Vaishnav, the Minister of Communications, Electronics and Information Technology, said a survey was recently conducted in all villages of Odisha where mobile towers are not available.

### Dates announced for CBSE exams

**New Delhi:** The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) announced Thursday that the Class X and Class-XII board examinations will begin from February 15, next year. Releasing the date sheet, the board said sufficient gap has been given between two subjects, and other factors such as competitive entrance tests have also been taken into account in deciding the dates. The board said that examination at all centres will begin at 10.30am. The CBSE said that the Class-X exams will end March 21 while that of Class-XII will finish April 5. The CBSE said ample time has been given to the students for preparations.

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Coming up with a unique & doable New Year resolution is not easy. But I'll figure out something by mid-year

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX			VARIATION
SENSEX	61133.88	↑	223.60
NIFTY	18191.00	↑	68.50
DOLLAR	82.79	↑	₹0.07
EURO	88.16	↑	₹0.38
GOLD	₹54,871	↑	₹110
SILVER	₹69,713	↑	₹700

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
TEMP	MAX 28.6°C	28.0°C	
	MIN 18.8°C	17.4°C	
Humidity	65%	60%	Forecast
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	Shallow to moderate fog likely

# Football King Pele no more

## LEGENDARY BRAZILIAN LOSES BATTLE AGAINST CANCER AND OTHER AILMENTS

AGENCIES

**Sao Paulo, Dec 29:** Pelé, the Brazilian king of soccer who won a record three World Cups and became one of the most commanding sports figures of the last century, died Thursday. Pele had been hospitalised for more than a month with cancer and multiple ailments. Finally the King of Scorers failed to defend an own goal. He was 82. The standard-bearer of 'the beautiful game' had undergone treatment for colon cancer since 2021. His agent Joe Fraga confirmed his death.

Widely regarded as one of football's greatest players, Pelé spent nearly two decades enchanting fans and dazzling opponents as the game's most prolific scorer with Brazilian club Santos and the Brazil national team. Pelé's grace, athleticism and mesmerising moves transfixed players and fans. He orchestrated a fast, fluid style that revolutionised the sport—a samba-like flair that personified his country's elegance on the field. He carried Brazil to soccer's heights and became a global ambassador for his sport in a journey that began on the streets of



Sao Paulo state, where he would kick a sock stuffed with newspapers or rags. In the conversation about soccer's greatest players, only the late Diego Maradona, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo are mentioned alongside Pelé. Different sources, counting different sets of games, list Pelé's goal totals anywhere between 650 (league

matches) and 1,281 (all senior matches, some against low-level competition). The player who would be dubbed 'The King' was introduced to the world at 17 at the 1958 World Cup in Sweden, the youngest player ever at the tournament. He was carried off the field on teammates' shoulders after scoring two goals

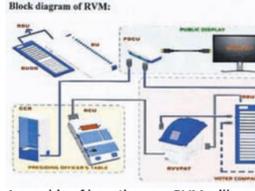
in Brazil's 5-2 victory over the host country in the final. Injury limited him to just two games when Brazil retained the world title in 1962, but Pelé was the emblem of his country's World Cup triumph of 1970 in Mexico. He scored in the final and set up Carlos Alberto with a nonchalant pass for the last goal in a 4-1 victory over Italy. The image of Pelé in a bright, yellow Brazil jersey, with the No. 10 stamped on the back, remains alive with soccer fans everywhere. In fact, at one point of time, the Brazilian Football Association had thought of doing away with the No. 10 jersey for good in honour of Pele. Pelé's fame was such that in 1967 factions of a civil war in Nigeria agreed to a brief ceasefire so he could play an exhibition match in the country. He was knighted by Britain's Queen Elizabeth II in 1997. When he visited Washington to help popularise the game in North America, it was the US President who stuck out his hand first. "My name is Ronald Reagan, I'm the President of the United States of America," the host said to his visitor. "But you don't need to introduce yourself because everyone knows who Pelé is," Reagan added.

# EC develops RVMs for migrant voters

The election body feels that a major proportion of the electorate who have shifted to other states for work refrain from casting their votes as they have to travel

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 29:** In a major move to increase voter participation, the Election Commission (EC) said Thursday it has developed a prototype of a remote electronic voting machine (RVM) for domestic migrant voters and has invited political parties for a technical demonstration here January 16. However, a number of political parties including the Congress and the JD(U) are unsure about how the RVM will work. Leaders cutting across party lines also pointed out that legal implications have to be taken into account for the use of RVMs. They also expressed apprehension whether such an idea would be feasible in India. If the RVM is implemented after stakeholder consultations, domestic migrant voters do not need to travel to their home districts to exercise their franchise. The voter turnout in the 2019 Lok Sabha elec-



A graphic of how the new RVM will work

- 8 national and 57 state political parties invited for technical demo of machine
- Domestic migrants tend to not register themselves as voters
- Approximately 85% of domestic migrants did not cast votes

tions was 67.4 per cent and the EC is concerned over the issue of over 30 crore voters not exercising their franchise, the body said in a statement. "It is understood that there are multifarious reasons for a voter not opting to register in a new place of residence, thus missing out on exercising the right to vote. Inability to vote due to internal migration (domestic migrants) is one of the prominent reasons to be addressed to improve voter turnout and ensure participative elections," the EC said. "Out-migration is predominant

among the rural population in overall domestic migration and around 85 per cent of the internal migration is within states," the commission noted. Terming counting of votes cast at remote booths and their transmission to the returning officer in other states as a 'technological challenge', the EC officials said RVMs will be developed as 'a robust, fail-proof and efficient stand-alone system' based on existing electronic voting machines and will not be connected to the internet. Continued on P3

### Srimandir timings changed for Jan 1

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, Dec 29:** Keeping in mind the rush that is usually seen on the year's first day at the Srimandir here, the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) said Thursday that timings of darshan will be changed. Officials said that a decision has been taken to open Srimandir in the wee hours of January 1, next year. A meeting which was held under the chairmanship of Puri District Collector Samarth Verma, took the decision to change the timings. Temple servants and officials of the SJTA were also present in the meeting. A decision was taken to make all possible arrangements for the smooth darshan of the devotees. "The Dwarafita Niti (opening of Singhadwar) will be done 1.00am January 1," a SJTA official said. "As there will be heavy rush both December 31 and January 1, a decision has been taken to close the main entrance of the temple for a few hours, December 31 and reopen it at 1.00am, January 1," he added. The officials also informed that a special sitting arrangement will be made for senior citizens. Also the existing shed meant for devotees wanting to take rest will be expanded, the SJTA official added.

# No major headway in Pavel death case

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada, Dec 29:** The state Crime Branch constituted Thursday another team of four officials to probe into the mysterious deaths of Russian legislator and businessman Pavel Antov and his friend Vladimir Bidenov at a hotel in Rayagada. "Another Crime Branch Team consisting of four officers has been formed. Headed by DSP Saroj Kant Mahanto, the team has gone to Rayagada for further investigation. This apart, two forensic experts and an identical number of photographers have been designated to assist the CID-CB team. The team has been entrusted with the responsibility of visiting the accident spot, examining the witnesses and identifying and collecting evidence. They will also follow up with the police regarding



Natalia Pansasenko & Mikhail Turov

the latest developments, the CB said in a press release. Later in the day, sleuths of the Central Intelligence Bureau (IB) visited different parts of the hotel, talked to the employees and checked CCTV footage. They also visited Rayagada police station and the Siriguda crematorium where bodies of Antov and Bidenov were cremated, sources said. Police said that they followed all the formalities for cremation.

Continued on P3

### Hoteliers concerned ahead of Hockey WC

**Bhubaneswar:** Expressing concern over the impact of the deaths of two Russian tourists in the Rayagada district, the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Odisha (HARO) wrote Thursday to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik urging him to ensure a proper investigation. In a letter to Patnaik, it said that a strong action plan should be chalked out for the safety and security of visitors, especially foreign tourists, coming to the state during the Hockey World Cup, which will begin January 13.

# CM INAUGURATES SLEW OF PROJECTS IN ANGUL



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Angul, Dec 29:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched a slew of development projects worth more than ₹1,805 crore in Angul district. During his visit here, the CM inaugurated 746 development projects worth ₹313 crore and laid foundation stones for another 795 worth ₹1,492 crore. Patnaik said that ₹242 crore will

be provided as loan under Mission Shakti programme. It will benefit more than 75,000 women in the district. Patnaik also announced the setting up of two major drinking water projects in the district. The state Cabinet has already approved the two projects and people in 48 panchayats will be benefited once the projects are implemented, he said.

# Mukesh specifies targets for successors

Billionaire refers to Argentina's comeback under Lionel Messi at the World Cup as perfect example to fight all odds

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 29:** Billionaire Mukesh Ambani has a pan-India 5G mobile network rollout plan by 2023-end, chasing more ambitious goals in retail and making Reliance India's greenest corporate as goals for his three children as he cited the example of Lionel Messi to explain leadership and teamwork. Ambani made his observations while speaking to company employees Wednesday at his father and founder Dhirubhai's birth anniversary, celebrated as 'Reliance Family Day'. Mukesh, who had first spoken of a succession plan at the 2021 'Reliance Family Day', has identified three verticals for his three children—telecom and digital busi-



Isha and Akash Ambani

ness for elder son Akash, retail for twin sister Isha and new energy business for youngest son Anant. The CMD of the USD 104 billion conglomerate spoke of the goals the three have to achieve. His speech

### ANANT, RADHIKA GET ENGAGED

**NEW DELHI:** Anant Ambani, the youngest son of billionaire Mukesh Ambani, will wed Radhika Merchant, daughter of industrialist Viren Merchant, the family announced Thursday. The 'roka' or engagement ceremony of Radhika, daughter of Shaiba and Viren Merchant, and Anant was performed Thursday at the Shrinathji Temple at Nathdwara in Rajasthan in the presence of family members and friends. The family said in a statement that the two have been friends for some time now. However, it did not specify the wedding date. "Anant and Radhika have known each other for a few years and today's ceremony commences the formal journey of their marriage in the coming months," the statement said.

now get ready for India's next big opportunity - to provide unique digital products and solutions to both domestic and international markets," the senior Ambani said. Continued on P3

# leisure



## MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT CONFIRMS STAN LEE'S DOCUMENTARY IN 2023

Marvel Entertainment tweeted a 25-second video Wednesday confirming the 2023 release of a Disney+ documentary on Stan Lee. "100 years of dreaming. 100 years of creating. 100 years of Stan Lee," Marvel Entertainment wrote in a caption that accompanied the teaser.

## KIM DOESN'T RULE OUT GETTING HITCHED AGAIN, HAVING MORE KIDS

Reality TV star Kim Kardashian would like to get married for a fourth time and she hasn't ruled out having more children. The 42-year-old, who has been married three times, said that she still holds out some hope that she will find true love.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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

**ARIES**  
Today even if you are alone, you may not really feel lonely. You will desire to listen to your inner self, so that you can express yourself more imaginatively. Ganesha says spend the evening with your beloved who can listen to your voice in your silence also.

**TAURUS**  
This all matters are likely to revolve around the opposite sex. Women are going to feature prominently and significantly in everything that you do. So says Ganesha. That is good. But you will be inclined to be lazy and laid back and may thus reduce the effect and impact of efforts.

**GEMINI**  
An extremely profitable and progressive day awaits you. You may come into a handsome inheritance. Your responsibilities will increase along with a possible promotion at work. However, do not let your success go to your head, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
Ganesha says that you will carve out your path for progress. You will get respect and recognition from people. Business rivals and illness may bother you. Beware of enemies' actions. Your alertness will thwart their designs.

**LEO**  
You will be in a light-hearted mood today. Be it at the office or at the home, you will be full of joy and will be looking to pass your time leisurely. You will spend time with family and friends. You will be unable to implement your plans for tackling work today in your current mood, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
You may relieve all the tension and pressure inside you today, a day which will be full of light and relaxing moments. Ganesha foretells a beneficial and progressive day for you. You will receive many invitations to social gatherings and parties.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says that to gain future opportunities you may have to rely on past experience. You will tend to become possessive about things close to you. You will also have to deal with unpleasant situations where your integrity is questioned. All said and done your day will go good except for minor issues and your understanding attitude will be praise worth today.

**SCORPIO**  
Today, Ganesha is in the mood to give you health tips. Cultivate healthy eating habits and exercise regularly to stay away from disorders like obesity. Irregular eating habits and unhealthy lifestyle may lead to many other troubles. Eat healthy, stay happy.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
You are on a high today and a feeling of ecstasy surrounds you. You are performance driven and shall give your best in anything you take up. Listen to your inner voice, it will guide you to the correct path. Ganesha showers His benevolent blessings on you. Make the most of this day.

**CAPRICORN**  
You have meticulously planned every aspect of your plan and prepared the check list. The only thing left now to do is execution of that plan. Delays and obstacles, however, will block your path and will leave you disheartened. Don't doubt your abilities though. You have planned properly and have faith as those delays are not permanent, assures Ganesha.

**AQUARIUS**  
Don't let your emotions play a spoilsport in the important decisions of your life. The tendency to be sentimental when you need to be rational will become an obstacle in your path.

**PISCES**  
Take one cautious step at a time today, says Ganesha. You will discuss intimate matters at home and official matters at work but be careful about whom you trust and deception from someone close might lead to worry and stress in the future. Even though you are an emotional person, lay onus on working with your head over your heart today as people might try to take advantage of your nature and step on your shoulder, feels Ganesha.

## Rashmika trolled for 'forgetting her roots'

**Bangalore:** Rashmika Mandanna is being trolled once again for "forgetting and looking down upon her roots". It comes days after she invited the ire of netizens for showing no gratitude for the production house that gave her a break in Kannada cinema.

The *Pushpa* star, whose Hindi movie *Mission Majnu* with Siddharth Malhotra is releasing soon, stated during the film's promotions that in Hindi cinema, romantic songs have a tradition, whereas in the south, there are only masala songs and item numbers.

"For me, when I was growing up, romantic songs meant Bollywood romantic songs," Rashmika said, upsetting her fans and followers.

"In the south we have all mass masala songs, item numbers and dance numbers. This is my first Bollywood romantic song from the film *Mission Majnu*. I am excited because it's so good and I am waiting for you all to listen to it," said the Goodbye actress.

AGENCIES



## Kriti ready to move on

**Mumbai:** Kriti Sanon had quite a fulfilling 2022 with lots of great work. The actress has been shooting back-to-back for her forthcoming films.

The actress shared a reel summing up her fabulous moments from 2022. Kriti wrote, "2022 You were fabulous! But.. I'm kinda ready to move on.."

The reel covers from BTS moments of promotions while also gives a sneak peek into Kriti's fitness regime. The actress serves fitness goals. Meanwhile, Kriti is also loved for her vlogs on her YouTube channel. Kriti also won many awards this year for her performance in *Mimi*.

The actress takes the viewers through her day many a time and also shares tips on skincare and more. Kriti loves writing and her poems also are received well by the audience. At the moment Kriti is shooting for a film with Shahid Kapoor produced by Dinesh Vijan. It's a unique romantic comedy surrounding the love story of a man with a robot.

Reportedly, Kriti is playing a robot in the film. While the film isn't yet officially announced, the actress had shared a flight selfie with Shahid Kapoor.

Kriti will be seen next in *Shehzada* with Kartik Aaryan which is a Hindi remake of Allu Arjun's *Ala Vaikunthapuramuloo*.

AGENCIES

## Rakul reflects on her tryst visiting a male gynaecologist



**Mumbai:** Rakul Preet Singh and Ayushmann Khurrana-starrer *Doctor G* was about a male doctor who was eager to go into orthopaedics but ended up becoming a gynaecologist, which leads to chaos. This Anubhuti Kashyap directed film released on October 14, 2022.

Sharing her personal experience of visiting male gynaecologist during a Best Actress Round Table 2022, Rakul said, "Long ago, the first time I ever went to a gynaecologist, it happened to be male. I had no experience on how or what it would be. I was shy being a teenager. However, I had my mother, so it was fine. Eventually I forgot about it. It was not a thought that stayed on with me. I evolved and grew as a person, and at a certain point I don't know when my mind adapted to it".

Highlighting the importance of this matter, Rakul further added, "God forbid, if tomorrow you have to go for a heart check-up or a surgery; you cannot decide if a male would do it for you or a female. Which is why I think it is a conversation that is supposed to start".

AGENCIES

**Mumbai:** Actress Mahira Khan, who made her debut in Hindi cinema opposite SRK in *Raees*, said that actors are considered "soft targets" in India as well as in Pakistan. Speaking about her experience in Indian cinema, the actor said that she meets and talks to her friends from India, but is 'careful' with what she writes on social media to 'protect' them and herself from scrutiny. Talking about her experience in working in India, the actor said in an interview, "I had the most amazing time working in India. I am still in touch with so many people and there's a lot of love there. Unfortunately, we are easy and soft targets, whether it's us here in Pakistan, whether it's them there in India. Because we're artists, and we're connected by that thread of art, we actually get each other." Mahira further added the reason behind this is mainly politics. "Unfortunately, it's politics; it's not a personal thing. On both ends, until the time that scapegoats are needed, we will always be that. But let's say that it gets better," she concluded.

AGENCIES

## Actors are soft targets in India, Pak: Mahira

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

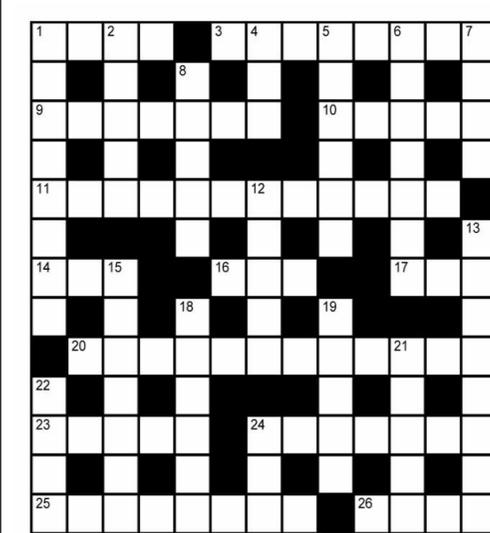


### BREVITY



### FUN post

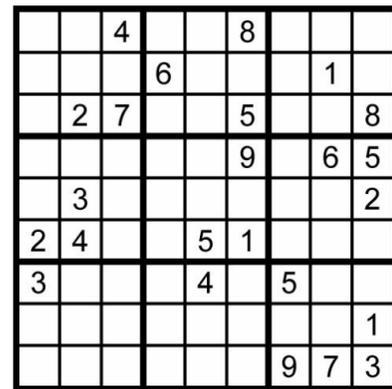
### CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2022 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Soybean paste
  - 3 Endurance contest
  - 9 Sir Walter
  - 10 Cupid's projectile
  - 11 Adventurer
  - 14 Piercing tool
  - 16 Quiche, e.g.
  - 17 Child's toy
  - 20 Desk drawer contents (7,5)
  - 23 Motif
  - 24 Dreamlike
  - 25 Pilgrim
  - 26 Consumer
  - 6 Farmer's reward
  - 7 Tidings
  - 8 Alcove
  - 12 Merger
  - 13 Diamond
  - 15 Unlawful act
  - 18 Goddess of wisdom
  - 19 Fifth wheel
  - 21 Burns and Allen, e.g.
  - 22 Potpourri
  - 24 Take to court
- Down**
- 1 Sharpshooter
  - 2 Latin dance
  - 4 Volcanic fallout
  - 5 Kobuk Valley National Park locale

### SUDOKU

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

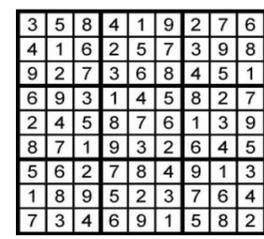


### SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



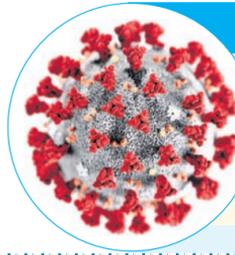
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## DANCE FEST

Artistes from West Bengal perform during the International Odissi Dance Festival at Rabintra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Thursday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	66,36,59,031	63,57,34,177	66,92,494
India	4,46,77,915	4,41,43,665	5,30,698
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

# 5G services in state by R-Day: Vaishnaw

THE RAILWAY MINISTER SAYS AROUND ₹10K-CRORE HAS BEEN ALLOCATED TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF ODISHA'S RAIL INFRA IN 2022-23



Union ministers Ashwini Vaishnaw, Dharmendra Pradhan and Pralhad Joshi, Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi and Balasore MP Pratap Sarangi, and Bhubaneswar (Central) MLA Ananta Narayan Jena during the foundation stone laying ceremony for Bhubaneswar railway station redevelopment, Thursday

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 29:** Asserting that the Centre has sanctioned ₹5,600 crore for telecom services in Odisha this fiscal, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Thursday said 5G services will be launched in the eastern state before the Republic Day celebrations next year.

In an apparent reference to the ruling BJP in the state, Vaishnaw also said, "Now, no one can make an allegation that the Centre is neglecting Odisha's telecom sector."

"The Modi government has sanctioned a total of ₹Rs 5,600 crore for telecom services in Odisha in the 2022-23 fiscal, and 5G services will be launched in the state before the Republic Day celebrations January 26, 2023," he said.

Vaishnaw, the minister of Railways, Communications, Electronics and Information Technology, said a survey was recently conducted in all villages of Odisha where mobile towers are not available. "PM Narendra Modi had directed officials to ensure high-

**A**ccording to Union Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi, Odisha's revenue from the mining sector has touched ₹50,000 crore from around ₹5,000 crore in 2014-15

**E**arlier this week, the state, in a Cabinet meeting chaired by CM Naveen Patnaik, had approved a proposal to provide 2,000 sq ft of land each at 1,687 places to BSNL for 30 years at Re 1 per site per annum without any premium and incidental fees

quality 4G and 5G services in all villages," the minister said.

Vaishnaw had in October said that 5G services would be available in at least four cities of Odisha by March 2023, and 80 per cent area of the state will have access to the upgraded network by the end of the next year.

PM Modi had October 1 launched the 5G services that promise to provide ultra high-speed internet on mobile phones.

Vaishnaw was speaking at a foundation stone laying ceremony for the redevelopment of the Bhubaneswar railway station.

Union Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi, who was also present in the programme, claimed that Odisha has substantially gained from the Centre's policy for auctioning of mines.

"The state's revenue from the mining sector has touched ₹50,000 crore from around ₹5,000 crore in 2014-15," he pointed out.

He also alleged that the states were unable to garner adequate revenue from mining operations earlier as a policy of 'first come first serve' was followed.

Under the District Mineral Foundation (DMF), Odisha gets ₹15,000 crore per year, Joshi said, adding that the fund can be utilised for development of mine areas and welfare of the poor and tribal people.

The state has also been allocated around ₹10,000 crore in the Budget for railway infrastructure development in 2022-23, Vaishnaw said.

"The Modi government has raised the allocation for railways in Odisha to ₹10,000 crore per annum from only ₹800 crore during the UPA regime," he said, claiming that critics have no reasons to make the allegation of central negligence to the state's telecom and railway sectors. Vaishnaw said that railway projects will make progress if the state government cooperates and provides required land.

Earlier this week, the state, in a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, had approved a proposal to provide 2,000 sq ft of land each at 1,687 places to BSNL for 30 years at Re 1 per site per annum without any premium and incidental fees.

It will help provide 4G connectivity in 1,792 villages, Odisha Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra had said.



**FOUNDATION DAY:** Dignitaries and visitors at the foundation day celebration of Odisha State Museum in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

## 'Safe City Drive'

**Bhubaneswar:** The Commissionerate Police has launched 'Safe City Drive' to rein in the criminals and antisocial elements during the Men's Hockey World Cup scheduled to be held in January 2023. Special teams comprising efficient police officials have been formed by the Commissionerate Police to achieve the objective of making the Capital city a 'citizen friendly and safe city'. The police have been keeping strict vigil on movement of suspicious vehicles, buses and also intensified surveillance on railway station and bus stands to check the movement of criminals and suspicious persons.

## NCDC branch

**Bhubaneswar:** In a bid to strengthen the state's disease surveillance and public health infrastructure, the state government had given approval for establishment of a branch of National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) with a modern laboratory in Odisha. Accordingly land had also been allotted for this purpose, in favour of director, NCDC, government of India, at Andharua Mauza of Khurda, free of premium and with a registration fee waiver.

# State asks Centre for 1.93 crore booster jobs

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 29:** Keeping in view the increase in Covid-19 cases in some foreign countries, the state government has urged the Centre to provide precaution vaccine doses for 1.93 crore people left out in Odisha.

Writing a letter to the Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, state Health Minister Naba Kishore Das said there has been an outbreak of new Covid variant BF-7 across some countries like China, Japan, USA, Brazil, and Republic of Korea with India reporting some cases.

So far, 8.14 crore doses have been given as first dose and 3.30 crore doses as second dose to the people aged 12 years and above, and 1.31 crore doses to the citizens aged 18 years and above as precaution dose in the state, Das said.

The precaution dose has covered only 41% of the population and currently no vaccine stock is available in the state

Hence, the precaution dose has covered only 41 per cent of the population and presently, no vaccine stock is available in the state.

"Keeping in view the demands from various categories of citizens, there is further requirement of precaution dose for 1.93 crore people against a total of 3.25 crore citizens," Das wrote to Mandaviya.

He requested the Union Minister to provide necessary guidance and support for supply of additional quantity of precaution dose to the state for vaccination of such left out citizens in government-run Covid-19 Vaccination Centres (CVCs).

## IIT-K confers award on SOA founder



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 29:** Four days after its 68th Convocation, the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, conferred its prestigious Distinguished Alumnus Award on Manojranjan Nayak, Founder-President of Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) here.

Nayak was to be conferred with the award at IIT, Kharagpur's Convocation held December 24 but he could not be personally present to receive the honour.

VK Tiwari, Director of IIT, Kharagpur, on a visit to Bhubaneswar, bestowed the honour on Nayak at a special programme.

## Continued from P1

## EC develops RVMs for migrant voters

**B**ased on feedback from various stakeholders and the demonstration of the prototype, the EC will appropriately carry forward the process of implementing remote voting, the statement said.

The multi-constituency remote EVM, developed by a public sector undertaking, can handle up to 72 constituencies from a single remote polling booth, the EC informed. "After focus on youth and urban apathy, remote voting will be a transformational initiative for strengthening participation in electoral democracy," Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar said.

"The initiative, if implemented, can lead to a social transformation for migrants. Many a time migrants are reluctant to get

themselves enrolled at their place of work for various reasons. The RVM will allow them to exercise their franchise without any hassle," Kumar added.

Elaborating on the concept note, the EC said it has invited all eight recognised national and 57 state political parties January 16 to demonstrate the functioning of the multi-constituency prototype RVM. The commission has also solicited written views of recognised political parties by January 31.

However, the EC was also quick to point out that The Representation of the People Act, 1950 and 1961, The Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, and The Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, will need to be amended to introduce remote voting, the statement said.

## Mukesh specifies targets for...

**R**etail business under Isha has grown rapidly and emerged as one with the widest and deepest reach in India, across all product baskets. "However, I know that all of you in the retail team are capable of chasing even more ambitious targets and goals," Mukesh said.

"Like Jio, the growth of the retail business will also have a cascading effect on India's inclusive development, creating more jobs, providing farmers higher income and helping traders become more prosperous," he added.

The new energy business, which spans from building Giga factories for renewable energy as well as entry into the hydrogen business, has the potential to transform the company, Mukesh pointed out.

"With Anant joining this upcoming Next-Gen business, we are making rapid progress in getting our Giga factories in Jamnagar ready. From being India's largest and most valuable corporate, Reliance is now well on its way to also becoming India's 'greenest' corporate," Mukesh stated.

## No major headway in Pavel death case

**M**eanwhile CB sources said that they have been able to collect vital information from the family members of the deceased. They added that they are cross-checking the information provided by Natalia Panasenko and Mikhail Turov with the families of the deceased. Crime Branch sleuths once more interrogated Panasenko and Turov, Thursday. They said that both the Russians were cooperating with the investigation. "Efforts are being made to collect the medical health records of the deceased persons," the CB added. Meanwhile, security has been tightened at the Hotel Sai International where the two Russians died. The staff continues to remain tight-lipped while mediapersons have been banned from entering the hotel.

Wednesday and Thursday, CCTVs were seen being repaired on the hotel premises. A hotel staff said that police have taken out the DVR of the CCTVs. The CB and the IB are depending on the CCTV footage to crack the mystery behind the death of Pavel Antov.

# Vigilance academy gets ISO certification for three years

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 29:** The State Vigilance Academy (SVA), Bhubaneswar has been awarded with ISO certification 9001:2015 for three years—from December 14, 2022 to December 13, 2025.

Based on the quality of training programmes on anti-corruption laws and infrastructure, the academy has once again received the prestigious certification. The academy has been functioning from November 20, 2018 and conducting training for All India/State Civil Service Cadre officers from IAS, IPS, IFS, OAS, OPS, OFS, OFoS, OT & AS, OSPS, ORS, OWS, OCS and OES ranks.

During 2018-2021, the academy has conducted 47 training courses and 1,279 officers from various cadres of Union and state governments have attended the training.



ing. In 2022, 388 officers from various cadres of both Centre and state have attended the training/workshops on anti-corruption laws and preventive vigilance.

**During 2018-2021, the academy has conducted 47 training courses and 1,279 officers from various cadres of Union and state govts have attended the training**

Going forward, Odisha Vigilance aims to strengthen the SVA as a repository of knowledge in the fields of anti-corruption, transparency and good governance. The goal is to turn SVA into a platform for niche research and disseminate evidence-based knowledge and solutions to institutions to strengthen their preventive vigilance structures and prevent leakages and address corruption in the field of governance.

# Orissa HC disposes of 1,36,599 cases till Dec 23

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 29:** The Orissa High Court has registered a disposal rate of 133.60 per cent as 1,36,599 cases were disposed of against 1,02,247 instituted between January 1 and December 23, 2022, an official said Thursday.

While there were 1,96,662 cases pending with the HC at the beginning of 2022, the figure stood at 1,62,310 as of December 23, an official said, adding that 8,769 cases of more than 10-year old were disposed of during the year.

According to the district judiciary statistics, the outgoing year saw a rise in cases being instituted as compared to the previous year.

While 5,00,404 cases were instituted in the district courts till November 30, 2022, the corresponding figure for the whole year of 2021 was 4,34,810.

As many as 4,47,733 cases were

disposed of in 2022 as compared to 2,38,588 cases in 2021, registering a 53.28 per cent rise over the previous year.

Around 72,806 judgements (civil 17,370 and criminal 55,436) were delivered in 2021, while the figure stood at 1,41,920 (civil 29,209 and criminal 1,12,711) as of November 30, 2022. The outgoing year saw a 51 per cent rise in delivery of judgements as compared to the previous year.

Better disposal can be achieved if Odisha judiciary functions with full strength. While the average working strength of judicial officers was 767 against the sanctioned strength of 962 in 2021, the corresponding figure in 2022 is 776 and 977 respectively.

The per capita disposal in 2021 is 311 cases whereas it is 577 cases in 2022.

The case clearance rate in 2021 ranges from 36.84 per cent to 76.86

**THE PENDENCY OF RAPE AND POCSO CASES IN THE DISTRICT JUDICIARY STANDS AT 18,882 AS OF NOV 30, 2022**

**ABOUT 1,042 RAPE CASES WERE DISPOSED OF FROM JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 26, 2022, OUT OF WHICH 125 CASES WERE DISPOSED OF WITHIN ONE YEAR FROM THE DATE OF TAKING COGNISANCE**



per cent and in 2022 it is between 45.76 per cent to 177.32 per cent.

The disposal of rape and POCSO cases was fast tracked during the year.

The pendency of rape and POCSO cases in the District Judiciary stands at 18,882 as of November 30, 2022. Around 1,042

rape cases were disposed of from January 1, 2022 to December 26, 2022, out of which 125 cases were disposed of within one year from the date of taking cognisance.

Similarly, 3,309 cases were disposed of in the District Judiciary for the corresponding period, out of which 660 cases were disposed

of within the statutory period of one year from the date of taking cognisance of offence as delineated under Section 35(2) of the POCSO Act. As many as 4,351 cases relating to rape and POCSO cases were disposed of during the period, out of which 785 were disposed of within one year from the date of taking cognisance.

Also, eight special courts to deal with the cases under POCSO Act have been established. Similarly, in order to combat the mounting pendency of family court cases in Bhubaneswar, another Court of Judge, Family Court -II, Bhubaneswar have been established.

This apart, six courts in the cadre of Civil Judge have been established during the period. In a significant step towards rationalisation of courts vis-à-vis the cases, 25 courts have been made functional.

FOCUS ECONOMY

# YEAR OF UNCERTAINTY



**Over-encumbered with debt, the world's poorest countries are unable to make critical investments in economic reforms, health, climate action, or education among other key development priorities**

The year 2022 has been blustery for the Indian as well as the global economy. The World Bank in its report titled "2022 in Nine Charts" released December 20, 2022, says that 2022 has been a year of uncertainty. The confluence of crises that defined the year continues to hinder global growth. The global economy is now in its steepest slowdown following a post-recession recovery since 1970 with global consumer confidence already suffering a much sharper decline than during the run-up to previous global recessions.

The world's three largest economies - the US, China, and the euro zone - have been sharply slowing. In addition to the lingering effects of the pandemic, rising food and energy prices fuelled couple by climate shocks and conflicts have hindered a rapid recovery. The rising food prices are hitting poor and developing countries the hardest. Under the circumstances, even a moderate hit to the global economy over the next year could tip it into recession.

As an unstable and uneven economic recovery took form in 2022, global development faced a crisis and slowing growth contributed to a reversal of progress on the global poverty agenda and an increase in global debt. The World Bank says poverty eradication has now become a stalled agenda. By the end of 2022, as many as 68.5 crore people could be living in extreme poverty - making 2022 the second-worst year for poverty reduction in the past two decades (after 2020). It is now projected that 7% of the world's population - roughly 57.4 crore people - will still scuffle in extreme poverty in 2030, far short of the global goal of 3% in 2030.

Over-encumbered with debt, the world's poorest countries are unable to make critical investments in economic reform, health, climate action, or education among

other key development priorities. Perhaps more significantly, the composition of debt has changed dramatically since 2010, with private creditors playing an increasingly larger role which has made the restructuring of debt far harder. This is particularly perplexing at a time when global growth is stagnating - leading to fears of 'stagflation' - and global initiatives, like the Common Framework, have proved inadequate so far.

The year 2022 was marked by a severe rise in food insecurity around the globe. The war in Ukraine, high inflation, supply chain disruptions, and the global economic downturn all combined to drive large price increases for many agricultural products and inputs, such as fertilizers.

The first half of the year displayed one of the largest shocks to global energy markets in decades - sending energy prices soaring, exacerbating energy shortages and energy security concerns, and further slowing progress toward universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy by 2030. Globally, 73.3 crore people still have no access to electricity and, at the current rate, 67 crore people will remain without electricity in 2030. In Sub-Saharan Africa, recent improvements have been reversed, with the number of people without access to electricity jumping to 56.8 crore in 2020.

Even prior to the pandemic, the world was facing a learning and skills crisis. COVID-19 has only intensified this crisis, as long school closures have led to colossal learning losses.

The report does not talk about individual countries. Though India does not face a slowdown, it is plagued by other problems. Poverty, hunger, unemployment, and inequality have been exacerbated further in 2022. Despite the Indian government talking of "Amrit Kaal" the grim reality is that India is home to the largest number of hungry, poor, and homeless people. Nearly 16.4% or 22.8 crore Indians are multi-dimensionally poor while 16.3% or 22.43 crore Indians are un-

der-nourished in 2019-2021. The proportion of the population that is severely food insecure in the country has risen from 20.3% in 2018-20 to 22.3% in 2019-21. The extension of free rations under the National Food Security Act to 80 crore people is an indirect admission that the spectre of hunger is stalking the country. The inflation eroded the purchasing power of people in India massively. India has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world accompanied by shrinking labour forces and a low employment rate.

In order to enhance its image, the World Bank has mentioned how it is addressing the above problems in the world. But the real problems lie with policies of the Unholy Trinity: the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO - which act in the interest of corporates and developed countries like the US. They batter the poor and developing countries to expedite neoliberal policies, restructure the economies and implement conditionalities to suit the interests of multinational corporations when confronting balance of payment problems or unbridled debt burden.

The real problems are: the rich and wealthy pay fewer taxes; the market is highly volatile; the policy of ultra-low interest regime and dollar hegemony. The existence of tax havens is helping the rich to evade taxes and accumulate black money and convert it to white when necessary. Those are leading to extreme inequality, with a concentration of wealth in a few hands. If countries are allowed to make trade and payments in their own currency or the currencies they can afford easily, many problems will evaporate.

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



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

**THE RISING FOOD PRICES ARE HITTING POOR AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THE HARDEST**



Sven Smit & Anu Madgavkar

**If the business, public, and social sectors work together, we could generate the sustainable and inclusive growth that the world urgently needs**

## Interconnected Goals

In November, hundreds of corporate CEOs and heads of state convened in Bali, Indonesia, for the B20 global business summit. The topics on the agenda this year revolved around three interconnected goals: sustainability, inclusion, and economic growth.

Far from being in conflict with one another, these three goals could be mutually reinforcing. A sustainable world could contain climate change and preserve natural capital and biodiversity. Inclusivity would create economic opportunities and shared progress for everyone. And while some believe that economic growth is incompatible with fighting climate change, it is necessary to produce the financial resources needed to create a sustainable, inclusive world - provided that those resources are used correctly.

To estimate the scope of the challenges ahead, we examined two crucially important indicators. First, we measured the sustainability gap, which is the additional investment in low-emissions technologies that every country must make to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Given that the world is on track to deplete its "carbon budget" - the amount of carbon dioxide it can emit without triggering dangerous levels of global warming - by 2030, there is little time left to make critical investments. The transition to a net-zero economy will require taking decisive steps by the end of this decade.

Another indicator, which we call the empowerment gap, equals the consumption level required to meet basic needs like food and energy, have discretionary income beyond the essentials, and be able to weather emergencies. According to our calculations, the empowerment line amounts to \$11 per person per day in poorer countries and \$55 in richer countries (at 2011 purchasing-power parity). If every household in the world could reach that level of consumption by 2030, every adult by 2050 would have grown up out of poverty and in economic security. But here, too, the world would need to make drastic shifts before this decade ends.

Economic growth could help us reach both goals. Governments could spend some of the income from growth to bring poorer households into the global middle class, while allocating some of it to build green infrastructure.

At the same time, research we presented at the B20 summit suggests that growth alone will not be able to close the sustainability and empowerment gaps. If the countries and regions we studied maintained their current spending levels, few would be able to close more than half of their empowerment gap by 2030, and none would close more than half of their sustainability gap. In the United States, for example, we estimate the empowerment gap to be \$5 trillion, and the sustainability gap to be \$5.6 trillion. If the US economy grew at an annual pace of 2.1% for the rest of the decade, the country would close just 36% of its empowerment gap and 7% of its sustainability gap by 2030.

The situation is very different in Sub-Saharan Africa, where we estimate the empowerment gap to be far larger, at \$10.3 trillion, with the sustainability gap totaling \$600 billion. Growth (as currently projected) is expected to close only 6% of the empowerment gap and 25% of the sustainability gap.

To close these gaps, economic growth would have to be bolstered by additional forces. Business-led innovation, for starters, could alter the current growth model in ways that are more oriented to inclusion and sustainability. Large G20-based companies spend over \$2 trillion per year on research and development and thus have a critical role to play in developing new technologies and solutions to reduce the costs of the sustainability transition.

And when these businesses figure out how to reduce the cost of low-emissions infrastructure, they could also help reorient growth toward sustainability by shifting consumers' preferences toward green products, as electric-vehicle manufacturers have done in recent years. At the same time, when accompanied by strategies and public policies that enable education, training, childcare, health care, and inclusive hiring, business-led innovation could help close the empowerment gap by boosting workers' incomes.

Government and philanthropy could also steer incentives and public resources toward sustainability and inclusion. For example, governments could mobilise more private capital for sustainable projects by investing in them, an approach known as blended finance. Carbon taxes and subsidies for low-carbon projects could also encourage investors to close the sustainability gap. Alternatively, governments could use direct transfer payments to lift more households over the empowerment line.

Unfortunately, the world's current empowerment and sustainability gaps cannot be closed immediately. But that should be a rallying cry, not cause for inaction. Companies must not only take up the challenge and innovate; they also must seize the many opportunities that already exist. Similarly, governments and philanthropists should focus on areas where markets currently fall short. If the business, public, and social sectors work together, we could generate the sustainable and inclusive growth that the world urgently needs.

Sven Smit is a senior partner at McKinsey & Company. Anu Madgavkar is a partner at the McKinsey Global Institute.

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## WISDOM CORNER

- Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything beautiful, for beauty is God's handwriting. **RALPH WALDO EMERSON**
- That best portion of a man's life, his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and love. **WILLIAM WORDSWORTH**
- The world breaks everyone, and afterward, some are strong at the broken places. **ERNEST HEMINGWAY**

## WORDSWORTH

### Empasm

This is an utterly obsolete medical word for a perfumed powder used in medicine to be sprinkled over the body to restrain sweating, reduce inflammation or to destroy body odour. Though it continued to appear in dictionaries until the beginning of the twentieth century, it had by then gone out of use. But then, it was never common, appearing most often as brief references in medical dictionaries and encyclopedias. This is a rare occurrence in general writing: *But even though I might be able to assuage the pains of disease I could not remove the seeds of contagion which were evidently now lodged in the ship. I knew of no empasm that could disperse the fetid odours of death which were hourly rising from the hold below (Remarkable Escapes of a Predestinated Rogue, in The Court Magazine, Dec. 1835).* It often appeared in medical literature alongside the closely related diapasm, also a scented powder made from aromatic herbs for sprinkling over the person. A diapasm was sometimes made into little balls that were strung together round the neck. A third word of similar form is cataplasma, an old term for a poultice. All three are from the Greek *plassein*, to sprinkle or shape.

## SPECTRUM TECHNOLOGY

# Mobile money spurring development



Moin Qazi

**WE'VE REACHED THE POINT WHERE MORE PEOPLE USE PHONES FOR BANKING THAN BANKS**

One of the most visible effects of the technological revolution in financial services is in how we pay for goods and services and transact with each other financially. From cash and cheques, it has rapidly transitioned into real-time transfers, contactless payments and app-based banking. In the critical times of COVID-19, mobile money helped governments navigate the financial dystopia and address the practical challenge of delivering affordable and efficient financial services.

The ubiquity of the mobile phone has made it possible to deliver financial services to people for whom a bank account is a distant dream. Digitisation has turned a smartphone into a wallet, a chequebook, a bank branch and an accounting ledger. The innumerable global poor have gained a new value through the cell phone: They are now the "new oil," crucial for future innovation, and tech companies are waking up to the possibility of this vast and relatively untapped mine of further data.

Four in 10 people in the world are below 25 years of age, and 85% of them live in developing countries. Today China has about 800 million internet users in contrast to 300 million in the US. India has the most WhatsApp users worldwide. From South Africa to Brazil, young people are taking to mobile internet with enthusiasm, due to the increased affordability of these devices and data plans. The most significant beneficiary sector in

developing countries from this technological revolution is the financial sector; which has revolutionised the speed, efficiency and affordability of remittances.

Mobile money, sometimes considered a form of branchless banking, has allowed people otherwise excluded from the formal financial system to perform relatively cheap, secure, and reliable financial transactions. Some of the most profitable gains for mobile banking have come in remote areas. In these communities, basic mobile phones have leapfrogged the substandard physical branch-banking system. We've reached the point where more people use phones for banking than banks.

Further, the penetration of cellular phones puts developing countries in an advantageous position where making a quantum leap in financial inclusion is concerned. For communities with low literacy levels and sporadic incomes, digital money can transform the socio-economic landscape. Mobile banking is enabling women to overcome common barriers. It reduces the need to travel long distances to access banking facilities and ensures privacy and security. Mobile money has laid the foundation for a raft of innovations, evolving from a tool for purchasing airtime and sending money between friends and family to a convenient way to access and pay for essentials, such as water bills or school fees.

Mobile finance offers advantages over traditional financial models.

First, digital transactions are essentially free. In-person services and cash transactions account for most routine banking expenses, but mobile finance clients keep their money in digital form. They can send and receive money without incurring transaction costs from their banks or mobile service providers.

Second, mobile platforms link banks to their clients in real-time. Further, digital footprints and transaction data can significantly help assess individual creditworthiness. Mobile network operators are teaming up with banks, financial-tech companies, and data analytics specialists to use customer information to gauge their credit risk and offer microfinance products to some who would otherwise lack any proof of their capacity to repay a loan.

But such success stories do not happen in a vacuum. To begin with, everyone needs a cellular phone with an affordable data plan. It is entrusted to governments and non-governmental organisations to extend mobile networks to remote areas.

Mobile money transactions will also have to address the limitations which prevent countrywide adoption of the channel.

The promises of mobile finance are certainly very seductive. However, the reality is much harder than we can imagine. It is easier to spread technology than to bring about extensive change in social and individual attitudes. Fraud may be endemic in many financial systems, and risk may always be present. However, with the right digi-

tal payment platform and investment, customers are given protection and privacy over their transactions, increasing confidence and providing a safe and convenient way to undertake transactions.

Although mobile telephony might entail initial fixed costs, the variable costs associated with their use are significantly lower, reducing transaction costs overall. Since success is in everyone's best interest, mobile and financial industries and regulators should work collaboratively to unlock the transformative social impact of mobile money. We need a supportive and enabling policy environment. The regulators may balance innovation with risks and systemic stability to support market dynamism. Rules that are too tight will stifle innovation and hinder adoption; rules that are too lax could allow fraudsters to bring mobile banking into disrepute. The right way would be light-touch regulation. The existing law covers most issues such as consumer protection, privacy, fraud; regulators will have to come with industry to build capacity in law enforcement agencies.

As with any revolution, the old order is giving way to a new one, and banks are just one group of players on the mobile money battlefield. Telecommunication companies, internet and technology firms, retailers, and others are in this fight. Governments will have to close the digital divide to reap the benefits of digital financial services.

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## 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**  
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### Biodiversity conservation

Sir, It is disheartening to realise that human activity is causing an enormous loss to the world's biodiversity, which includes everything from forests to oceans, animal species, and tropical plants. The term "biodiversity" refers to all of the species that inhabit the planet and the intricate web of relationships that connects them. The three global issues of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, pollution and waste have been frequently raised by the scientific community. The recently concluded United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15) endorsed the "Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework" (GBF) on the final day of discussions. The GBF which contains four goals and 23 targets aims to reverse biodiversity loss, restore ecosystems, and protect indigenous people's rights. By 2030, efforts will be made to prevent the destruction of unaltered landscapes and places with a variety of species. The strategy calls for putting 30% of the earth and 30% of degraded ecosystems under protection by 2030 in order to stop and reverse the loss of nature. It also includes recommendations for increasing funding for developing nations, which has been a key point of contention in negotiations. The fact that nearly 200 nations have endorsed a new set of objectives to "stop and reverse" biodiversity loss by the end of the decade is noteworthy. Targets will also be set for preserving indigenous peoples' rights and crucial habitats like wetlands and rainforests. India is already a member of the High Ambition Coalition, a group of over 113 countries that aims to bring 30% of the world's geographical area under conservation by 2030. India also made a point at COP15 about the need to concentrate biodiversity conservation and mitigation measures on ecosystem-based approaches rather than nature-based solutions.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

### Loan scam

Sir, The series of arrests in the ICICI Bank loan fraud case continues with the CBI taking Videocon group chairman Venugopal Dhoot into custody. The court also extended the remand of the Kochhars by three days. Chanda Kochhar, former MD and CEO of the bank, was charged with criminal conspiracy and cheating for the alleged irregularities in a loan extended to the Videocon group in 2012, which turned NPA. Besides being inconsistent in giving statements, the Kochhars and Dhoot have refused to appear together for questioning.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

# Angul-Balram rail link launched



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Angul, Dec 29:** Evacuation of coal from Talcher coalfields in Angul district is set to get a boost with the inauguration of the ₹300-crore Angul-Balram rail link Thursday. The project, inaugurated by Union Coal and Mines Minister Pralhad Joshi, in the presence of his Cabinet colleagues Dharmendra

Pradhan and Ashwini Vaishnaw, is likely to enable Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL) to increase its daily dispatch of coal by around 40,000 tonne. The project was constructed by Mahanadi Coal Railway Ltd, a joint venture entity of MCL, IRCON International Ltd and IDCO, an industrial infrastructure development agency of the Odisha gov-

ernment, an official statement said. The 14-km-long Angul-Balram rail link is the first phase of a total 68-km inner corridor connecting Angul with Putugadia, Jarapada and Tentuloi, which will cater to coal mines of Talcher coalfields. The inner corridor is being implemented by MCRIL in two phases. In phase two, the Balram-Putugadia-Jarapada-Tentuloi rail link would be completed. IRCON is the implementing agency of the project that is being developed at an estimated cost of ₹1,700 crore, the statement said. The commissioning of the first phase of the project has enhanced the potential of MCL to dispatch coal by 10 more rakes daily. The rail-link will also facilitate the evacuation of the dry fuel from blocks allotted to miners other than Coal India in Talcher coalfields.



**ACROBATIC SKILLS:** Students performed a pyramid dance on the concluding day of a camp organised by National Service Scheme in Berhampur University, Thursday

## Cops clueless a month after couple shot dead

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Barbil, Dec 29:** A month has passed since a couple was shot dead by four unidentified miscreants at Lasarda village under Bolani police limits in Keonjhar district, but police are still clueless about the perpetrators. Locals have cast doubts over the police investigation. Notably, four masked people asked for petrol from a grocer Laxmidhar at Lasarda at 8pm, November 28. Later the miscreants suddenly attacked Laxmidhar and shot him and his wife Manjulata dead.

## Villagers allege massive scams, demand probe

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Banki, Dec 29:** People of Kiapal panchayat under Banki block in Cuttack district have alleged massive irregularities in various development works and government schemes. They have demanded an investigation into the irregularities and submitted a memorandum to the BDO in this regard. Sources alleged that funds meant for roadside plantations from Tarini Chowk to Parthapur RD Road have been misappropriated while some 'Gaon Sathis' have been appointed illegally. They added that construction of a concrete road near Naranpur Chowk was botched up and the major part of the fund has been embezzled. They also alleged that funds allotted to procure dustbins for the Naranpur Hanuman temple have also been embezzled.

## KEONJHAR DISTRICT

# OMBADC Oversight Authority happy over devpt initiatives

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, Dec 29:** Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation's (OMBADC) Oversight Authority Justice Anang Kumar Patnaik took stock of the progress of various developmental initiatives in Keonjhar district, during his three-day visit that concluded Thursday.

Patnaik went on a field visit Thursday. He visited Dimbo village under Sadar block and later the district headquarters hospital before holding a review meeting on various developmental projects at Durbar Hall of the Collectorate. He expressed his happiness on the progress of the OMBADC-funded projects in the district. He advised the district administration to widen various welfare activities for the people with OMBADC funds in the days to come. Keonjhar Collector Ashish Thakare and senior members of the OMBADC were present at the review meeting. At the review meeting, the Collector and OMBADC members underscored the need for spending funds in some sectors and their monitoring and drawing up plans in mineral-bearing areas. Initially, the OMBADC had allocated funds for development of in-



frastructure for drinking water, district headquarters hospital, healthcare, livelihood improvement, skill development, education and water conservation in the district. "With OMBADC funds, various quality infrastructure works have been done," he noted. Patnaik on the first day visited various project sites in Ghasipura, Hatadihi and Ghatagaon blocks. On the second day, he visited Sadar block, Jhumpura, Champua NAC and Joda block. He visited 5T-transformed High School at Ramchandrapur, Ghasipura and expressed happiness over the use of technology and learning aid for imparting education. He also visited the work site of Anandapur indoor stadium and piped drinking water project for 19 villages in Hatadihi. On December 27, he interacted with the community and oversaw the works under 'Ama Jungle

Yojana'. He enquired about the possible income generating activities and advised people to engage in more diversified activities. At the Mother and Child centre at Ghatagaon, Justice Patnaik interacted with the CDMO and enquired about the services being extended for the public. He stressed on improving the overall scenario of mother and child healthcare in Odisha. Patnaik Wednesday oversaw Krushi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) at Keonjhar and expressed his happiness about the Agri Livelihoods Demo-cum-Service provision units, capacity building and first order agri processing units. He also interacted with farmers attending skill development sessions at KVK. Expected benefits of KVK include training 1,000 farmers through 77 skill development sessions across 13 blocks and 4 districts. Later Patnaik visited the mushroom cultivation unit at Sanamuni.

## Kangaroo court ostracises family

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bolangir, Dec 29:** A kangaroo court allegedly at Mirdhapalli village under Sadar police limits in Bolangir district socially boycotted a family over past political rivalry and tiff during Sulia Yatra, Wednesday. It was alleged that the kangaroo court presided over by Mirdhapalli Sarpanch Pinku Patel and comprising the members of village committee has banished the family members of Saroj Rout from using fire and water in the village. The matter came to the fore after Saroj lodged a complaint at the Sadar police station. Sadar SDPO Tophan

Bag said that police has imposed Section-107 on both the groups and asked them to maintain peace and order. A case has been registered in this connection and further investigation is on. The kangaroo court also made it clear that those who are found talking to Saroj and his family members, or sharing any relation with them; or any shopkeeper if found selling any provisions to them will have to pay a fine of ₹5,000. Saroj's family members are now facing a social boycott by fellow villagers after the kangaroo court pronounced the order. Apprehending threat to their lives, Saroj's family members have fled from the village and taken shelter

on their paddy yard near their farmland. The incident is stated to be fallout of an altercation between Saroj and some youths over parking of a bike at a parking slot during Sulia Yatra held in the village, December 27. The village committee was organising the yatra. The youths again had an argument with Saroj near a village pond over the issue, Wednesday. Accordingly, the village committee convened a meeting Wednesday night and unanimously decided to socially boycott Saroj and his family members. The village chowkidar Balaram Jal was asked to announce the order of the committee in the entire village by beating drums.

## 7 teachers sacked for absenteeism

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jajpur, Dec 29:** The Jajpur district administration terminated seven government school teachers from service for prolonged unauthorised absence from duty. The termination orders were issued by District Education Officer Ranjan Kumar Giri pursuant to the decision of the District Collector. The terminated junior teachers of government schools under different blocks remained absent from their duties for years. They did not join their duties despite the issuance of several notices to them. Hence, they were terminated from service, Giri said.

# Aska PS tops list in overall performance

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Aska, Dec 29:** Aska police station in Ganjam district has stood first in state in overall performance ranking of the state's police stations for the year 2022. Aska police station has topped the list of all the 643 police stations ranked across the state and stood first in the Pragati Dashboard developed by the State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB). The SCRB conducted a survey to rank the police stations on the basis of their overall performances in aspects like resolving of grievances of people visiting the police station, pendency of cases, detection and solving of cases, rate of conviction and filing of chargesheets. Aska police station received 94.54 per cent rating on the Pragati Dashboard. The police station has done its

best in receiving the complaints of people visiting the police station, delivering swift action on their complaints, conducting probes and submitting the chargesheet, pursuing a case till its logical end by getting the accused punished, reaching the crime spot within the minimum time period of receiving complaint, making a station diary in matter of loss of documents and giving a copy of the FIR to the complainants, giving permission for festivals and ceremonies, providing permission of minimum time period to play high decibel music in public address systems and DJs. This has happened after Prashant Kumar Sahu joined as IIC in the police station from August 22, 2019. He has been working steadfast in providing prompt services to the people visiting the police station and in maintaining law and order in the area.



**DRAMA COMPETITION:** Artistes of Khariar Sanskritik Manch in Nuapada enact a scene from a play titled 'Amar Gaon' as part of 25th Veer Surendra Sai Sambalpur Drama Competition at Aranyak Manch in Sambalpur, Thursday

# Harnessing solar energy: Gajapati farmer shows the way

POST NEWS NETWORK

**R Udayagiri, Dec 29:** Manoj Raika, a farmer of Nuagada block in Gajapati district, has set an example for others by harnessing solar energy for growing a variety of crops and becoming self-sufficient. "As I am making use of solar energy to run pump sets for watering crops, I have nothing to pay for electricity bills. Solar pump sets helped me save several thousand rupees on energy bills during the last three years," said Manoj, a resident of Atarasingh village. Manoj, who has been pursuing farming for the last 15 years, has four acres of land but in an un-irrigated area. Initially, it was tough for him to grow crops like paddy,



maize, mustard and vegetables according to seasonal suitability. "When I initiated farming, lack of irrigation facility emerged as a major

Manoj earns ₹2.5 lakh annually from farming. Drawing inspiration from Manoj, many other farmers have also purchased solar pump sets to grow crops. stumbling block as agriculture here is primarily monsoon-dependent. There is no electricity near the farmland. It is too difficult for me to draw up water from the depth of the well," he added. In 2018, he thought of using solar energy. Under Jananidhi Yojana, he got a solar-powered pump set after applying for the scheme. "The pump set has been very helpful in irrigating crops free of cost.

As irrigation is easy, I had to grow other crops too, increasing my farm income," he added. He has underscored the need for more and more farmers making use of such solar-powered agriculture implements so that they can save a lot of money towards electricity bills. Besides, he is adopting farm mechanisation to reduce dependence on farmhands. He is using a power weeder and mini rice mill which also help him in cultivating the land more effectively and save money. Drawing inspirations from Manoj, many other farmers in the area have also purchased solar pump sets to grow crops. Manoj earns ₹2.5 lakh annually from farming. Unlike others, he needn't have to migrate to other states in search of livelihood opportunities.

**UCO Bank** ASHOKA MARKET BRANCH  
UCO Bank Building, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, C-2, Ashok Nagar, Bhubaneswar- 751009

**RELATED INFORMATION ABOUT LOST SALE DEED**

This is for information of the public in general that **Mr. Manoranjan Sahoo** had availed Loan from our Branch by mortgaging the Registered Sale Deed No.: 9017, Dt: 12.10.1988 Dist.: Khurda, Tahasil: Bhubaneswar, Mouza: Nayapalli, Khata No.: 84, Plot No.: 218, Holding No.: 8812, Area: Ac.0.072 Dec. over which the two storied building situated having carpet Area: 3000 Sq.ft., stands corresponding to Hal Mouza: Bhubaneswar City Unit No.: 17 Nayapalli, P.S.: New Capital No.: 35, Khata No.: 1469, Plot No.: 1402, but unfortunately the above Sale Deed has been lost from our bank loan file and in spite of our best efforts, we couldn't able to trace out the same. If anybody find the above sale deed or found the same requested to return to our branch. If anybody misutilises the same, then Bank shall not be responsible for the same and legally they will be punished.

**Date : 29.12.2022** **Sd./ Asst. General Manager**

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ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର (ରାସ୍ତା ଓ ଗୃହ) ବିଭାଗ ନଂ.୪, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

**Office of the Superintending Engineer  
Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No.IV  
Nirman Soudha, Unit-V, Bhubaneswar**

E-mail ID: eernb4bbsr@gmail.com, Tel:(0674)2390245  
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS THROUGH e-Procurement  
No.7960, Date:28.12.2022  
Bid Identification No.C.C. (R&B)-04  
No.B-1067: e-Procurement Notice No.44 of 2022-23

1	Name of the Work	Building Work (Electrical)
2	Total No. of Works	1 No. Building Work (Electrical)
3	Estimated Cost	Rs.45,33,965.00
4	Class of Contractor (I)	MV Class
5	Period of Completion	2 (Two) Calendar Months
6	Type of Tender	Single Cover System
7	Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	From Dt.07.01.2023 to 17.30 hrs of Dt.17.01.2023
8	Last date & time for receipt of bids in the Portal	Dt.17.01.2023 upto 17.30 Hrs.
9	Opening of Bid through online	Dt.18.01.2023 at 11.30 AM onwards
10	Name & Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Er. Trinath Behera, Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No.IV, Bhubaneswar

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>. N.B. Subsequent corrigendum/addendum if required shall be available in the website as indicated above.

**Sd./Superintending Engineer,  
BBSR (R&B) Division No.IV, BBSR**

**LOST/FOUND**

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that, One **Smt. Geetanjali Sahu, W/o. Radha Krushna Dash, Resident of At/PO - Badabaragam Via -Purushottampur, Dist - Ganjam** has applied to the LIC HOUSING FINANCE LTD., Berhampur to avail housing loan by mortgaging her Title Deeds One of the Original Link Regd. Sale Deed bearing Document No. 10861000369/2010 of SRO, Purushottampur and Original ROR vide Khata No. 702/110, Plot no - 297/1710 of Mouza Kumari under Purushottampur Tahasil has been lost since 08/12/2020. All concerned thereof, having any claim over the property purchased under the said Document No 10861000369/2010, are required to file their claim with the undersigned within 15 (Fifteen) days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, it will be presumed that the property having link with said document is free from encumbrances and any claim in respect of thereof, against the applicant as a Mortgager and the Company as the Mortgagee, shall be void and ineffective after the lapse of 15 (Fifteen) days of publication of this Notice. If anybody found the documents kindly contacts in this address.

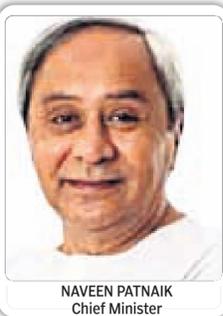
**A.Uma Maheswar Rao, Advocate, Baikuntha Nagar, 1st Lane At/PO-Berhampur, Dist.Ganjam PIN-760001, Mob No.9337502710**

**Smt. Geetanjali Sahu W/o- Radhakrushna Dash At/PO- Badabaragam Via-Purushottampur Pin-761018 Mob-9861373150 9861101388**

STATE

They always wield the proverbial power of sword even if it remains invisible to make the world a better place to live in. Despite the after effects of Covid-19 pandemic, and the geopolitical and economic crises, it is their decisions, good or bad, that have helped the world move on. It was a challenging year both at regional and global levels but with their uncanny sense of decision-making, some of the industry captains, politicians and bureaucrats have revived industries and economies. Orissa POST takes a walk down memory lane in 2022 to identify these powerful people

NB: This list is in no particular order



NAVEEN PATNAIK  
Chief Minister



VK PANDIAN  
5T Secretary



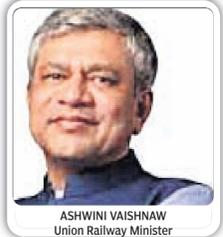
DHARMENDRA PRADHAN  
Union Education Minister



DS KUTEY  
Special Secretary to CM



JAYA NARAYAN MISHRA  
Leader of Opposition



ASHWINI VAISHNAV  
Union Railway Minister



SURESH CHANDRA MAHAPATRA  
Chief Secretary



NARENDRA MODI  
Prime Minister



GAUTAM ADANI  
Industrialist

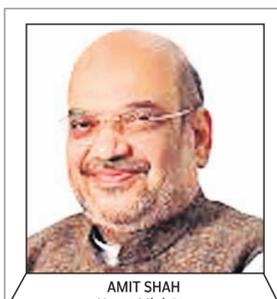


DY CHANDRACHUD  
Chief Justice of India

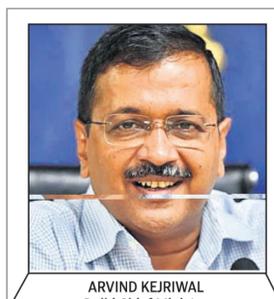


RAHUL GANDHI  
Congress leader

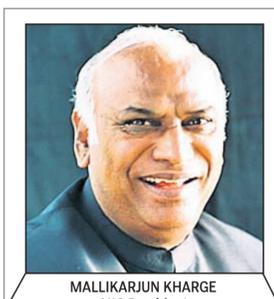
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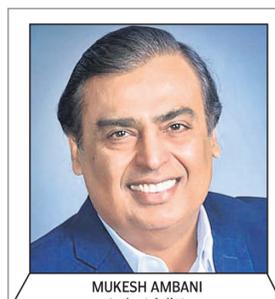
AMIT SHAH  
Home Minister



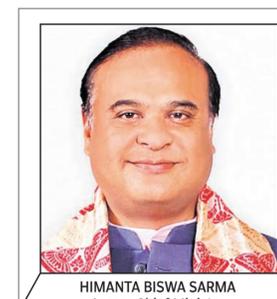
ARVIND KEJRIWAL  
Delhi Chief Minister



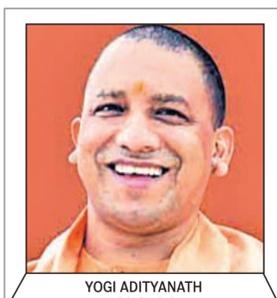
MALLIKARJUN KHARGE  
AICC President



MUKESH AMBANI  
Industrialist



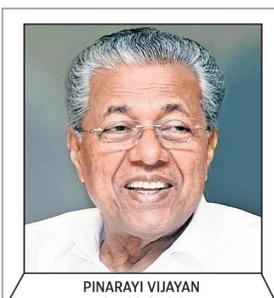
HIMANTA BISWA SARMA  
Assam Chief Minister



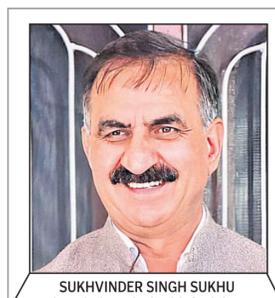
YOGI ADITYANATH  
UP Chief Minister



K CHANDRASEKHAR RAO  
Telangana Chief Minister



PINARAYI VIJAYAN  
Kerala Chief Minister



SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU  
Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister



ASHOK GEHLOT  
Rajasthan Chief Minister



BHAGWANT MANN  
Punjab Chief Minister



TEJASWI YADAV  
Bihar Deputy Chief Minister



MAMATA BANERJEE  
West Bengal Chief Minister



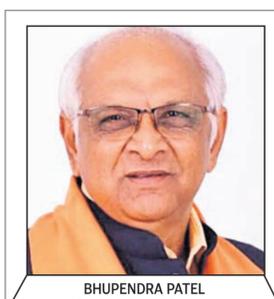
PK MISHRA  
PM's Principal Secretary



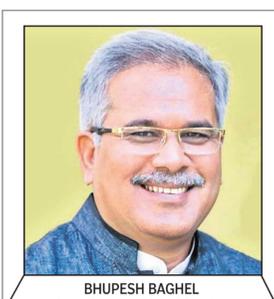
DEVENDRA FADNAVIS  
Maharashtra Deputy CM



PRIYANKA GANDHI  
Congress leader



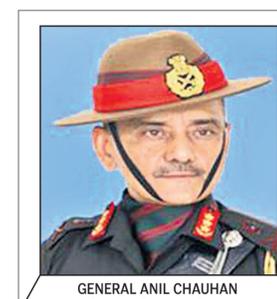
BHUPENDRA PATEL  
Gujarat Chief Minister



BHUPESH BAGHEL  
Chhattisgarh Chief Minister



HEMANT SOREN  
Jharkhand Chief Minister



GENERAL ANIL CHAUHAN  
Chief of Defence Staff

INTERNATIONAL



VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY  
President, Ukraine



VLADIMIR PUTIN  
President, Russia



XI JINPING  
President, China



KING CHARLES III  
King of the United Kingdom



JOE BIDEN  
President, USA



EMMANUEL MACRON  
President, France



JACINDA ARDERN  
Prime Minister, New Zealand



LUIZ INACIO LULA DA SILVA  
President-elect, Brazil



JUSTIN TRUDEAU  
Prime Minister, Canada



MOHAMMED BIN SALMAN AL SAUD  
Crown Prince, Saudi Arabia



RISHI SUNAK  
Prime Minister, UK



GEN. ASIM MUNIR AHMED  
Chief of Army staff, Pakistan



RONN DESANTIS  
Governor of Florida



ELON MUSK  
CEO, Twitter, Tesla & Space X



POPE FRANCIS  
Head of the Catholic Church



BENJAMIN NETANYAHU  
Prime Minister, Israel



PUSHPA KAMAL DAHAL 'PRACHANDA'  
Prime Minister, Nepal

# national

## of the day quote

The government has achieved the target of starting 1.5 lakh Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres across the country



MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | HEALTH MINISTER

The learning process will remain only a battle to pass the exam. Until the current examination system is changed, the entire education system will remain a slave of the three-hour annual examination. We have progressed with time but still have not been able to move away from rote assessment systems



MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat should stay alert as Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has an evil eye and he might usurp the Sangh office



UDDHAV THACKERAY | FORMER MAHARASHTRA CM

## IAF TEST-FIRES BRAHMOS AIR LAUNCHED MISSILE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 29: The Indian Air Force Thursday said that it has successfully fired the extended range version of Brahmos Air Launched Missile against a ship target from a Sukhoi SU-30MKI aircraft.

The IAF said that the missile can hit a target at a range of around 400 km. After being launched from a Su-30 fighter aircraft, the missile hit the target ship in the centre, achieving the desired mission objectives in firing conducted in the Bay of Bengal region.

With this, the IAF has achieved a significant capability boost to carry out precision strikes from SU-30MKI aircraft against land and sea targets over very long



ranges, it added.

According to the IAF, the extended range capability of the missile coupled with the high performance of the SU-30MKI aircraft gives the IAF a strategic reach and allows it to dominate the future battlefields. The dedicated and synergistic efforts of IAF, Indian Navy, the DRDO, the BAPL and the HAL have been instrumental in achieving this feat, Defence Ministry officials added.

The IAF will be further strengthened with enhanced lethal capabilities by induction of new range of missile system, long-range guided bombs, the range augmentation kit for conventional bombs and advanced surveillance systems.

Last week, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, had accorded approval for acceptance of necessity (AoN) for 24 capital acquisition proposals. These proposals include six for the Indian Army, six for the Indian Air Force, 10 for the Indian Navy and two for the Indian Coast Guard for a total value of Rs 84,328 crore.



The government is shaken... Writing to Raul that the Covid made the Yatra dangerous was a signal that it was extremely concerned about its success

SASHI THAROOR | CONGRESS LEADER

## RIYA KUMARI MURDER: HUSBAND HELD

The husband of Jharkhand actor Riya Kumari was Thursday arrested for allegedly murdering her, police said. Riya Kumari, who goes by the screen name of Isha Aliya, was shot dead on National Highway 16 in West Bengal's Howrah district in the early hours of Wednesday when she was heading to Kolkata along with her husband Prakash Kumar and two-year-old daughter, they said



IAF successfully conducted a trial run of the 4.1 km emergency landing facility constructed on a national highway in Bapatla. Two Sukhoi fighter aircrafts among others participated in the drill

## Congress calls for white paper on farmers' income

THE ALL INDIA KISAN CONGRESS SAID THE BJP'S CLAIM OF DOUBLING OF FARMERS' INCOME BY 2022 IS JUST A MYTH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 29: The Congress Thursday accused the government of not fulfilling the promise of doubling farmers' income and demanded a white paper on their earnings since 2004.

The All India Kisan Congress, a department of the opposition party, said the Bharatiya Janata Party's claim of doubling of farmers' income by 2022 is just a myth. In reality, their income has come down during the NDA regime.

"In February 2016, PM Modi had promised doubling of farmers' income by 2022. What to speak of doubling their income, if the inflation is accounted for, the farmers' income has actually reduced during these years," Kisan Congress chairman Sukhpal Singh Khaira told a press conference here.



He cited the National Sample Survey of 2018 and said it was actually the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government between 2004 and 2014 which had "more than doubled the farmers' income". He said the UPA government doubled the MSP of wheat and paddy - two main crops - within eight years of coming to power. During the Congress regime, the MSP for wheat was Rs 640 per quintal in 2004 and it went up to Rs

1,400 per quintal for the 2013-14 season. Similarly, the MSP for paddy in 2004 was Rs 560 per quintal and it went up to Rs 1,310 per quintal in 2013-14.

In strong contrast, Khaira said, the MSP for both paddy and wheat did not increase by more than 50 per cent during the BJP regime.

"After independence, the Modi government is the first regime which imposed GST on pesticides, fertilisers and farm appliances..." he said. "Doubling of farmers' income was another epic 'jumla' of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he alleged. Questioning Prime Minister Modi's silence on the non-fulfilment of his promise of doubling farmers' income by 2022, the Congress leader asked him what happened to the recommendations of the committee set up for the purpose in 2016.

## BJP got 72% of all funds via ETs in 2021-22: ADR

After BJP, the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) received the second highest amount of ₹40 crore, with Prudent ET being the only donor

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 29: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) received the highest amount of donations from electoral trusts (ETs) in fiscal year 2021-22, at Rs 351.50 crore making up 72.17 per cent of the total donations received by all parties, as per a detailed report by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).

The Prudent ET donated the highest amount (Rs 336.50 crore) to the BJP, against Rs 209 crore contributed in FY 2020-21. AB General ET and Samaj ET donated Rs 10 crore and Rs 5 crore to the BJP in FY 2021-22, respectively.

The Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) have received a total of Rs 18.43 crore and Rs 21.12 crore from ETs, respectively.

While there is only Rs 0.19 crore difference in the donations made by the Prudent ET to both parties, Independent ET donated Rs 4.81 crore to the AAP, making AAP the bigger receiver compared to Congress. Small Donations ET donated only Rs 1.9351 cr to the Congress.

Moreover, the Prudent ET donated to nine political parties, including the TRS, the Samajwadi

Party, the YSR Congress, the Shiromani Akali Dal, the Punjab Lok Congress Party, and the Goa Forward Party.

Six ETs, that have declared receiving contributions from different corporates and individuals during FY 2021-22, received a total amount of Rs 487.0856 crore and distributed Rs 487.0551 crore (99.994 per cent) to various political parties.

However, details of donors to these six ETs remain unknown, thereby leading to speculation on whether donations to these trusts were only a means of getting tax exemption or a way to convert black money stashed in tax havens to white money in India, the ADR said.

According to the ADR, details of donors to these ETs, which were formed before the Central Board of Direct Taxes rules came into existence, should also be disclosed.

In FY 21-22, 89 corporate/business houses contributed Rs 475.8021 crore to ETs out of which 62 contributed Rs 456.30 crore to Prudent ET, two contributed Rs 10 crore to AB General ET, three contributed Rs 5 crore to Samaj ET, and 15 contributed Rs 2.20 crore to Independent ET.



## SHORT TAKES

### PM's mother is recovering

Ahmedabad: Two days after she was admitted to a hospital in Ahmedabad, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother Heeraben Modi, 99, is doing better and is "likely to be discharged in a day or two", the Gujarat government said today. "Heeraba's health is good. Her health is improving rapidly. She is likely to be discharged in a day or two. Oral diet started yesterday night," read a communication from the Chief Minister's Office.

### CBI arrests Defence Accounts Service officer

New Delhi: The CBI has arrested an officer of the Indian Defence Accounts Service in a case of alleged bribery of Rs 10 lakh, officials said Thursday. It is alleged that a company based in Jind in Haryana had transferred the money to a middleman seeking favours from the 1988-batch officer, they said.

### Woman raped for two days

Gurugram: A 20-year-old woman was allegedly held captive and repeatedly raped by her friend here, police said Thursday. According to a complaint filed by the woman, the accused, identified as Rasdul, lived as a tenant at the victim's house, they said. The accused and the woman became friends and stayed in touch even after the man shifted to another accommodation, police said citing the complainant.

## NDMC steps up efforts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 29: Amid growing concern over a surge in COVID-19 cases in some countries, including in India, the New Delhi Municipal Council has leapt into action by organising mock drills, holding preparatory meetings and educating people on the pandemic.

NDMC vice-chairman Satish Upadhyay conducted an inspection of the services at a hospital Tuesday.

The New Delhi civic body also called a joint meeting with health officials to verify the Covid arrangements at Charak Palika Hospital in Moti Bagh on the same day. Sharing details about coronavirus pre-

## COVID SCARE



paredness, NDMC Chairman Amit Yadav said the civic body started working soon after the Centre issued an advisory on COVID-19.

"With the COVID-19 advisory from the government, we have already begun working. We are holding inspections in hospitals. We are conducting mock drills and conducting preparatory meetings. We are taking stock of medicine availability," Yadav said.

## Alert in Bodh Gaya amid Dalai Lama's visit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 29: As security was beefed up in Bodh Gaya in Bihar following a threat to Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama allegedly from a Chinese woman, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Thursday called it "a security issue" and refused to comment further on it.

"It looks like a security issue, I don't have any update on it. I certainly don't think this is the right forum to talk about security-related aspects," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said at the weekly briefing.

He said the government has a liaison officer there, but refused to



Buddhist monks and devotees attend a sermon of Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama at Kalachakra Ground

make any further comments on the "security issue".

A security alert was issued in Bodh Gaya in Bihar Thursday morning amid a visit of the Dalai Lama, with the police searching for a Chinese woman, an official said.

Police issued a sketch of the woman, identified as Song Xiaolan, besides sharing her passport and visa details with the press.

It was not immediately clear why the police were looking for the woman.

Security has been beefed up around the Mahabodhi Temple Complex with the screening of devotees being intensified. The Dalai Lama addressed a gathering there in the morning.

## JALLIKATTU FEVER GRIPS TN

## YOUNG MEN REV UP TRAINING TO TAKE ON MIGHTY BULLS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Madurai, Dec 29: Every time the bull was released into the sporting arena, she pushed her tail between her hind legs and raised her ears. The milch cow, tethered to a tree, pretty close to the arena was apparently apprehensive and perhaps afraid as the bull repeatedly charged at her.

Veerapandi village near Madurai city was humming, young men training hard to succeed as ace tamers in the bull taming sport 'Jallikattu,' that traditionally commences in the Tamil month of 'Thai' (January) and is conducted

in several regions of Tamil Nadu. Under the watchful eyes of master trainers, 'Mudakkathan' Mani and 'Police' Vinoth, the young men learn the significance of sharp reflexes and the appropriate methods to hold on to a bull's hump to ensure that there is no injury to man and animal. Workout sessions are now relatively more.

The 'Vadi,' entry point to the makeshift sporting arena in the village was abuzz with youths and bulls raring to go and little ones huddling on a platform under a large tree to cheer the trainees.

A few men line up on both sides of the Vadi, ready to make a soft



jump onto the animal. "Lower your left hand a little below the hump and

have a watch over your legs too," Mani shouts at Sriram

THE SUPREME COURT DECEMBER 8 RESERVED ORDER ON PETITIONS AGAINST THE BULL TAMING GAME

THE TOP COURT HAD SAID THAT JALLIKATTU CANNOT BE TERMED A BLOOD SPORT AS NOBODY IS USING ANY WEAPON AND THE BLOOD MAY ONLY BE AN INCIDENTAL THING

Marudhupandi, a college student. The youth, who managed to get to the hump could not sustain the brief success as the bull eventually gave the youth the slip and he tripped and fell to the ground with a thud.

"Adjusting the position of the hand very fast is important to avoid injury. If the bull turns its neck, its horn may pierce or hit the tamer badly," Mani, a veteran bull tamer, who has successfully tamed over 3,500 bulls over a span of about 25 years told PTI.

"The tamer's legs should not go too close to the animal's legs. The aspirant's knees must bend slightly backwards as and when needed."

Many Jallikattu bulls do not have hooves and the idea is to prevent injuries to men in case the animals kicked them. Similar training sessions are held in various rural regions of the State.

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of the day quote

The stance of the BJP government in Karnataka to cancel the proceedings of the House tomorrow in order to attend the Union Home Minister Amit Shah's programme is against the state. I demand that the session be extended for one more week and to provide an opportunity to discuss public issues

The year 2022 was a fresh beginning for me when I was sworn in for the second time. I have progressed step by step and also the state progressed along with me

The issue of OBC reservation in the urban local bodies' elections was another attempt to prevent weaker sections from entering the corridors of power

SHORT TAKES

Stampede tragedy: Death toll rises to 8

Amaravati: One more person who was injured in a stampede during a programme organised by the Telugu Desam Party in Kandukur town in Nellore district succumbed while undergoing treatment Wednesday night, taking the toll to eight, police said.

Search operation intensified in J&K

Jammu: A day after four terrorists were killed in an encounter here, police Thursday launched search operations in several areas, including at the general bus stand and railway station, to trace the truck driver who fled from the spot before the gunfight started.

UGC-NET to be held Feb 23 to March 10

New Delhi: The National Eligibility Test (NET) to determine the suitability of students to be recruited as assistant professors will be conducted from February 23 to March 10, 2023, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced Thursday.

Scuffle onboard Bangkok-Kolkata plane: BCAS files police complaint

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 29: The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) Thursday filed a police complaint regarding the scuffle between passengers onboard a Thai Smile Airways plane from Bangkok to Kolkata earlier this week, and Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said such passenger behaviour is unacceptable.

The security watchdog said the police has already started its investigation, and further action will follow. "With regard to the scuffle between passengers on board a @ThaiSmileAirway flight, a police complaint has been filed against those involved. Such behaviour is unacceptable," Scindia said in a tweet.



Assistant Commandants of Sashastra Seema Bal take part in the passing out parade at SSB Academy in Chandukhedhi near Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

Now the SP and other parties are not going to get any benefit by making tall claims on reservation. All these communities should also be alerted from these double-faced parties

MAYAWATI | BSP PRESIDENT

SHOCKING REPORT

A total of 16,397 persons were killed in road accidents in 2021 due to not wearing seat belt, of which 8,438 were drivers and remaining 7,959 were passengers, according to a report by Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)



'PATHAAN' CONTROVERSY

Make changes in film, songs: CBFC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 29: The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) has directed the makers of Shah Rukh Khan-starrer "Pathaan" to implement "changes" in the movie, including its songs, in accordance with board guidelines, chairperson Prasoona Joshi said Thursday.

The CBFC has asked production banner Yash Raj Films to submit the revised version of the spy action thriller before its release next month, Joshi said in a statement.

He did not detail the changes suggested to the makers or specify the song.

"Pathaan" has been battling controversy and calls for a ban after the release of its song "Besharam Rang", also featuring Deepika Padukone, December 12. A sequence in the song showing Deepika in a saffron bikini led to protests across India for allegedly hurting "Hindu sentiments".



Last week, the makers released another song, "Jhoomejo Pathaan". "The film recently reached the CBFC examination committee for certification. The film went through the due and thorough examining process as per the CBFC guidelines."

COUGH SYRUP DEATHS IN UZBEKISTAN

Firm halts production 'for now', probe begins

EXPERTS SAY THAT COUGH SYRUPS SOMETIMES CONTAIN "UNACCEPTABLE LEVELS" OF DIETHYLENE GLYCOL AND ETHYLENE GLYCOL. THE SYRUP BECOMES HARMFUL IF THERE IS EVEN A SLIGHT DIFFERENCE IN THEIR QUANTITY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Noida, Dec 29: The manufacturing of Marion Biotech's Dok-1 Max has stopped "for now", the company's legal representative said Thursday as the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation began a probe in connection with the death of 18 children in Uzbekistan allegedly linked to the cough syrup.

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said further action would be taken based on the inspection of the pharma company, under a cloud after the Uzbekistan health ministry's allegation that the children died after consuming Dok-1 Max. Marion Biotech does not sell Dok-1 Max in India and its only export has been to Uzbekistan, an Uttar Pradesh government official said as inspection began at the company office in Noida on the outskirts of the capital on Thursday morning. Samples of the cough syrup have



been taken from the manufacturing premises in Noida and sent to the Regional Drugs Testing Laboratory (RDTL) in Chandigarh for testing, Mandaviya said.

The CDSCO, he said, has been in regular contact with the national drug regulator of Uzbekistan regarding the matter since December 27. "Immediately on receipt of information, joint inspection of the Noida facility of the manufacturer, Marion Biotech, was carried out by UP Drug Control and CDSCO team and further action as appropriate would be initiated based on the inspection report," Mandaviya said in a series of tweets.

Marion Biotech is a licensed manufacturer and holds the licence for manufacturing Dok-1 Max syrup and tablet for export purpose granted by the Drugs Controller, Uttar Pradesh, the health ministry said in a statement.

The governments of both countries are looking into the matter, said Hasan Harris, legal representative of the Noida-based Marion Biotech.

"There is no problem from our end and no issue in testing. We have been there for the past 10 years. Once the government report will come, we will look into it. For now the manufacturing has stopped," Harris told PTI.

Before Uzbekistan's claims were reports linking the deaths of 70 children in Gambia to cough syrups manufactured by Haryana-based Maiden Pharmaceuticals earlier this year. Sources said the DCGI has sought more information from the Uzbek regulator regarding the latest allegation. According to the Uzbek ministry, the chemical ethylene glycol was found in a batch of Dok-1 Max syrup during laboratory tests. The alleged role of Indian pharma companies in the deaths of children abroad had a political fallout too. While the Congress asked the government to stop boasting about India being a pharmacy to the world and take strictest action, the ruling BJP accused it of deriding India in its "hate" for Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

NIA raids 56 locations linked to PFI in Kerala



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 29: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Thursday conducted searches at 56 locations in Kerala in a case related to unlawful and violent activities being carried out by the Popular Front of India (PFI), its office-bearers/cadres, members and affiliates.

The PFI has been found justifying the use of criminal force and encouraging vulnerable youth to join terrorist organisations. This case was registered suo moto by the NIA September 19.

Searches were conducted at residences of seven State Executive

Committee members, seven Zonal Heads of PFI, 15 Physical Training Instructors-Trainers of PFI, houses of seven PFI cadres trained in the use of knives, daggers, swords and other types of weapons to carry out murderous violent acts and 20 other suspects.

The raids were carried out at three places in the districts of Thiruvananthapuram, three places in Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, two places each in Kottayam, Thrissur, at one place in Palakkad, seven places at Malappuram, 13 places in Ernakulam, four in Kozhikode, nine in Kannur and six at Wayanad.

Earlier September 22, the NIA conducted searches at 24 locations in Kerala, including the offices of PFI and residences of 13 accused.

"Searches have led to the recovery and seizure of sharp-edged weapons, incriminating material and digital devices," the official said in a statement.

CBI searches 91 locations over medical laxity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 29: The CBI conducted searches at 91 locations across the country Thursday in connection with its investigation against several state medical councils and foreign medical graduates who were allowed to practise in India without qualifying a mandatory test, officials said.

The agency had registered an FIR against 14 state medical councils and 73 foreign medical graduates who were allowed to practise medicine in India without qualifying the mandatory Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE), they said.

According to norms, a foreign medical graduate must qualify



FMGE/Screening Test conducted by the National Board of Examination in order to get pro-

visional or permanent registration with the National Medical Commission or a state medical council to practise medicine in India.

The sources said NBE sends its results to candidates as well as councils, they said. When fake eligibility certificates were produced by these candidates, medical councils could have verified it from the results directly sent to them by NBE, they said.

The CBI has registered the case of alleged corruption, criminal conspiracy, forgery and cheating against unidentified officials of state medical councils, the erstwhile Medical Council of India, and 73 foreign medical graduates, the officials said.

Urgent need to develop antibiotics for newborns: Experts

RECENT ESTIMATES SHOW ABOUT 23 MILLION NEWBORNS DIE OF SEVERE BACTERIAL INFECTIONS EVERY YEAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 29: There is an urgent need to develop antibiotics for newborn babies, a population that is particularly vulnerable to antibiotic resistance, according to leading global health experts including those from India.

Over the last decade, AMR has worsened to the point where around 50-70 per cent of common pathogens show a high degree of resistance to available first and second-line antibiotics, they said.

The paper is co-authored by international experts in the field of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), including those from the Global Antibiotic Research & Development

Partnership (GARDP) and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).

The authors noted that despite substantial progress in medical research and a steep decline in the number of children under the age of five who die of preventable diseases, many problems related to child health remain to be tackled. Severe bacterial infections are one of them.

"There is an urgent need to identify high priority antibiotics to understand which ones work best and safely in children, and then make them available where they are needed," said Mike Sharland from St George's, University of London (SGUL), and member of the Antimicrobial Resistance Programme at Penta - Child Health Research.

"By achieving global consensus, we can streamline the process of antibiotic development, allow for faster access to antibiotics, and reduce the burden of AMR on the vul-



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

nerable neonatal population," added Manica Balasegaram, Executive Director of GARDP.

The report also highlights how collaborative antibiotic development and access network specifically targeting newborns could

also prove valuable compared to single independent studies.

A successful example, the authors noted, has been the collaborative between GARDP, Penta - Child Health Research, SGUL, and other partners on a recent global

observational study of 3,200 babies with neonatal sepsis across 19 hospitals in 11 countries.

They are also partnering on an upcoming clinical trial, which will start in South Africa within the next few months before being expanded to other countries.

Despite a rising number of newborn deaths caused by AMR, very few effective antibiotics have been adequately studied to treat serious bacterial infections such as neonatal sepsis, the authors said.

As many as 40 antibiotics approved for use in adults since 2000, only four have included dosing information for newborns in their labels, they said. According to the report, ethical concerns, logistical issues and regulatory requirements have made it difficult to conduct clinical research in newborns.

There is a long delay in completing paediatric regulatory studies and they are also not harmonised globally to demonstrate clinical utility in newborns, it said.

OBC RESERVATION IN URBAN LOCAL BODY POLLS

UP govt moves apex court against Allahabad HC order

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 29: The Uttar Pradesh government Thursday moved the Supreme Court challenging the Allahabad High Court order quashing its draft notification on the urban local body elections and directing the state to hold the polls without reservation for the Other Backward Classes.

The state government, in its appeal against the December 27 order, has said the high court cannot quash the December 5 draft notification which provided for reservation of seats in the urban body polls for the OBCs apart from those for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women.

The appeal, filed through advocate on record Ruchira Goel, said the OBCs are a constitutionally protected section and the high

court erred in quashing the draft notification.

The Uttar Pradesh government had Wednesday appointed a five-member commission for going into the entire gamut of issues for providing reservation to the OBCs in urban local body polls.

The panel will be headed by Justice (Retd) Ram Avtar Singh. The four other members are retired Indian Administrative Service officers Chaub Singh Verma and Mahendra Kumar, and former legal advisors to the state Santosh Kumar Viskarma and Brajesh Kumar Soni.

The Lucknow bench of the high court had ordered that the state government should notify the polls "immediately" as the term of several municipalities would end by January 31, while annulling the December 5 draft notification.

# international

## of the day quote

The island nation's economy, guided by the government's sound economic policies and recovery measures, has successfully recovered to pre-Covid levels this year



IBRAHIM MOHAMED SOLIH | MALDIVIAN PRESIDENT

We are in a tight position. We don't have \$24bn in foreign exchange reserves that our last government left in 2016. But that not my fault. It's the system's fault



ISHAQ DAR | PAKISTAN'S FINANCE MINISTER

The banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan militant group has between 7,000 and 10,000 fighters in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border area



RANA SANAUULLAH | PAKISTAN'S INTERIOR MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### 'Surya Kiran' ends

Kathmandu: The 16th edition of "Surya Kiran," the joint military training exercise between Indian and Nepal, aimed at enhancing interoperability in jungle warfare, counter terrorism operations and bolstering bilateral ties between the two countries concluded here Thursday. As many as 334 military personnel from both sides participated in this two-week long exercise that began on December 16. The event was organised at Nepal Army Battle School at Sallhandi in Rupandehi district near the Nepal-India border.

### Pacts inked

Nicosia: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Thursday met his Cypriot counterpart Ioannis Kasoulides here and discussed the full spectrum of bilateral relations and issues of mutual and global interests like the Ukraine conflict, as the two sides signed three agreements, including an MOU on defence and military cooperation. Jaishankar arrived here earlier in the day on his first official visit to Cyprus as the two countries celebrate the 60 years of diplomatic relations. During his visit, Jaishankar met his Cypriot counterpart Kasoulides and signed an agreement on defence and military cooperation, another Letter of Intent on immigration and mobility, as well as the agreement on Cyprus joining the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

### Three charged

Johannesburg: Three white men in South Africa have been charged with crimes including attempted murder after an alleged racist attack on two Black boys that has sparked public outrage. The men were caught on video assaulting the Black teenagers who were using a swimming pool at the Maselspoort resort in the Free State province. The men were trying to prevent the teenagers from swimming, claiming that the pool was reserved for white people.

### Search continues

Buffalo: Roads reopened Thursday in storm-besieged Buffalo as authorities continued searching for people who may have died or are stuck and suffering after last week's blizzard. The driving ban in New York's second-most-populous city was lifted just after midnight Thursday, Mayor Byron Brown announced. "Significant progress has been made" on snow removal, he said at a news conference late Wednesday. Suburban roads, major highways and Buffalo Niagara International Airport had already reopened.

## FEAR RETURNS

# Lack of Covid info stirs global concerns

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, Dec 29: Moves by several countries to mandate COVID-19 tests for passengers arriving from China reflect global concern that new variants could emerge in its ongoing explosive outbreak — and that the government may not inform the rest of the world quickly enough.

There have been no reports of new variants to date, but China has been accused of not being forthcoming about the virus since it first surfaced in the country in late 2019. The worry is that it may not be sharing data now on any signs of evolving strains that could spark fresh outbreaks elsewhere. The US, Japan, India, South Korea, Taiwan and Italy have announced testing requirements for passengers from China. The US cited both the surge in infections and what it said was a lack of information, including genomic sequencing of the virus strains in the country.

Authorities in Taiwan and Japan have expressed a similar concern. "Right now the pandemic situation in China is not transparent," Wang Pi-Sheng, the head of Taiwan's epidemic command centre, said. "We have a very limited grasp on its information, and it's not very accurate."

The island will start testing everyone arriving from China on January 1, ahead of the expected return of about 30,000 Taiwanese for the Lunar New Year holiday later in the month. The new Japanese rules, which restrict flights from mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao to designated airports beginning Friday, are already disrupting holiday travel plans.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin noted Thursday that many countries have not changed their policies for

China rolled back many of its tough pandemic restrictions earlier this month, allowing the virus to spread rapidly in a country that had seen relatively few infections since an initial devastating outbreak in the city of Wuhan

Every new infection offers a chance for the coronavirus to mutate, and it is spreading rapidly in China

travellers from China and said that any measures should treat people from all countries equally.

Every new infection offers a chance for the coronavirus to mutate, and it is spreading rapidly in China. Scientists can't say whether that means the surge will unleash a new mutant on the world — but they worry that might happen.

Chinese health officials have said the current outbreak is being driven by versions of the omicron variant that have also been detected elsewhere, and a surveillance system has been set up to identify any potentially worrisome new versions of the virus. Wu Zunyou, the chief epidemiologist at China's Center for Disease Control, said Thursday that China has always reported the virus strains it has found in a timely way.

"We keep nothing secret," he said. "All work is shared with the world." German Health Ministry spokesperson Sebastian Guelleke said authorities there have "no indication that a more dangerous variant has developed in this outbreak in China," but they are monitoring the situation. The European Union is also assessing the situation, though its executive branch noted that a prevalent variant in China is already active in Europe.



# Russia steps up attack on Ukraine

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, Dec 29: Russian missiles hit Ukraine Thursday in the biggest wave of strikes in weeks, damaging power stations and other critical infrastructure during freezing winter weather.

Russia fired 69 missiles at energy facilities and Ukrainian forces shot down 54, Ukrainian military chief Gen. Valerii Zaluzhnyi said. Local officials said attacks killed at least two people around Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city.

The strikes also wounded at least six people across the country, although the toll of the attacks was growing as officials assessed the day's events. Russia dispatched explosive drones to selected regions overnight before broadening the

## MASSIVE BOMBARDMENT



barrage with air and sea-based missiles, the Ukrainian air force said. Air-raid sirens rang out across the country, and the military activated air-defense systems in Kyiv, the regional administration said. Russia has attacked Ukrainian



The mood for a new government was evident. There was a whole raft of reasons for that including the problems with infrastructure and essential services, education, increasing poverty, abuse of rights, a climate of fear and a massive national debt

SITIVENI RABUKA | FIJI'S PM

## US STUDY

Restricting abortion access is linked to increased suicide risk for women of reproductive age, a study conducted in the US found



George, 5, a migrant boy from Venezuela who is travelling with his family and trying to seek asylum in the United States, plays with a Captain America doll at the border between Mexico and the United States, while members of the Texas National Guard stand guard on the banks of the Rio Bravo river, with the purpose of reinforcing border security and inhibiting the crossing of migrants to the United States, seen from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico

## RISING CHINA THREAT

# US to sell Taiwan anti-tank system

The announcement indicated Taiwan would be buying the vehicle-borne version, the kind of general-use weapon many experts believe Taiwan needs more of to dissuade or repel a potential Chinese invasion



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Dec 29: The US State Department has approved the sale of an anti-tank mine-laying system to Taiwan amid the rising military threat from China.

The department Wednesday said the Volcano system and all related equipment would cost an estimated USD 180 million. It's capable of scattering anti-tank and anti-personnel mines from either a ground vehicle or helicopter. The announcement indicated Taiwan would be buying the vehicle-borne version, the kind of general-use weapon many experts believe Taiwan needs

more of to dissuade or repel a potential Chinese invasion.

To advertise that threat, China's military sent 71 planes and seven ships toward Taiwan in a 24-hour display of force directed at the self-ruled island it claims is its own territory, Taiwan's Defence Ministry said Monday.

China's military harassment of Taiwan has intensified in recent years, along with rhetoric from top leaders that the island has no choice but to accept eventual Chinese rule. That has seen the ruling Communist Party's in-

creasingly powerful military wing, the People's Liberation Army, send planes or ships toward the island on a near-daily basis.

Between 6 am Sunday and 6 am Monday, 47 of the Chinese planes crossed the median line of the 160 kilometre (100 mile) Taiwan Strait, an unofficial boundary once tacitly accepted by both sides, according to the Defence Ministry.

That came after China expressed anger at Taiwan-related provisions in a US annual defense spending bill in what has come to be a standard Chinese practice.

## NETANYAHU BACK AS PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jerusalem, Dec 29: Benjamin Netanyahu was Thursday sworn in as Israel's Prime Minister for a sixth time, leading the Jewish state's most right-wing government to date.

Netanyahu, 73, already Israel's longest-serving Prime Minister, has the support of 63 lawmakers in the 120-member Knesset (Israeli parliament). In the house, 54 lawmakers voted against his government. He returned as prime minister with the formation of his sixth government, which is composed of a number of far-right allies, a prospect that many fear



We will speed up and increase the volumes of construction of ships of various projects, equip them with the most modern weapons, and conduct the operational and combat training using the experience received during the special military operation

VLADIMIR PUTIN | RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

trition. The Ukrainian military has reclaimed swaths of Russian-occupied territory in the country's northeast and south, and continues to resist persistent Russian attempts to seize all of the industrial Donbas region in the east.

would put the new government at odds with large parts of its own population and its closest allies abroad. The lawmakers supporting the new government are all right-wing, including Netanyahu's Likud party supported by the ultra-orthodox Shas, United Torah Judaism, the far-right Otzma Yehudit, Religious Zionist Party, and Noam.

Shortly before the confidence vote for Israel's 37th government, the Knesset elected Likud lawmaker Amir Ohana as its new Speaker. A former justice minister and public security minister in past governments, Ohana is the Knesset's first openly gay speaker.

Speaking at the Knesset ahead of the swearing-in of the new government, Netanyahu said that the three "national goals" of his government would be to prevent Iran from going nuclear, launch a bullet train that runs across the length of the country and bring more Arab countries into the Abraham accords fold.

# Private Afghan universities risk closure after ban on women

A spokesman for the private universities' union, Mohammad Karim Nasiri, said 35 institutions risk closure because of the ban. Male students have also been boycotting classes and exams in solidarity with their female counterparts, he added

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kabul, Dec 29: A quarter of Afghanistan's private universities risks closure because of the ban on female students imposed by the Taliban government, a spokesman for the sector said Thursday.

Afghanistan's rulers last week barred women from attending universities effective immediately, dealing another blow to women and girls' rights and freedoms since

they seized power in the country in August 2021. The move also triggered international condemnation and an outcry at home.

A minister for higher education in the Taliban government, Nida Mohammad Nadim, has defended the ban, saying it is necessary to prevent the mixing of genders in universities and because, according to him, some subjects violate Islamic and Afghan values. Despite initially promising a more moderate



rule respecting rights for women and minorities, the Taliban have widely implemented their inter-

pretation of Islamic law, or Sharia, since their takeover of the country. They have banned girls from

middle school and high school, barred women from most fields of employment and ordered them to wear head-to-toe clothing in public. Women are also banned from parks and gyms. The Afghan society, while largely traditional, had increasingly embraced the education of girls and women over the past two decades under a US-backed government.

A spokesman for the private universities' union, Mohammad Karim Nasiri, said 35 institutions risk closure because of the ban. Male students have also been boycotting classes and exams in solidarity with their female counterparts, he added.

Afghanistan has 140 private universities across 24 provinces with around a total of 200,000 students.

Out of those, some 60,000-70,000 are women. The universities employ about 25,000 people. "Closing the universities (to women) is both a spiritual and material blow," Nasiri said. "We boldly told authorities that, with this decision, the nation is going backward and everyone is worried."

"It is not a good situation, everyone is worried about this decision — whether they are teachers, students, or administrative staff," he added. Because of all the financial losses, private university owners told a senior Taliban official, Maulvi Abdul Kabir, and the union that they will have no choice but to close the schools and move their investments abroad if the decision is not reversed, Nasiri said.

# business

## of the day quote

There is a need to promote nano liquid urea in place of conventional granular urea as it is better, cheaper, convenient and will help the government in saving a huge amount of subsidy

**MANSUKH MANDAVIYA** | MINISTER FOR CHEMICALS AND FERTILISERS

2022 proved to be a successful year for the residential real estate market as momentum of sales and consolidation of players continued

**ANU PURI** | CHAIRMAN, ANAROCK

The world's demand for gas is expected to decrease by 65 billion cubic metre in 2022, with 55 billion cubic metre falling on the 27 European Union countries

**ALEXEI MILLER** | HEAD, GAZPROM

## SHORT TAKES

### Mineral output rises 2.5% in Oct

**New Delhi:** The country's mineral production increased 2.5 per cent in October over the same month a year ago, the mines ministry said Thursday. The index of mineral production of mining and quarrying sector for the month stood at 112.5, up 2.5 per cent as compared to October last year. As per provisional figures of the Indian Bureau of Mines, the cumulative growth during April-October 2022-23 over the corresponding period of previous year is 4 per cent. The output of important minerals in October includes coal (662 lakh tonne), lignite (35 lakh tonne), natural gas (utilized) 2,829 million cubic metre and petroleum (crude) 25 lakh tonne.

### Mamaearth parent drafts IPO papers

**New Delhi:** Honasa Consumer Ltd, which owns new-age FMCG brands like Mamaearth and The Derma Co, has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise funds through an initial public offering (IPO). The IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares worth ₹400 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) component of 4,68,19,635 equity shares by promoters, investors and other selling shareholders, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP).

### Foxconn aims to retain workers

**Hong Kong:** Apple iPhone maker Foxconn is offering a \$718 subsidy to employees with an aim to retain workers at its main China factory that was affected by Covid-related protests. Foxconn will provide a subsidy to workers who continue in essential roles at the Zhengzhou iPhone factory from January 1 to March 20, reports AppleInsider. Workers will need to be a valid employee as of that date to receive the subsidy.

### KFin Tech makes tepid mkt debut

**New Delhi:** Shares of KFin Technologies made a muted market debut Thursday and ended on a flat note. The stock made its debut at ₹369, higher by just 0.81 per cent, against the issue price of ₹366 on the BSE. During the day, it hit a high of ₹372.40 and a low of ₹351.10. Shares of the company settled at ₹364 per piece, lower by 0.54 per cent. On the NSE, it was listed flat at ₹367, marginally higher by 0.27 per cent. The stock ended at ₹364.40 each share, a dip of 0.43 per cent. The company commanded a market valuation of ₹6,099.51 crore on the BSE.



**India today works from a position of strength, we negotiate with confidence. We will sign at least two such free trade agreements in 2023**

**PIYUSH GOYAL** | UNION COMMERCE MINISTER

## BANKS' FUNDRAISING SPREE TO CONTINUE

Indian banks could continue to actively raise funds via debt markets in the Jan-March quarter. State-run and private banks raised an aggregate of ₹611.94 billion in Oct-Dec, more than double the ₹301.34 billion raised in July-Sept. Banks are set to raise at least ₹300 billion in the Jan-March quarter, as they look to lock in funding in a tightening liquidity situation



# India's crude basket rose 102% between Oct '20-'22

**RETAIL PRICES OF PETROL AND DIESEL HAVE SURGED BY 19.3% AND 27.1%, RESPECTIVELY, DURING OCT 2020-2022**

**INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE**

**New Delhi, Dec 29:** Even as the average price of Indian basket of crude oil increased by 102 per cent (from \$43.34 to \$87.55) between October 2020 and October 2022, the retail prices of petrol and diesel have increased in India by only 19.3 per

cent and 27.1 per cent, respectively, during this period, sources said. According to Petroleum Ministry sources, petrol prices stood at ₹81.06 per litre in October 2020, however by October 2022, they had risen only 19.3 per cent to ₹96.72 per litre. Similarly diesel prices, which were at ₹70.53 per litre in October 2020,

rose by 27.1 per cent to stand at ₹89.62 per litre. Prices of petrol and diesel have not been increased by public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) since April 6, 2022, despite record high international prices. As a result, against the combined 'Profit Before Tax' of ₹28,360 crore in the first half of 2021-22, the three OMCs - Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum - have booked a combined loss of ₹27,276



crore in the first half of 2022-23. The Centre had reduced the central excise duty twice November 4,

2021 and May 22, 2022, effecting a cumulative reduction of ₹13 and ₹16 per litre for petrol and diesel, respectively. Following these reductions in Central excise duty, some of the states also reduced Value Added Tax (VAT) rates on petrol and diesel. India imports more than 85 per cent of its crude oil requirements, therefore the prices of petrol and diesel in the country are linked to their respective prices in the international market.

# Gross NPA ratio falls to 7-year low of 5%

**GROSS NON-PERFORMING ASSETS RATIO IS PROJECTED TO FALL FURTHER TO 4.9% IN SEPTEMBER 2023**



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Dec 29:** The RBI Thursday said banks' gross NPA ratio has fallen to a seven-year low of 5 per cent and the banking system remains sound and well-capitalised. The declining tendency in the Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) ratio is likely to continue and under the baseline scenario of the stress testing framework, it is projected to fall further to 4.9 per cent in September 2023, the 26th issue of the Financial Stability Report (FSR) said.

The provisioning coverage ratio (PCR) has been increasing steadily since March 2021 to 71.5 per cent. The profit after tax of SCBs registered a growth of 40.7 per cent in the first half of the current fiscal, led by strong growth in net interest income and a reduction in provisions.

### GLOBAL SHOCKS LOOM LARGE

The report also said the global economy is facing formidable headwinds with recessionary risks looming large. The interplay of multiple shocks has resulted in tightened financial conditions and heightened volatility in financial markets, it pointed out. For emerging market economies (EMEs), it said, the challenges are even harsher as they encounter global spillovers, debt fragility, currency volatility and capital outflows. On inflation, the report said though prices are elevated, front-loading of monetary policy actions and supply side interventions are easing the pressure. In the financial sector, it said, buoyant demand for bank credit and early signs of a revival in investment cycle are benefiting from improved asset quality, a return to profitability and resilient capital and liquidity buffers. Monetary tightening in advanced economies, tightening of financial conditions, geopolitical risks, global growth uncertainty and growing risks from private cryptocurrencies and climate change are cited as the major contributors to rise in global, financial market and general risks.

The report further said the capital positions of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) remained strong in September 2022. The Capital to Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) and Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) ratio of SCBs stood at 16 per cent and 13 per cent, respectively. "Their GNPA ratio have been steadily trending down to a seven-year low of 5 per cent in September 2022, while net non-performing assets (NNPA) have dropped to ten-year low of 1.3 per cent of total assets," it said.

# CAD at 4.4% of GDP

*A falling rupee, and the widening gap between imports and exports is increasing the current account deficit. It likely widened to its highest in nearly a decade in the April-June quarter, driven by soaring global commodity prices*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Dec 29:** Widening trade gap pushed up the country's current account deficit to \$36.4 billion or 4.4 per cent of the GDP in the second quarter of the current fiscal, as per data released by the Reserve Bank Thursday.

India's current account balance recorded a deficit of \$36.4 billion in July-September 2022-23, up from \$18.2 billion (2.2% of GDP) in the first quarter of the fiscal and \$9.7 billion (1.3% of GDP) in the year ago period. "Underlying the current account deficit in Q2:2022-23 was the widening of the merchandise trade deficit to \$83.5 billion from \$63 billion in Q1:2022-23 and an increase in net outgo under investment income," the RBI said. It also said the current account deficit for April-June quarter of 2022-23 has been revised downwards due to downward adjustment in Customs data.

"India recorded a current account deficit of 3.3 per cent of GDP in H1:2022-23 on the back of a sharp increase in the merchandise trade deficit, as compared with 0.2 per cent in H1:2021-22" the RBI added. Services exports reported a growth of 30.2 per cent on a year-on-year (y-o-y) basis on the back of rising exports of software, business and travel services. Net services receipts increased both sequentially and on a y-o-y basis. Meanwhile, the RBI's Financial Stability Report said the steady net inflows of foreign direct investment and the resumption of



- CURRENT ACCOUNT DEFICIT RISES TO \$36.4 BILLION IN Q2
- DEFICIT STOOD AT \$18.2 BILLION OR 2.2% OF GDP IN Q1
- FOREX RESERVES DEplete \$25.8 BILLION IN FIRST HALF

portfolio flows since July 2022 indicate that the CAD will be comfortably financed.

Net outgo from the primary income account, mainly reflecting payments of investment income, increased to \$12 billion from \$9.8 billion a year ago, as per a statement on 'Developments in India's Balance of Payments (BoP) during the Second Quarter (July-September) of 2022-23'. "Private transfer receipts, mainly representing remittances by Indians employed overseas, amounted to \$27.4 billion, an increase of 29.7 per cent from their level a year ago," the statement added. Also, net foreign portfolio investment recorded inflows of \$6.5 billion, up from \$3.9 billion during the second quarter of 2021-22.

On BoP during April-September 2022 (H1:2022-23), it said net invisible receipts were higher on a y-o-y basis on account of higher net receipts of services and private transfers. Net FDI inflows at \$20 billion in the first half of 2022-23 were comparable with \$20.3 billion in the similar period of 2021-22. Portfolio investment recorded a net outflow of \$8.1 billion as against an inflow of \$4.3 billion in H1 of 2021-22. In the first half of 2022-23, there was a depletion of \$25.8 billion from the foreign exchange reserves (on a BoP basis). The depletion of foreign exchange reserves was to the tune of \$30.4 billion in July-September quarter of 2022-23 as against an accretion of \$31.2 billion in the year-ago period.

# 'India-Aus FTA to cross \$70bn in next 5 years'

*India's goods exports to Australia stood at \$8.3 billion and imports from the country aggregated to \$16.75 billion in 2021-22*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 29:** The free trade agreement (FTA) between India and Australia, which comes into effect from Thursday, will help boost bilateral trade in goods and services to cross \$70 billion in the next five years, according to economic think tank GTRI.

chandise trade of \$25 billion in 2021-22 between India and Australia. This creates opportunities for more trade in tough times. GTRI estimates suggest that the bilateral trade will cross \$70 billion in the next five years due to buoyant trade relations and Australia's gradual weaning away from China." GTRI Co-founder Ajay Srivastava said. He said while India's exports are diversified, ranging from agriculture, garments, and railway engines to telecom, 95 per cent of India's imports from Australia are raw materials and mining products needed by industry. This makes the two countries gain from both exports and



imports, he added. He also said this agreement will be an antidote for Australia's China troubles. Under the agreement, Australia is allowing duty-free import of all Indian products. Key gainers will be India's labour-intensive exports. Duty on these will decrease from the current four-five per cent to zero. These goods include textiles, apparel, footwear, furniture, sports goods, jewellery, machinery, railway wagons, and medicines. Coal accounts for three-fourths

# BITING BACK Russia to divert metals away from West: Min

AGENCIES

**Moscow, Dec 29:** Russia will redirect its metal exports from Western countries to alternative markets due to sanctions imposed by the EU and US, Trade Minister Denis Manturov said, RT reported.

Moscow named China, Turkiye, southeast Asia, member states of the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union and CIS countries as priority areas for diversifying metal supplies. According to Manturov, trade flows will also focus on the Latin American, African, and Middle Eastern markets, RT reported.

At a meeting with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Manturov noted that "our enterprises, with the participation of trade missions, are already reori-

enting exports", adding that the state will provide measures of support for logistics. Russia is a major metals producer and exporter. According to Institut Polytechnique de Paris, last year the country held a 13 per cent market share for titanium production, 11.2 per cent for nickel, 10.5 per cent for platinum, 5.4 per cent for aluminium, 4 per cent for copper, and 4.4 per cent for cobalt. It is the world's top producer of palladium, a rare metal used in car manufacturing, accounting for 37 per cent of production in 2021. Russia is not only a major producer of primary aluminium but it is also embedded in the global supply chains needed to make the metal.

# GLOBAL HEADWINDS 2023: Indian equities may sail into choppy waters

**GLOBAL FACTORS EXPEDITED BY RUSSIAN INVASION INTO UKRAINE LIKE RECESSION FEARS, GEOPOLITICAL RISKS AND RISING COVID CASES IN CHINA COULD KEEP EQUITY MARKETS VOLATILE IN THE COMING YEAR**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 29:** Indian equity market is likely to be "choppy" in 2023 and the returns might be moderate or even negative as a raft of factors, including geopolitical uncertainties, recession fears and in-



**India so far stood out like an oasis in the desert, where the rest of the world is facing multiple challenges. The resilience has been led by strong corporate earnings growth which is expected to continue its momentum going ahead as well**

**SIDDHARTH KHEMKA** | HEAD (RETAIL RESEARCH), MOTILAL OSWAL FINANCIAL SERVICES LTD

by a combination of domestic and global factors, including the coronavirus situation and policy initiatives in the Union Budget next year.

Despite strong global headwinds roiling financial markets worldwide this year, the domestic equity market stood strong as a stellar performance of bluechips saw the 30-share Sensex soaring nearly 13,000 points to its all-time high of 63,583.07 December 1, in less than six months after touching its 52-week low of 50,921.22 points June 17. The strong showing this year came even as Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) dumped Indian equities and concerns over high inflation persisted. The US Fed policy actions in 2023 along with RBI's would hold

importance where any moderation might encourage markets to pick up momentum, Siddharth Khemka, Head - Retail Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

"Also, next year is the last year before elections due in 2024 which could result in many policy-led initiative announcements in the upcoming Union Budget in February," he added. Suman Bannerjee, CIO of US-based hedge fund Hedonova, said, "We'll see negative returns in 2023", adding that the Indian market is very overvalued compared to global counterparts. "Once the US Fed pivots and starts reducing rates, we'll see bear markets in the USA spillover to India," he noted. Trends in the equity market

next year will also continue to be guided by movement of rupee and the US dollar as well as international oil benchmark Brent crude.

Market analysts said 2022 was a volatile and turbulent year for global equities, marred by varied global headwinds, including Russia-Ukraine war, high inflation, fears of global economic slowdown and re-emergence of coronavirus. This year, aggressive rate hikes by central banks globally to tackle inflation, rising commodity prices and the Russia-Ukraine conflict led to an exodus of foreign money. Till December 28, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) made a net withdrawal of ₹1.21 lakh crore (nearly \$16.5 billion) from the Indian equity market and pulled out a net amount of around ₹16,600 crore (\$2 billion) from the debt market, as per data available with the depositories.

# Haaland sets scoring record



**MEMORABLE OUTING:** Erling Haaland (black-red) scores Manchester City's second goal against Leeds United, Wednesday

**Leeds, Dec 29:** Erling Haaland set a Premier League scoring record in Manchester City's 3-1 win over Leeds. At this pace, it won't be his last. Haaland scored twice to become the fastest player to 20 goals. The Norwegian star, who was born in Leeds, reached the mark in 14 games. Not a bad homecoming. "For me, as a striker, I could have scored a couple more but that's life, what can I do? I have to practice more," Haaland told Amazon Prime. City's victory at Elland Road reduced first-place Arsenal's lead to five points. Rodri gave the visitors the lead on the stroke of halftime when he tucked in from close range after goalkeeper Illan Meslier parried a Riyad Mahrez shot.

Haaland doubled City's advantage six minutes into the second half after Jack Grealish pounced on a weak pass by Liam Cooper and raced clear to set up the Norwegian for a tap-in. That was Haaland's 25th goal for City in 20 appearances in all competitions. He scored his 26th in the 64th minute to make it 3-0 after another assist from Grealish. He later missed out on a fourth hat-trick of the season when he shot tamely at Meslier: Leeds scored in the 73rd minute when Pascal Struijk headed home from a corner. Haaland beat Kevin Phillips' quickest-to-20 goals record — set in 1999-20 with Sunderland — by seven games. Haaland's father, Alf-Inge, was on hand to watch Wednesday. "With my father in the (stands) over there, it's special," the 22-year-

old Haaland said. "I am happy today, it's a really special moment in my career... It's my craziest fantasy that I could be at Elland Road and score for Manchester City against Leeds." **Liverpool sign Gakpo** Liverpool completed the signing of Netherlands forward Cody Gakpo from PSV Eindhoven. The 23-year-old Gakpo, who scored three goals at the World Cup, will officially join the Premier League club when the transfer window opens Sunday. PSV announced Monday that it had agreed to the transfer for an undisclosed fee, describing it as a "record" for the Dutch club. "This is a great club for me to come in and try to show what I can (do) and try to help the team to achieve more beautiful moments

that they already did in the past years," Gakpo told Liverpool's website. Gakpo scored 55 goals and provided 50 assists in 159 appearances for PSV. **CHELSEA DEAL** Chelsea has agreed to sign striker David Datro Fofana from Norwegian club Molde. The 20-year-old Ivory Coast international will join Chelsea on New Year's Day, the Premier League club confirmed Wednesday. Terms of the deal were not disclosed. Fofana was the leading scorer for Molde, one of Erling Haaland's former clubs, with 15 league goals last season. He's made three appearances for his national team. Molde's statement noted that Fofana is looking forward to following in the footsteps of his idol, Didier Drogba.

# Mbappe saves PSG the blushes

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Paris, Dec 29:** World Cup superstar Kylian Mbappe scored a penalty deep into stoppage time as unbeaten league-leader Paris Saint-Germain overcame Neymar's red card to scrape a 2-1 home win against Strasbourg. PSG players celebrated wildly at the final whistle, probably out of relief following a poor performance against a team in 19th place. The penalty came after Jean-Ricner Bellegarde clumsily lost the ball trying to dribble through midfield rather than clearing it in the 93rd minute. The ball reached Mbappe and he was fouled from behind. PSG captain Marquinhos swept the loose ball home but referee Clement Turpin disallowed the goal and the penalty stood. Mbappe held his nerve to sweep the ball past goalkeeper Matz Sels, who guessed the right way but was beaten for speed. Mbappe's 96th-minute penalty increased his league-leading tally to 13 goals as PSG moved eight points ahead of second-place Lens. Neymar was earlier shown a second yellow card in the 62nd for diving in the penalty area and red-carded. It means he will be suspended for Sunday's trip to Lens. Mbappe started just 10 days after playing in the World Cup final. He became only the second player to score a hat-trick in the final but was inconsolable after Les Bleus lost on penalties to Lionel Messi's Argentina following a 3-3 draw. Messi was given extra time off by PSG and is expected back at training early next week. Neymar, who was in tears after Brazil lost to Croatia in the quarterfinals, set up PSG's opening goal at Parc des Princes. His free-kick from the left was headed in by countryman Marquinhos in the 14th minute, moving Neymar level with Messi on a league-leading 10 assists. Strasbourg's equaliser in the 51st was given as a Marquinhos own goal, as he tried to block Adrien Thomasson's cross from the right



**GOING WILD:** Kylian Mbappe celebrates PSG's winner against Strasbourg, Wednesday

and the ball looped over goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma. It was a soft one to concede and came after midfielder Marco Verratti carelessly lost possession. **MONACO'S NEW TALENT** After launching the career of Mbappe, French club Monaco may have found another gem in Eliesse Ben Seghir: The 17-year-old midfielder came off the bench to score twice — including an Mbappe-style winner — in his league debut to help Monaco win 3-2 at Auxerre. Ben Seghir's goals both came from the left side — which is where Mbappe was so devastating when he made his debut for Monaco in 2015 as a 16-year-old. Mbappe helped the Principality club win the title in 2017, before

joining PSG and winning the World Cup with France in 2018. Ben Seghir replaced striker Wissam Ben Yedder at the start of the second half, with the score 1-1, and made it 2-1 in the 58th minute from Russia midfielder Aleksandr Golovin's pass. He then struck a brilliant winner in the 85th. Cutting inside from the left, Ben Seghir bamboozled a defender with a stepover and then feigned to shoot several times as he advanced before curling the ball into the right corner — which is one of Mbappe's signature moves. After the final whistle, Ben Seghir celebrated with Monaco's 700 away fans by shouting into a megaphone. The win moved Monaco up to fifth place.

# Kartik ton, Suryakant blitzkrieg prop Odisha



POST NEWS NETWORK

couldn't do much with the bat as the hosts were reduced to 266/5, facing a threat of conceding first innings lead. But, Kartik and wicketkeeper-batter Sujit Lenka (26) took the team's total past 300 with a 43-run stand for the sixth wicket. Prayash Singh (13) too departed shortly with Odisha only 10 runs behind Haryana's total. However, Kartik found an ally in Suryakant, who bagged a six-wicket haul during Odisha bowling. Suryakant was at his destructive best during his 27-ball stay. Kartik, who played second fiddle to Suryakant in the partnership, enjoyed the show from the other end. The duo shared 79-run stand in just nine overs, before Harshit Saini (2/52) breached Kartik's defence soon after the batter completed his century. Suryakant too followed his partner the next over. After conceding the first innings lead, the visitors got off to a strong start with the openers — Yuvraj Singh (38, 49b, 4x4, 1x6) and Ankit Kumar (59 batting, 121b, 9x4) — sharing a 68-run partnership. Tarini Sa (1/26) dismissed Yuvraj, but the hosts couldn't get another wicket as Haryana ended the day with 119/1 on the board. Himanshu Rana (17 batting) was giving Ankit company at stumps. **BRIEF SCORES:** Haryana 338 & 119/1 (Ankit Kumar 59 batting; Tarini Sa 1/26); Odisha 414 (Kartik Biswal 101, Subhranshu Senapati 63, Suryakant Pradhan 60; Yuzvendra Chahal 3/107, Harshit Saini 2/52, Nishant Sindhu 2/55). Match to continue.

# Australia clinch series in style

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Melbourne, Dec 29:** Spinner Nathan Lyon took 3-58 as Australia bowled out South Africa for 204 Thursday to claim victory by an innings and 182 runs on the fourth day of the second test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Australia clinched the series and will be chasing a 3-0 sweep in Sydney where the third and final test starts January 4. Tamba Bavuma top-scored for South Africa with 65, although he also played key roles in two run outs. Resuming Thursday on 15/1, South Africa lost three wickets in the morning session. Mitchell Starc, nursing a tendon injury to the blood-stained middle finger on his bowling hand, produced a fast yorker to remove Sarel Erwee lbw for 21 at 47/2. Ten runs later, Scott Boland had Theunis de Bruyn (28) caught at second slip as cracks continued to appear in the Proteas' brittle batting lineup. Those cracks widened when Khaya Zondo was run out in demoralizing fashion for one at 65/4 after Bavuma pushed to mid-off and called Zondo through for a risky single. Bavuma and Kyle Verreynne (33) fought hard to add 63 for the fourth wicket before Boland (2/49) removed Verreynne lbw at 128/5 in the fourth over after lunch. Marco Jansen (5) fell in the same fashion to spinner Nathan Lyon 16 runs later, following a video review. Bavuma was involved in a second run out, theatrically turning his back on Keshav Maharaj (13)



Scott Boland (C) was mobbed by teammates after dismissing a South African batter, Thursday

who was forced to give up on an attempted third run through cover and failed to regain his ground at the striker's end at 174/7. A wild slog from Bavuma was caught at mid-on in the following over as Lyon claimed his second victim of the innings and Kagiso Rabada (three) also skied an attempted slog, leading to his departure in Lyon's next over at 177/9. Anrich Nortje and Lungi Ngidi entertained the crowd with some big hits as they added 27 for the last wicket, which fell before the tea break on day four. The victory was Australia's first Test series win at home against

**I will quit if team management says it's time: Warner**  
**Melbourne:** Star Australia opener David Warner Thursday said he is "committed" to playing next year's 50-over World Cup in India but will quit if the team management says "it's time". The 36-year-old, who was undergoing prolonged lean patch in red-ball cricket, silenced his detractors by scoring a double century in his 100th Test. Asked if the second Test against South Africa, which Australia won by an innings and 182 runs, will be his final Boxing Day Test, the southpaw said, "I'm committed to playing next year's World Cup. I will keep myself fit, try and keep scoring, but if they (the team management) do tap me on the back and say it's time, I'm ready (to quit)," said Warner.

South Africa since 2005-06. The Proteas were triumphant in 2008-09, 2012-13 and 2016-17. Starc took 1/62 off 18 overs

in a lion-hearted performance and is expected to focus on being fit for Australia's Test tour of India in February.

# A SAGA OF FORGETTABLE YEAR FOR INDIAN CRICKET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 29:** Virat Kohli's artistic sixes against Pakistan united fans from Kashmir to Kanyakumari in an otherwise underwhelming year for Indian cricket, which started with a promise of transformation but ended with the commencement of another difficult transition period. Indian cricket in 2022 was chaotic, to say the least and messy at most of the time both on and off the field. The only saving grace was a Rs 48,000 crore IPL media rights deal, an indication of what market forces aspire the cricketing ecosystem to be. But on the field, it was a saga of disappointing results at least for the men.

It started with a Test series defeat in South Africa which led to a dejected Virat Kohli stepping down from captaincy in the longest format. His relationship with the BCCI bigwigs was a fractured one after being sacked from ODI captaincy and he wanted to leave on his own terms. It happened in January and as the year comes to an end, Kohli's illustrious heir Rohit Sharma too finds himself shunted from the national T20 captaincy. In an expected change of guard, Hardik Pandya emerged as a new leader of the national T20 team as Rohit paid the price for another semi-final exit in the T20 World Cup following defeat against England. The Indian team looked good during bilaterals but came a cropper at the



global events. No one knows when the trend will be bucked. Some of the bilateral series lacked context and hence Virat Kohli's 71st and 72nd international hundreds in dead rubbers versus

Afghanistan (T20) and Bangladesh (ODI) didn't have a lot of currency. While Kohli's straight six off Haris Rauf and his 82-run knock will forever remain a poetic nostalgia, the archaic approach of India's senior batters, including that of skipper Rohit and KL Rahul, stuck out like a sore thumb during the T20 World Cup. In the case of Rohit, his dip in batting form also became an issue although he was the only one among the top three who had tried changing his game as per the needs of modern-day white-ball cricket. Rahul was the most disappointing of the lot and by the end of the year, it became clear that the Chetan Sharma-led panel's wish of seeing a potential national

leader in him had crash landed. Shreyas Iyer's consistent run in Tests and ODIs, Rishabh Pant emerging as the current team's most prolific Test match game changer and Jammu's tearaway quick Umran Malik entering collective conscience were some of the positive signs. In women's cricket, Mithali Raj and Jhulan Goswami, who set a benchmark in the women's game and earned respect for the national team on the international stage ended their respective glorious journeys. While there are a number of batters who could fill Mithali's void, finding Jhulan's replacement will be difficult if the performance of the team under Harmanpreet Kaur is an indication.

Hopefully, Cricket Australia keep taking it up with the ICC and keep pushing for it. When you do see some of the stadiums around the world unoccupied, I think it would be much better to have a full house and that atmosphere and celebrating the game with full houses," he said. The last time India and Pakistan played a bilateral Test match against each other was way back in 2007. Since then, both sides have only faced each other in either ICC or Asian Cricket Council tournaments. Pakistan are scheduled to feature in the Boxing Day Test against Australia at the MCG in 2023 as part of a three-match series in the next World Test Championship cycle, and Fox hopes for a full house in that match similar to the India-Pakistan T20 World Cup clash. "I've never seen anything like it at the MCG, that India-Pakistan game was something else," Fox said. "The atmosphere, I've never felt it like that. I think if we can be more inclusive and make sure that we cater for all cultures, we've got to tap into that Pakistan community next year," he added.