

Wishing our readers

**A HAPPY  
NEW YEAR  
2023**

—EDITOR

## Big job racket busted

Over 50,000 job aspirants from Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Odisha were duped of crores

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 31:** In a major breakthrough, the state Crime Branch's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) has busted an interstate job racket which was operating from Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh. One of the prime accused in the racket was arrested from Aligarh by the EOW which termed it the 'most challenging case' so far for the investigating agency.

The accused was identified as Zafar Ahmed, 25, of Aligarh. Zafar, an engineer by profession, is a mastermind of the racket.

Several tech savvy engineers from Uttar Pradesh were part of the core group of the racket. Some expert website developers were reportedly assisting the accused engineers in operating the racket.

"This core group was assisted by around 50 call center employees. These employees were paid ₹15,000 per month and were of Jamalpur and Aligarh locality of Uttar Pradesh," EOW Saturday said in a press note. The accused were taking all precautions to avoid getting tracked by law enforcement agencies. They were using more than 1000 fake SIMs and 530 mobile handsets. **Contd. P4**



**FULL OF HOPE:** Women wishing Happy New Year 2023 pose for a picture at a mustard field in Moradabad, Saturday

## PLUS II EXAM FROM MARCH 1

**Bhubaneswar:** Plus II board examinations will commence from March 1, the Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE) declared Saturday. As per a CHSE notification, the Higher Secondary Examination-2023 for regular and ex-regular students in Arts, Science, Commerce and Vocational streams will be conducted from March 1 till April 5. The examination will begin from 10 am and will continue till 1 pm. Practical examinations will be held from February 1 to 10. Candidates are advised to enter exam centres 30 minutes before commencement of examination and enter the exam hall before 15 minutes of examination. **P4**

## FORMER POPE BENEDICT DIES

**Vatican City:** Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, the shy German theologian who tried to reawaken Christianity in a secularised Europe but will forever be remembered as the first pontiff in 600 years to resign from the job, died Saturday. He was 95. Pope Francis will celebrate his funeral Mass in St. Peter's Square Thursday, an unprecedented event in which a current pope will celebrate the funeral for a former one. Benedict stunned the world February 11, 2013, when he announced his retirement. **P8**

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Our mission is to rescue those returning home after celebrating New Year and getting stuck in traffic

## Putin critic Russian rescued

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 31:** Amid the mysterious death of two Russian nationals including a lawmaker in Rayagada district, Odisha Police Saturday rescued 58-year-old Andrew Glagolev, another Russian, from Bhubaneswar railway station.

For the last several days, Andrew was seen roaming near the Bhubaneswar railway station holding a placard in which he wrote, "I am a Russian refugee. I am against the war. I am against Putin. I am homeless. Please help me."

Police said Glagolev, a resident of Moscow in Russia, came to India on a tourist visa March 27, 2016, which was valid till September, 2016. His passport is valid from April 3, 2015 till April 3, 2025.

As he does not have money, he



Andrew Glagolev

was begging for help from the people at the railway station. As he cannot understand English, no one was able to communicate with him.

After getting information about

him, railway police detained him for inquiry about the purpose of his visit to India and his problems.

Jayadev Biswajit, IIC of GRP police station said, Andrew arrived in India with a valid passport and visa. His tourist visa has expired now. However, he has applied for asylum to concerned authorities in the UN, said Biswajit.

Following a probe, police came to know that Glagolev has been staying on rent at Puri for a couple of years. He is addicted to cannabis and makes a living by begging at Puri and Bhubaneswar railway stations.

He also stayed for a couple of years in Vrindaban before shifting to Puri around five years ago. He again returned to Vrindaban after spending three months in Puri.

He had again come to Puri three

## CB collects samples from cremation ground

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada:** A 12-member team of Crime Branch along with a 6-member team of forensic department Saturday conducted a probe into the death of two Russian tourists here. The team visited Sirikana cremation ground and collected the charred remains of Pavel Antov and his friend Vladimir Bydanov who died under mysterious circumstances at a local hotel. The remains will be sent for DNA test and other examinations. The CB team seized the mobile phone and laptop of Pavel. It was learnt that the CB might seek the help of technical experts or Interpol to unravel the data stored in the phone and laptop. **P4**

months back and was staying on rent in Gangaram Nua Sahi.

**Continued on P4**

## 16 investment projects worth ₹4,183cr cleared

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 31:** The State Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA) of the state government Saturday approved 16 industrial project proposals worth ₹4,183 crore.

The SLSWCA headed by Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra has approved the proposals of nine diverse sectors, which would generate employment opportunities for nearly 13,000 people in the state. The approved projects will be set up across Odisha with six of them in Khurda district, three in Puri, two in Koraput and one each in Cuttack, Bhadrak, Dhamara, Mayurbhanj and Angul.

The state government has approved three projects of metal an-

cillary and downstream industry worth ₹803 crore, four apparel and textile project proposals worth ₹324.57 crore and two paper, wood and forest-based investment projects of ₹606 crore. Jindal Panther Cement Pvt Ltd has received an approval from the panel to set up its cement manufacturing unit in Angul at an investment of ₹955 crore.

Similarly, a proposal to set up a food processing unit by Varun Beverages Limited with an investment of ₹624.30 crore was approved by the panel, they said.

Two waste management/circular economy proposals worth ₹252 crore were approved. Further, a chemical unit of ₹50.76 crore and a tourism project of ₹50.84 crore were approved.



# 2023

## The Year of Lovemark

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### Aries

21st March to 20th April

In 2023, the movements of Saturn and Jupiter may bring some major changes which would be a mixed bag, some of them can be helpful and some of them might need your attention and caution. Saturn might influence your connection with foreign countries, your expenditures and financial gains, your social connection and also the inclination towards spirituality. At the beginning of the year, there are chances of recovering back which you might have lent family or friends. Though, it is advised that from the beginning of the second quarter, you should keep a check on your expenses and enhance savings so that you can manage Saturn's energy which might strongly impact your finances. If you plan properly on your finances in advance, you might be saved from a financial crunch. In 2023 you would be under a strong influence of both, Saturn and Rahu, affecting your intelligence and your subconscious mind, hence it is suggested that you should keep your thoughts under control. Be very attentive to your thinking and decision-making because the influence of Rahu may drag you on the wrong side. To get rid of this effect, note down your plans or get advice from some elder or experts so that the positive energy of Jupiter could help you to gain success, both on the personal and professional front. Health should be one of your primary focuses from the second quarter. Doing some light exercise and meditation on regular basis could help you to overcome the strong influence of Saturn upon your health. Do not compromise on your healthy eating habits and try to avoid junk food. You also need to balance your emotions and avoid unnecessary stress because the combination of Rahu with Jupiter in your horoscope could bring in some negative influence resulting in wastage of your energies and distraction from your aim.



### Taurus

21st April to 21st May

The beginning of the year might fulfill your wishes and happiness from friends as per Taurus 2023 Horoscope and also bless you with the expected financial gains. This year 2023 Taurus Horoscope helps you to get the blessings of Jupiter, Saturn and Mercury so the keyword to attain success this year is your optimism. This year you might see small changes in your daily routine according to Taurus 2023 predictions. Mars suggests you to avoid an aggressive attitude so that things go as per your plan. Taurus Horoscope 2023 predicts that Sun in the first phase of the year might give some delay to get favours from the boss and seniors but things might start to improve from the last phase of March. In terms of learning new skills and education, 2023 for Taurus might help to get the fulfillment of the desire to get admission in a foreign country for students. Those of you who want to play at the international level might also get the expected result as indicated by 2023 Taurus Horoscope. In terms of relationship, Taurus Horoscope 2023 predictions say that Mercury and Jupiter movement might give success in terms of marriage and love life. Taurus in 2023 predicts that some of you might have a second marriage. Jupiter might also give a good support of luck in terms of money as per Horoscope Taurus 2023 and the right intelligence to make the proper investment in the second quarter. Astrology Taurus 2023 predicts that Saturn might give financial gain with your proper plan and decision making ability.



### Gemini

22nd May to 21st June

Saturn will require patience, attention to detail, and a disciplined approach both personally and professionally this year. Jupiter will provide you the chance to increase your network of friends as well as your professional and international connections. You're going to put commitment, career, and health first this year. With Jupiter and Mercury's blessings, many dreams are expected to be realised in the second half. The health of this year is expected to be mediocre. This year, your health will be significantly impacted by the way the planets are moving and how they influence your ideas. In order to maintain your fitness and health, it is essential that you surround yourself with positive people and attempt to nurture good attitudes. A pregnant woman is also receiving guidance from Rahu and Ketu to pay attention to her health and avoid needless stress in order to give birth to a healthy child. You are advised to stay away from heavy and greasy foods to regulate your anger and to improve your health because Mars movement might cause unneeded aggression. The student may experience slow growth and increased effort this year in order to get the desired outcome, as suggested by Saturn.



### Cancer

22nd June to 22nd July

This year, your health, finance, relationship with your in-laws, and the happiness you get from your job are going to undergo some changes and also require priority. A Saturn transit can ask you to meditate and warn you about overthinking because it is going to affect your health and ability to make decisions. Stress and negative influence in the surrounding can adversely affect the quality and result of your work, so you need to pay attention to your work management, as well as to your subconscious thoughts, which can become distorted if you face hurdles and delays to achieve your goals. During the first quarter of this year, Jupiter will be in transit with Rahu, which can cause confusion, workload, and delays, requiring proper analysis, verification, and revision before executing. In terms of relationships, avoid any third-party suggestions. You may succeed if you put in the effort and keep a positive attitude. Sleeping comfort can be affected by Mars in the beginning. Mars, however, can provide you with direct access to good clients and international connections, which will help you. Those of you in the spiritual and religious fields can get a good scope in a foreign country and also on the digital platform. There might be an inclination for some of you to learn yoga, martial arts, and meditation. Rahu and Ketu may bring changes in your career and also in your place of residence. Some of you might get the expected result when you buy your flat and home. From the second quarter onward, Saturn will make things according to your plan, but patience is required. The first quarter is not going to be favorable for love and relationship due to workload and negative thoughts. We advise you not to blame your partner for his/her mistakes and to spend quality time together without arguing. During Mars' movement in the first quarter, over-expectation and demanding behavior can lead to relationship problems.



### Leo

23rd July to 22nd August

This year Saturn advises you to avoid digging into your past mistakes and start working on your projects and work. Your health can suffer from unnecessary negative thoughts. As indicated by the movement of Mars and Rahu, you should avoid aggression. By practicing regular meditation, you will be able to protect yourself from the damaging effects of Mars, Rahu, and Saturn which can make getting a good night's sleep difficult as well as affect your health. This year, Saturn's movement could cause some delays in getting the favour at work. There might be a delay in getting support from senior authorities and also at home the support of elders might be delayed. Likewise, due to the impact of Saturn, there may also be some hindrances to receiving support from luck or there can be unplanned travel related to work and business. It is advised that you avoid becoming aggressive or demanding in your job and business due to Saturn and Rahu movement. Mars, in its starting phase, may help you to get back the money you owe from your friends, but this is not the best platform for investing heavily in the share market. Saturn can delay the receipt of expected financial gain from a business. Business gains might be delayed for some of you and things can also get delayed in the second quarter as indicated by the Saturn movement. Thus, you are advised to seek professional financial advice. The first quarter of this year will be characterized by patience and a positive approach. You are advised to do some analysis before making major decisions because Jupiter is ready to provide you with the support that comes from your ability to make the right decisions as well as your initiative.



### Virgo

23rd August to 22nd September

You will need patience and attention on a personal and professional front, as well as your health, in the first and last quarter of this year. In the second quarter, you can spend time with family and friends. Saturn and Rahu both require more effort and a positive approach on both a personal and professional level. Jupiter will bring happiness in the second quarter through promotion, marriage, and childbirth. In the last quarter, Venus and Ketu advise you to pay attention to your relationships and financial matters. You shouldn't be hasty in taking a financial decision from new or unknown people during this year as Saturn and Rahu indicate, expert advice can give you the right direction. As indicated by the movements of Mars and Mercury, you will be able to earn money from traveling this year. You should avoid arguments and relationship proposals during the month of May. If you are in love with someone, it is advised that you wait before making a proposal because the planetary alignment is not favourable for you to receive what you are expecting. July and August may bring positive results in terms of love marriages as well as a positive response to a relationship proposal.



### Libra

23rd September to 22nd October

The year 2023 for the easy-going Libra seems to be lucky and positive most of the time. 2023 Predictions for Libra foresees a positive and happy love life and relationship at the beginning of this year. Venus's transition might help you in your social circle, suggests Libra stars for 2023. Libra this year 2023 may experience strong passion with heightened emotions which will probably have a deep impact on their relationship with their partner due to the fluctuations in the position of Mars. Horoscope for Libra in 2023 requires them to be patient with the situation. As the year progresses Libra Reading predicts that Jupiter's transition might help you sort the problems in the relationship. May might be a testing month for you as Libra 2023 Horoscope Predictions foresees that you are likely to lose patience and could get aggressive. The latter half of the Libra year 2023 may contain blessings from the goddess of love Venus herself which may bring happiness to your relationship. Libra Zodiac Sign 2023 indicates planets seem to shower you with their blessings in aspects of your romantic relationships. March will probably be the month where your relationship will start to take a boost. In the Astrology of Libra 2023 things might start to look clear in terms of relationships with the help of Jupiter. Your relationship will probably be a lot stronger and close with each other as foreseen by 2023 Astrology Predictions Libra. Libra 2023 Astrology observes a favorable year for your finances and money-related matters. To have gains Saturn might require you to have your plans prepared in advance. Libra Future 2023 may begin with a bumpy ride in the start but with time, probability of getting better opportunities is observed.



### Scorpio

23rd October to 22nd November

The Scorpio natives are blessed with the in-born potential to fight back with challenges. Scorpio forecast 2023 says that the start of the year might be prosperous. Scorpio fortune 2023 may expect some good rewards from your old investments because of the blessing from Jupiter. However, Scorpio Vedic Horoscope 2023 foresees that because of unsupportive Rahu and Ketu you may have to deal with complications. Scorpio Reading 2023 predicts that things will probably start to look good by the mid of February. Zodiac Sign 2023 Scorpio advises you to make purchases or sell out property around February. But Saturn requires you to avoid making unnecessary expenses in the middle of the year. 2023 Astrology Scorpio foresees that if too much expense is made then you might have to face the consequences. Scorpio Reading 2023 observes good earning opportunities and an increase in your wealth around May caused by the blessings from Jupiter. By the end of the year, you might have made major improvements in your wealth due to the easy inflow of money. Scorpio Fortune 2023 suggests it would be favorable for property deals. 2023 Predictions for Scorpio love life may have a sweet beginning this year observing Jupiter and Venus. The astrology of Scorpio suggests that married couples who are in a cordial relationship may have a chance of getting close to each other. Love might be coming your way for the singles around the mid of February predicts Scorpio Vedic Horoscope 2023. Movement on Mars may lead to interactions of natives around March foreseen by Scorpio Sign 2023.



### Sagittarius

23rd November to 21st December

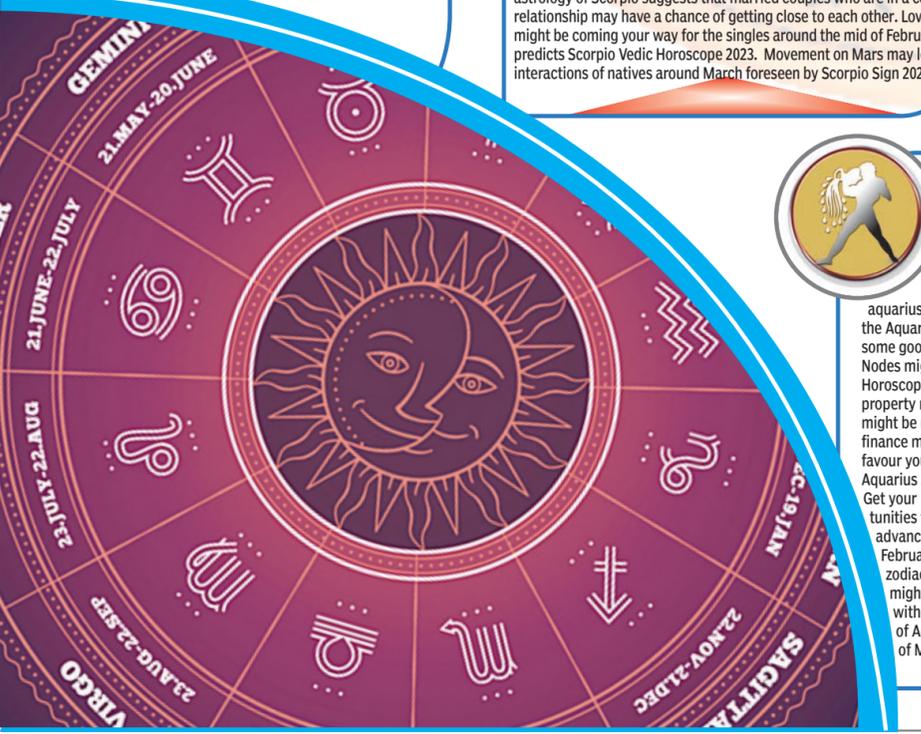
2023 Horoscope Sagittarius predicts that at the start of the year things might run smoothly with your optimistic approach. Sagittarius 2023 Astrology foretells that this might be a good time to get mingled with someone if you are single suggests Venus. With the advancement in the year, your social circle will be more pronounced too. Horoscope for 2023 Astrology predicts that you might be able to handle stressful situations at home with ease. But Sagittarius Zodiac Sign foresees that you might get into arguments with your native or closed ones due to the effect of Ketu. However, things will go back to calm after some time. Horoscope for Sagittarius 2023 with Jupiter's blessing you will be able to get through the difficulties in the family and your love life will slowly have rejoiced too. Sagittarius Horoscope for 2023 Jupiter and Venus will possibly bring positivity to your finances. Predicted that 2023 Sagittarius you might be presented with numerous opportunities. However, Astrology Sagittarius 2023 foretells that matters related to assets from the past may resurface and will require your attention. In such financially tough times, family members will provide you with help and assistance in finance says 2023 Year for Sagittarius. Old dues may also help you to maintain stable wealth. Though the transitional Jupiter will be readily showering you with financial prosperity as time passes Sagittarius's horoscope for 2023 advises you to cut down on unnecessary expenses.



### Capricorn

22nd December to 20th January

This might be a progressive year for Capricorn 2023. Money won't be much of an issue this year as you are likely to have a very profitable time ahead, says Capricorn 2023 Horoscope. The transition of Saturn indicates, others might try to swindle you out of your money as per 2023 Capricorn Horoscope. Capricorn 2023 predictions advises you to watch out and be alert for this. The stars from around March might have a positive impact on your financial status as indicated by Horoscope 2023 Capricorn. Capricorn yearly Horoscope 2023 lets you push yourself to fulfil the requirements of your family. Saturn might demand strict discipline. Thus Horoscope of Capricorn 2023 demands your efficient planning and balanced decisions during the ending phase of this year. Due to the blessings of Jupiter, Astrology Capricorn 2023 helps you to see good returns from your assets. The combined impact of Venus and Mars might provide stability and passion in your relationship as the year begins as per horoscope for 2023 Capricorn. Jupiter might provide stability in current romantic relationships of Capricorn zodiac sign 2023. If you are in a serious committed relationship, but not yet married, then it might be a good phase to tie the knot, says astrology 2023 Capricorn.



### Aquarius

21st January to 18th February

Many important projects are waiting to be handled and this year is likely to solve property related matters for Zodiac sign aquarius 2023. The year might bring a positive impact on your life according to the Aquarius 2023 Horoscope. In the beginning of this year, Jupiter might bring some good earning opportunities. Around the mid of February, the impact of Nodes might bring several difficulties on the financial front for Aquarius Horoscope 2023. Venus might also favour you for your wealth, fixed assets and property related matters in the year of Aquarius 2023. The impact of Nodes might be misleading for Aquarius 2023. Viewing this you need to handle finance much carefully as per 2023 Horoscope for Aquarius. Your fortune might favour you during the ending part of this 2023 Aquarius year. The year of the Aquarius 2023 would prove positive for Aquarius zodiac 2023 to buy vehicles. Get your Aquarius Horoscope 2023 by just one click. Venus might bring opportunities to enjoy a romantic time as per Aquarius Astrology 2023 as the year advances, giving your emotions a boost. The period around the month of February might be an ideal time to begin a new relationship for Aquarius zodiac sign 2023, if they are single. Saturn indicates that a recent mistake might be weighing on you as per 2023 Aquarius predictions. Spending time with family is essential to address an ongoing concern tells the Horoscope of Aquarius 2023. Your love life might feel tumultuous around the month of May according to Aquarius forecast 2023.



### Pisces

19th February to 20th March

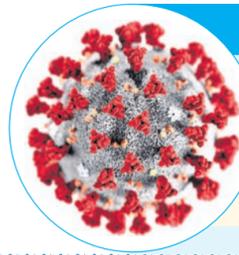
Self Indulgence might cause some disruptions but Great Opportunities are still waiting as per Yearly Horoscope Pisces 2023. This year is likely to bring some good opportunities to strike some good financial deals as per Pisces 2023 Horoscope. Your financial status might improve gradually from the month of February. However, Pisces 2023 might need to accept new challenges as Saturn does not seem to allow the natives to get the desired success so easily. Due to the blessings of Jupiter, your income might improve and it might also help you to resolve some pending issues regarding your property or other assets as indicated by 2023 Pisces Horoscope. Saturn seems to demand careful steps in regard to financial matters for 2023 Pisces. Jupiter might make you able to put in a long-term strategy for the period ahead around the month of May. During the latter half of year, some new opportunity seems to be on offer for Pisces 2023. This year is likely to bring some refreshing experiences in your love life. However, Pisces 2023 predictions state that the impact of Saturn might make you see the difference between dreams and reality. In the beginning of this year Venus might activate all social contacts in 2023 for Pisces. The period around the month of February is likely to be very rewarding and you are likely to receive gratification from all spheres of life as per Pisces Horoscope for 2023. Careless approach and self-indulgence are more likely to cause some disruptions for 2023 Pisces, indicates Mars. As the year advances, Jupiter might help you lay a foundation for a more stable relationship.

# downtown



## ZERO NIGHT BASH

People dancing to the tune of a popular number at a hotel in Bhubaneswar, Saturday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	66,47,30,682	63,66,62,170	66,96,763
India	4,46,78,384	4,41,44,029	5,30,702
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

# Tight vigil for New Year rush



Security personnel deployed in Puri  
PNN/ AGENCIES

**Puri/Bhubaneswar, Dec 31:** After two years of subdued New Year celebrations under Covid-19 guidelines, the state is all set to welcome the New Year 2023 with a bang. Keeping in view the rush and likely law and order situation, the Puri police has deployed heavy security personnel in and around the Srimandir while the Commissionerate Police in Bhubaneswar has issued traffic advisory to tackle rush.

According to sources, adequate security arrangements have been put in place at Srimandir in Puri in view of the New Year celebrations, a senior police officer said Saturday. A massive gathering is expected at the 12th century shrine on New Year's eve and New Year's Day. A traffic advisory has also been issued, Puri Superintendent of Police Kunwar Vishal Singh said.

The New Year's congregation at the temple is being allowed after a gap of two years.

Lakhs of devotees are thronging the coastal town to have darshan of the presiding deities of the temple, Singh said. "More than 60 platoons of policemen and 200 officers have

been deployed in and around the temple. Hundreds of lifeguards will also be stationed at the designated bathing points along the beach," Singh said.

He urged devotees to adhere to the traffic regulations and cooperate with on-duty police officers.

Puri Collector Samarth Verma said all arrangements have been made in the temple to ensure smooth darshan.

Meanwhile, the Commissionerate Police has urged the citizens of Bhubaneswar to follow traffic rules on the occasion of New Year celebrations Sunday. In a video message, DCP Pardeep Singh Saturday said that everyone is excited over the New Year celebrations after a gap of two years.

"It is seen that everyone is in celebration mood and in that situation forgetting traffic rules will invite trouble for everyone. I request all to abide by the traffic rules. Avoid over-speeding and don't cross the speed limit of 50 kmph. Don't drive under the influence of alcohol and if you are going to any New Year party, take driver with you. Police will be deployed at various points and persons found flouting the guidelines will be persecuted," told Singh.

The police expect that NandanKanan road, Janpath, Cuttack road and Rasulgah will witness traffic jams Sunday. He informed about sharing important traffic related information through FM radio and the twitter handles of DCP Traffic and DCP Bhubaneswar UPD. He requested the residents to contact the police through emergency number 112.

## 3 Coop dept officials given compulsory retirement

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 31:** The state government Saturday issued orders for compulsory retirement of three officials of the Cooperation department.

Following the approval of Governor of Odisha Ganeshi Lal, the Cooperation department has issued three different orders to this effect.

The officials who have been given compulsory retirement are: Mukteswar Soreng, sub-assistant AGCS, office of the directorate of cooperative audit, Asish Kumar Rout, sub-assistant registrar of cooperative societies and Kedar Gouri Patra, inspector of cooperative societies, office of the registrar of cooperative societies. The order from the Governor came in exercise of the powers conferred under Clause (a) of Rule 71 of the Odisha Service Code.

Earlier, the state government had sent several corrupt officials on compulsory retirement.



**ABSOLUTE SURRENDER:** A man prays to a setting sun on the bank of River Mahanadi in Sambalpur, Saturday, hours before the end of 2022

OP PHOTO

# Govt appoints 27 advisors, 4 chairpersons

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 31:** On the eve of New Year, the state government Saturday appointed BJD leaders as advisors to various programmes and projects of the government.

According to a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), Subash Chandra Patra has been appointed as chairman of Odisha Pisciculture Development Corporation while Mahendra Badhei will serve as the chairman of State Warehousing Corporation,

**BJD has appointed two media coordinators, five national spokespersons, 16 spokespersons and nine panelists**

Sk Nizamuddin as chairman of Wakf Board and Kalyani Nayak as State Social Welfare Board Chairman.

Similarly, Pramod Padhi has been appointed as advisor to Odisha

Lift Irrigation Corporation, Sanjaya Sethi as advisor to Capital Hospital, Puspanjali Rana as advisor of Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY), Tanmay Swain as advisor to State Scholarships Scheme and Elina Das as advisor to Anwesha and Akankhya schemes.

Meanwhile, the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) reconstituted its media cell.

In a press release, party organisational secretary Pranab Prakash Das said in supersession of all previous orders issued earlier, BJD president Naveen Patnaik has re-

constituted the media team.

As per the list, the party has appointed two media coordinators, five national spokespersons, 16 spokespersons and 9 panelists.

Lenin Mohanty and Madhusmita Nayak have been appointed as media coordinators and Prasanna Acharya, Pinaki Misra, Amar Patnaik, Sarmistha Sethi, Sasmit Patra and Manas Ranjan Mangaraj as national spokespersons.

Newly-inducted BJD leader Swayam Prakash Mahapatra has been posted as media head of the ruling party.

## State in mission mode to tackle SCDs

**Bhubaneswar:** In a significant step towards improvement of public health in Odisha, the state government has started preparations for detection and treatment of sickle cell diseases (SCDs) in different parts of the state, an order issued by the Health and Family Welfare department said Saturday. Department secretary Shalini Pandit said that institutional arrangements from state to block level would be put in place for implementation and monitoring of the drive and coordination among the stakeholders. She added, "State government has ordered for constitution of coordination and monitoring committees at state, district and block levels."

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## NEET - State Toppers

AIR 39	AIR 75	AIR 100	AIR 124
PRIYA SOMADUTTA NAYAK STATE RANK #1 2022	NEKTA N S S MISHRA STATE RANK #1 2021	GEETI GAYATREE PANDA STATE RANK #2 2021	SOORAJ NANDA STATE RANK #3 2021

## JEE (Advanced) - State Toppers

AIR 51	AIR 73	AIR 115	AIR 226
SAYANTAN DHAR STATE RANK #1 2019	SIBASISH ROUT STATE RANK #1 2020	GOUTAM DAS STATE RANK #1 2021	SAATWIK PATNAIK STATE RANK HOLDER 2022

**REGISTRATIONS OPEN**

**SAI ENTRANCE TEST (SET) FOR CLASS VI TO IX & XI ON 28<sup>TH</sup> & 29<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2023**

SAI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL - SIS			SAI INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL - SIRS		
CBSE XII Board 2022 Results	Above 75%	First Class	CBSE XII Board 2022 Results	Above 75%	First Class
96.5% students scored above 75%	Science 97.6%	100%	98.6% students scored above 75%	Science 100%	100%
	Commerce 93.9%	100%		Commerce 97.4%	100%
	Humanities 98.0%	100%		Humanities 100%	100%
NEET QUALIFIERS	JEE ADVANCE QUALIFIERS	JEE MAINS QUALIFIERS	KVPY 2022 QUALIFIERS	NTSE QUALIFIERS	GLOBAL AMBASSADORS
28 STUDENTS	22 STUDENTS	36 STUDENTS	13 STUDENTS	26 STUDENTS	17 STUDENTS

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**RUSSIAN TOURISTS' DEATH CASE**

# Crime Branch sleuths collect samples from cremation ground



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada, Dec 31:** A 12-member team of state Crime Branch conducted a probe into the death of two Russian tourists at a hotel in this town, a report said Saturday. The CB team was accompanied by a 6-member team of forensic department. The CB team first visited the Sirikana cremation ground and collected the charred remains like bones of Pavel Antov, a Russian lawmaker and his friend Vladimir Bydanov who died under mysterious circumstances at the hotel. The charred bones will be sent for a DNA test and other examinations. Later, the CB team seized the mobile phone and laptop of the deceased Russian lawmaker. It was learnt that the CB team might seek the help of technical experts or Interpol to unravel the data stored in the phone and laptop. Meanwhile, the post-mortem report of Pavel and Vladimir had arrived. Two forensic experts DK

local police and came back and conducted a verification at the hotel. There, they quizzed the hotel staff to figure out the sequence of events. Basically, the team wanted to know from the staff that what they had seen on that day and did they find anything unnatural and made a video recording of their statements. The CB team also sought details of the guests to have visited hotel during last one month. When contacted, DSP Saroj Kanta Mohanta said that evidence and newer details about the deaths are being collected and the actual reason behind their deaths could be ascertained only after the completion of the probe. This team had earlier visited the Rayagada hospital yesterday and interrogated four staff there. This apart, the members had also collected Pavel's slippers from the spot and fingerprints from a glass in his room (Room No-203). Notably, four Russian nationals came to Rayagada and stayed in a hotel on December 21. One of them identified as Vladimir Bydanov was found dead, December 22. Two days later, Antov was found dead, December 24. After the deaths, controversy over their last rites erupted as their mortal remains were consigned to flame. However, Russian Ambassador to India Denis Alipov clarified that nothing wrong was done by performing the last rites of the deceased Russian tourists.

Dev and Himanshu Sekhar Nath conducted the post-mortem of Pavel's body. The report mentioned that it was an accidental death, caused by the lungs and liver damages. The report stated that the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh ribs of Pavel was fractured while lungs and livers sustained critical injuries. The report also stated that a Pavel had undergone a surgery in the past before his death. The CB is probing the death by taking various aspects into consideration. The CB team again visited the site where Pavel's body was found and conducted a probe by taking the post-mortem report and available details into consideration. Friday, the CB team conducted a probe at the hotel where Pavel and Vladimir were staying and held discussions with the police station officials till late night. Later, they again held discussions with local police officials before proceeding to the cremation ground, Saturday. There they even questioned the



**REMEMBERING HEROES:** Dignitaries during the state-level Valour Day observed by I&PR Department of Odisha government at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

# CHSE releases Plus II exam dates

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 31:** The Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE) declared dates of Plus II board examinations Saturday. The exams will commence from March 1. As per the official notification released by the CHSE, the Higher Secondary Examination-2023 for the regular and ex-regular students in Arts, Science, Commerce and Vocational streams will be conducted from March 1, 2023 till April 5. The examination will begin from 10 am and will continue till 1 pm. The practical examinations in the subjects will be held from February 1 to February 10, 2023. The candidates are advised to enter the exam centre 30 minutes before the commencement of the examination and enter the exam room/hall before 15 minutes of examination. The examination will be conducted under CCTV surveillance.

The centre superintendents are requested to ensure that CCTV is made functional in all examination halls well in advance of the commencement of examination and to see that CCTVS are functioning throughout all sittings uninterrupted. The examinations in all the streams will be conducted following Covid appropriate behaviour. The examinations of Biology (Section A: Botany & Section-B: Zoology) for both regular and ex-regular candidates will be held in a single sitting with a gap of 20 minutes in between. First, the candidates shall be supplied with Biology Paper- Botany) questions at 10 AM. After that, Biology-II (Zoology) question paper shall be given at 11.50AM after collection of answer booklets used by candidates for answering Biology (Botany) paper. All regular candidates (registered in the year 2021) appearing



for Annual H.S Examination, 2023 shall appear the examination with full syllabus (100 per cent) and previous pattern as detailed in the 2019 syllabus. The Ex Regular candidates with registration up to the year 2020 shall appear AHS Examination-2023 with reduced syllabus, and the pattern of question will be like that of AHS Examination-2022. The duration of practical examination for integrated Vocational Practical subjects (IVS) and Vocational Trade subjects will be three hours. The project evaluation and viva voce in Commerce stream, groups are to be formed taking minimum 24 students in a group. Evaluation and viva-voice of a group is to be completed in three hours.

## Big job...

**Continued from P1**  
As per primary estimate by the EOW, the fraudsters have duped more than 50,000 job aspirants hailing from at least five states including Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Odisha of crores. The accused used to develop websites resembling government websites in which they posted fake government job advertisements to dupe gullible aspirants. The accused used to ask the aspirants to register themselves for interview, training and other kinds of events by paying an amount ranging from ₹3000 to ₹50,000. The accused used to receive the amount through mule accounts created using fake SIM cards and forged documents and collect the money from various Jan Seva Kendras using the QR code of Jan Seva Kendra and mule accounts. After getting the money, the accused persons used to close the websites and call centers. The fraudsters also throw all the mobile sets along with SIMS used in the "closed operations" in the nearby rivers to destroy evidences.

## Shifting of Ekalavya school faces dissent

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Tikiri, Dec 31:** After knowing that an administrative decision has been taken to shift the Ekalavya Vidyalay proposed at Kashipur block in Rayagada district to a place 50 km away, locals including social activists and political leaders have strongly opposed it. Hundreds of people protesting the decision Friday gathered near the block office and submitted a memorandum addressed to Chief

Minister Naveen Patnaik seeking his intervention. ABDO Padmini Kanhar received the memorandum. It was stated that a survey team and the local tehsildar had identified a land near Neki Ghati Mandir in Kashipur for establishment of the school. Later, a decision was taken to shift the school elsewhere. They warned of agitation against the administration and the government if the decision to shift the school is not reversed.

## NITR concludes diamond jubilee

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, Dec 31:** A young achievers' conclave marked the global alumni meet of National Institute of Technology (NIT), Rourkela which was held on the occasion of its three-day diamond jubilee celebrations. For immense contribution in their respective fields, the old students of NIT were awarded in the conclave which concluded Friday evening. As many as 180 old students residing in various countries were present at this alumni meet. The

awardees were identified as Prashanti Jena, Preetisudha Meher, Kishan Agarwal, Rumak Pradhan, Suresh R Dash and Baikunthnath Sahu. A panel discussion aimed at development of the institution and felicitation of retired faculties was also held. Tech Mahindra MD CP Gurmani joined as chief guest and SM Vaidya, chairman of Indian Oil Corporation was the guest of honour on the inaugural day. NIT director Prof K Umamaheshwar Rao presided over the function.

# Royal Bengal Tiger hide seized in Nabarangpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Papadahandi, Dec 31:** Acting on a tip-off, the local police seized the hide of a Royal Bengal Tiger (RBT) and arrested one person in this connection during a raid near Deer Park in this town in Nabarangpur district, Saturday. The accused trader was identified as Kamal Kumar Mohanty, a resident of Shatami Sahi in the town under Papadahandi police limits in the district. This was stated here by Nabarangpur Town DSP Chandrasekhar Hota in the presence of SDPO Aditya Sen, Papadahandi IIC Rameshwar Pradhan and SI Shibaji Panda at a press meet held at Papadahandi



police station, Saturday. The raid took place when Nabarangpur SP S Sushree was tipped off about a person negotiating with prospective buyers for sale of a RBT hide near the Deer Park in the town. She directed Papadahandi police to conduct a

raid and arrest the accused. Accordingly, a team led by SI Shibaji Panda, conducted a raid near the Deer Park and seized the hide while arresting the accused from the spot. A case was registered in this connection under relevant sections of IPC and Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and the accused produced in the court, the IIC said. The seized hide will be sent to Wild Life Institute of India, Dehradun for biological examination, police said. Investigation is underway to find out the involvement of other persons in the illegal trade of the RBT and the source of procurement of the hide, the DSP added.

## Putin critic...

**Continued from P1**  
GRP later handed over Glagolev to Kharavela Nagar police. "We have intimated the Foreigners Regional Registration Officers (FRROs) in Hyderabad about the Russian citizen," DCP Prateek Singh told **Orissa POST**. During enquiry, police found Glagolev had applied for refugee status at the United Nation for High Commissioner for Refugee, New Delhi which is pending. He was registered as asylum seeker with the UNHCR September 29, 2022 till September 28, 2023. Commissionerate police sources revealed that Glagolev was later sent to Puri and the cops intimated Puri police about his stay. Notably, Russian lawmaker Pavel Antov and his friend Vladimir Bidenov died under mysterious circumstances in a hotel in Rayagada.

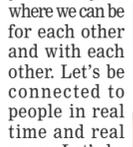
# Climate, health & creativity main focus of personalities for 2023

*In 2021, with quarantines and lockdowns, the pandemic instilled fear in our hearts and made us stay inside. But in 2022, with vaccine shots in our arms, we stepped out, gradually but cautiously, with hope. As the year comes to an end and we usher into a new one, all around us we can sense a mix of fear and hope. To explore this mix and the expectations of people, OrissaPOST caught up with a few prominent personalities of the state:*

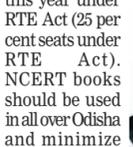
**Jaya Krushna Panigrahi**, an environmental expert, who gives priority to orderliness in life, says, "Protection not pollution, equality not discrimination and peace not war should be the guiding principles for the humanity in 2023. We need to be more concerned about the environmental challenges that threaten the very existence of the living system in the world. As the creator of all these problems, our moral responsibility is to apply



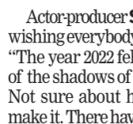
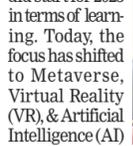
our wisdom for protecting nature." **Amrit Pattojoshi**, a health expert who advises people to work and exercise hard, says, "I see this new year as a year where we can be for each other and with each other. Let's be connected to people in real time and real sense. Let's be fair to others and ourselves. My new year resolution is to be less concerned about what people think about me, to spend a little more



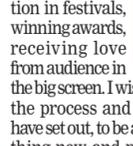
time in doing physical exercise and to be little less harsh on myself." **Basudev Bhatt**, an educationist with focus on women empowerment, expresses her wishes, "At least 40,000 seats should be filled up this year under RTE Act (25 per cent seats under RTE Act). NCERT books should be used in all over Odisha and minimize the school bag weight in all schools. Free and Compulsory Education should be ex-



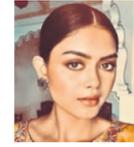
tended from Class-VIII to Class-XII." **Silpi Sahoo**, SAI International Education Group Chairperson, says, "We are looking forward to a splendid start for 2023 in terms of learning. Today, the focus has shifted to Metaverse, Virtual Reality (VR), & Artificial Intelligence (AI) and their integration in leveling up the teaching and learning process. New careers have taken shape, and education has transformed. The major focus will be on women in Sports; GreenTech, and FinTech will also shine up during the coming years." Actor-producer **Swastik Choudhury** wishing everybody a great year said, "The year 2022 felt like coming out of the shadows of pandemic slowly. Not sure about how far we could make it. There have been many high



points this year like witnessing Adieu Godard finding recognition in festivals, winning awards, receiving love from audience in the big screen. I wish to continue with the process and objectives that I have set out, to be able to bring something new and path breaking for our people in terms of cinema, vision or experience. The Anthony actor **Partha Sarthi Ray** said, "I'm not a resolution person. Each day is a new day for me and any day can be a good start. Personally I'm excited for 2023 as I have some major releases coming soon. I wish to work in more creative concepts and make Odia cinema a force to

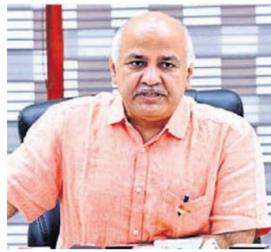


reckon with at pan India level." The Daman actor, **Dipanwit Das Mohapatra** said, "I am seeing this New Year as a year of new possibilities. Working hard for my craft and doing more and more new roles and keep improving is my only resolution." Actress **Swapna Priyadarisni** says, "I'll personally see this year as a year of blessings and new beginning. My resolution on New Year 2023 would be to travel and spend more time with my family. I don't believe in plans, I'll just keep working hard and accept whatever comes my way."



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MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

## NEW YEAR JOY

Defying Covid protocols amidst the scare of the new Omicron variant, crowds of holidaymakers have descended onto Himachal Pradesh's popular tourist resorts to ring in the New Year



## of the day quote

I have never spoken to any Congress leader and neither has anyone called me. So I wonder why these kinds of stories are planted in the media  
GHULAM NABI AZAD | CHIEF OF DEMOCRATIC PROGRESSIVE AZAD PARTY

Existing industrial units in Dharavi in Mumbai will get more space apart from a common facility centre and tax sops for five years as part of the area's redevelopment plan  
DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA DEPUTY CM

We are seeing some in the BJP selectively quoting Swami Vivekananda to show they are following his path... (but) anyone who has read the totality of his message will understand that he is talking of an all-inclusive and all-embracing faith  
SHASHI THAROOR | CONGRESS LEADER

# Cannot travel in bullet-proof car: Rahul



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The former Congress chief said when Bharatiya Janata Party leaders take out roadshows, they do not use bullet-proof cars and the government does not write to them regarding any violation of security protocols

Replying to a reporter's question that he was breaking security protocols during the foot march, Rahul Gandhi said it seems the government wants to make out a case against him that he keeps flouting security norms

New Delhi, Dec 31: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accused the Centre Saturday of using different security protocols for BJP leaders and for him, noting that the current regime wants him to undertake the "Bharat Jodo Yatra" in a bullet-proof vehicle, which is not acceptable to him.

Replying to a reporter's question that he was breaking security protocols during the foot march, Rahul Gandhi said it seems the government wants to make out a case against him that he keeps flouting security norms. "I am undertaking the Bharat Jodo Yatra and the government wants me to do it in a bulletproof vehicle. They say it is protocol and I should not trouble them. They want me to travel from Kanyakumari to Kashmir in a bulletproof car, which is not acceptable to me. How can I sit in a bulletproof vehicle in this yatra?" he asked.

The former Congress chief said when Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders take out roadshows, they do not use bulletproof cars and the government does not write to them regarding any violation of security protocols.

"They have undertaken roadshows in open vehicles, which is against the protocol. How can there be a different protocol for me and for BJP leaders? The CRPF and other senior officers know what is important for my security. You tell me, how can I travel in a bulletproof vehicle? In the Bharat Jodo Yatra, one has to walk. So I do not understand what do they mean. Probably, they are making a case

that I keep breaking security protocols. Let them make a case," he said.

On him wearing a T-shirt in Delhi in December, Rahul Gandhi asked, "Why are you getting disturbed if I am wearing a T-shirt? You want me to wear a sweater?" "Why are these people so disturbed? I will put out a video on how to walk in a T-shirt and how to confront cold. I will make it for you," he added.

Rahul Gandhi told reporters that if they are wearing sweaters, it means they are scared of the cold. "It does not mean it is cold, but you are scared of the cold. I am not scared of the cold. To tell you seriously, I am not feeling cold. When I feel cold, I will start wearing a sweater," he said.

All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary KC Venugopal wrote to Home Minister Amit Shah on December 29, saying no action was taken on a complaint from his party regarding the entry of unauthorised vigilance sleuths from Haryana into the Bharat Jodo Yatra containers.

"As far as the Delhi leg of the yatra is concerned, there were two significant issues -- both related to the utter lack of collaboration between the police and CRPF," Venugopal said. He added that in Badarpur and at the Red Fort, Gandhi was directed away from the entry passage towards the crowd and it had exposed him to an extremely unprotected area, causing a lot of confusion and commotion.



A man dressed as Santa Claus extends New Year wishes while standing on a boat in the sea in Kochi

PTI PHOTO

## SHORT TAKES

### Delhi traders welcome decision

New Delhi: Restaurateurs and traders Saturday welcomed the Lt Governor's decision to allow restaurants in 5-star and 4-star hotels in Delhi to operate round-the-clock, saying it will promote the night economy. However, a few restaurant owners also urged the government to allow bars situated outside hotels to remain open 24x7. Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena, had in November, set up a high powered committee to ease and facilitate license requirements for restaurants/eateries, and directed it to examine the existing regulations and suggest ways of expediting the licensing processes.

### Liquor tragedy: Mastermind held

New Delhi: Delhi Police's Crime Branch has arrested a man wanted in the cases related to the spurious liquor tragedy in Bihar's Saran which claimed the lives of 73 people, an official said Saturday. The accused has been identified as Ram Babu Mahto, a resident of Doila village in Saran district. According to Ravindra Singh Yadav, the Special Commissioner of Police (Crime), information was received by the Inter-State Cell of the Crime Branch that Mahto may be hiding somewhere in Delhi. "On the basis of technical surveillance as well as specific inputs, Mahto was nabbed from Dwarka," Yadav said.

## Assam to merge four districts with 4 others

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 31: The Assam government Saturday decided to merge four districts with four others and changed the administrative jurisdiction of a few villages, a day before the Election Commission's freeze on redrawing administrative units comes into effect.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the decisions have been taken with a heavy heart keeping in mind the interests of Assam, its society and administrative exigencies. He added it was only "temporary" and did not disclose the reason behind the decision. "While Biswanath district will be merged with Sonitpur, Hojai will be merged with Nagaon, Bajali will be merged with Barpeta and Tamulpur will be merged with Baksa," he said. The decisions had to be taken at the cabinet meeting on Saturday as the Election Commission has imposed a ban on creating new administrative units in Assam from January 1, 2023 as the poll panel will undertake the delimitation exercise in the state.

# IT minister pulls up WhatsApp

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 31: IT Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar Saturday pulled up WhatsApp for tweeting a video that depicted an incorrect map of India and asked it to fix the error immediately, following which the messaging platform deleted the tweet and apologised.

As the minister called out WhatsApp over the distortions in the map of the country, he also warned that "all platforms that do business in India and/or want to continue to do business in India, must use correct maps". "Dear @WhatsApp - Request that you pls fix the India map error asap", Chandrasekhar tweeted after the Meta-owned messaging platform put out a New Year-related tweet showing a wrong map of India.



The video post by WhatsApp about a New Year eve livestream depicted the globe that showed an incorrect map of India with regard to Jammu and Kashmir

The video post by WhatsApp about a New Year eve livestream depicted the globe that showed an incorrect map of India with regard to Jammu and Kashmir. WhatsApp deleted the tweet after it was flagged by the minister. "Thank you Minister for pointing out the unintended error; we have promptly removed the stream, apologies. We will be mindful in the future," WhatsApp tweeted.

Chandrasekhar had, earlier this week, also cautioned video calling company Zoom's founder and chief executive officer Eric Yuan over an incorrect map of India.

"Your may want to make sure you use correct maps of the countries you do/ want to do business in," the minister had tweeted on December 28. Yuan had later deleted the tweet in question.

# Santragachi Jheel sees surge in migratory birds

The latest unofficial count till now by the Nature Mates' Club, which has been maintaining the lake for the last 5 years, suggests the number has already crossed 7,000 this year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Dec 31: Santragachi Jheel or Pakhiralay (Bird Sanctuary), on the outskirts of Kolkata, has attracted a record over 7,000 winged visitors this winter, at least 15 per cent more than the number estimated last winter.

The latest unofficial count till now by the Nature Mates' Club, which has been maintaining the lake for the last 5 years, suggests the number has already crossed 7,000 this year.

"So far, the 'jheel' (lake) has hosted around 45 species, but never at one particular point in time. Normally you will get to see around 20 species", said Lina Chatterjee of Nature Mates, who oversees the Santragachi Jheel project.

According to the NGO's annual census, the number of birds had fallen to nearly 700 in 2018 when the Howrah Municipal Corporation



cleared the lake of water hyacinths entirely, leaving no place for the birds to rest.

However, some species whose numbers dwindled considerably in the previous years are making

a comeback. "The number of birds which went down to 700 after this drive to clear up water plants has now grown back to more than 7000" said Arjan Basu Roy, secretary of Nature Mates Nature Club.

"Luckily, we are getting back the Trans-Himalayan Migrant Ducks which went missing post the 2018 clean-up drive", he said.

The most dominant species among the birds found is the Lesser Whistling duck.

The Gadwall and Garganey and Northern Pintail varieties can also be spotted.

For the first time in years, the Glossy Ibis has also been spotted here.

The number of birds may well go up by January 14, the official counting day for the sanctuary, provided the weather and fog conditions are favourable, Roy said.

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ନବବର୍ଷ ୨୦୨୩ ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ ଜିଲା, ରାଜ୍ୟ ତଥା ବେଶବାସୀଙ୍କୁ ଆକର୍ଷକ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଜଣାଉଛି ଜଗତଜନନୀ ମା' ଦଶଭୁଜାଙ୍କ ଅପାର କୃପାରୁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ନୂତନ ବର୍ଷଟି ପୁଷ୍ଟ, ଶାନ୍ତି ଓ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳବର୍ଷ ହେଉ । ନୂତନ ବର୍ଷର ଆଗମନରେ ମହାନାରୀ ଜଗତଜନନୀଙ୍କୁ ଜଗତଜନନୀ ମା' ଦୁର୍ଗା ବିନାଶ କରନ୍ତୁ, ମା'ଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ଏତିକି ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା।

ସନାଗଚୀ ମହାକୁଡ଼ ପୂର୍ବତନ ବିଧାୟକ, ଚଣ୍ଡୁଆ, କେନ୍ଦୁଝର

FOCUS LEGAL SYSTEM

# WHOSE RULE OF LAW?



**The good works of Western law have continued apace in locations ranging from Vietnam and Iraq to Afghanistan. Yet none of these initiatives was ever supported by any evidence that simply 'transplanting' legal regimes would succeed**

economic engagement – from “law and economics” and new institutional economics to legal origin theory – have crashed onto the shores of the Global South. The consistent message has been that low-income countries must modernise their legal systems, replacing all traditions and social conventions based in “magical” and “mystical” thinking (as Max Weber once put it) with cold, calculable legal “rationality.”

The West, under the auspices of programs such as the United Nations Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor and the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators, has launched multiple initiatives not only to “export” a valuable commodity – a Western-style legal system – but also to quantify and measure its uptake. One influential effort, which I was involved with at its inception, is the American Bar Association-backed World Justice Project. Among other things, the WJP assesses the health of the rule of law in ailing developing countries (usually designated “corrupt”) and then prescribes treatments – typically shock therapy-style elixirs – to bolster

property and contracts regimes. The good works of Western law have continued apace in locations ranging from Vietnam and Iraq to Afghanistan. Yet none of these initiatives was ever supported by any evidence that simply “transplanting” legal regimes would succeed. On the contrary, many millions of dollars were spent on a two-decade-long reform effort in Afghanistan, and still, before the Taliban’s reconquest, the country ranked 134th of 139 in the WJP’s 2021 Rule of Law Index.

There are undoubtedly problems with this kind of empirical approach, as the controversy surrounding the World Bank’s Doing Business report shows. But even more problematic is the underlying theory. As the 2008 global financial crisis did with orthodox economics, the Trump presidency exposed core flaws in rule-of-law scholarship that had long been buried or obscured. Chief among these is the assumption that law will play a decisive part in eliciting good behaviour – that it will exert what legal scholars call “general normative force” on the society in question.

But now, no one can deny that the prevailing epistemic apartheid

– the marginalisation of those studying the “problems” of establishing and maintaining the rule of law – within law schools has damaged Western countries as much as the rest of the world. This is evident even in the WJP’s own reports, which showed a marked decline in the US’ rule-of-law ranking for five consecutive years from 2017 to 2021.

Although the US recovered somewhat from Trump’s contempt for the rule of law in 2022, it might not be so lucky next time around. Trump has already announced his campaign for the 2024 presidential election, and dismissed the House January 6 Committee as a “kangaroo court.” Moreover, a fully Trumpified Republican Party remains committed to eroding the values that underpin the rule of law.

The emergence of social order via the establishment of law-like systems is a universal phenomenon. It happens when individuals join an emerging social consensus in support of such a system, and this process tends to follow the same pattern no matter the country. But understanding the rule of law’s basic structure and normative merits doesn’t really help us understand its underlying mechanics.

Fortunately, now that we are seeing the global nature of the challenges associated with maintaining the rule of law, important but long-neglected areas of legal scholarship (including empirical legal studies, law and psychology, behavioural law and economics, and law and emotions) are getting the attention they deserve. The more we can bring rigorous scientific analysis to the study of the rule of law, the better we can understand and protect it, both in the “Third World” and in the “First.”

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**THE PURPORTED DIFFERENCES IN KIND BETWEEN THE GLOBAL NORTH AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A PRODUCT OF COLONIAL TRIUMPHALISM, RATHER THAN REFLECTING AN ACCURATE SCIENTIFIC TAXONOMY**



Antara Haldar

In the early 2000s, there was a near-unanimous consensus among academic lawyers that the absence of the rule of law was strictly a “Third World problem” – meaning one that the advanced economies of the Global North had solved. Yet, just over a decade later, the United States elected as president a man who would go on to incite an insurrection at the US Capitol, conspire to overturn an election that he lost, abscond with classified documents when he finally left the White House, and then call for the “termination” of the US Constitution.

How did a quintessentially “Third World problem” become a “First World problem” as well? In fact, it was ever thus. The purported differences in kind between the Global North and the Global South have always been a product of colonial triumphalism, rather than reflecting an accurate scientific taxonomy.

This was the core insight of “law and development,” a beleaguered area of study that came into (modest) prominence in the 1970s. At the height of the Cold War, organisations like USAID and the Ford Foundation pushed law professors and legal scholars to take more of an active interest in evangelizing Western-style law (which is a bit like a pharmaceutical company paying a laboratory to “find” that one of its proprietary drugs is indeed effective). But, as a small coterie of law and development scholars pointed out, law is not always “potent” or “good,” even at “home” in the West.

Ignoring this inconvenient truth, Western organisations proceeded to foist their vision of the rule of law on the rest of the world anyway. While law and development professors were unwilling to play ball, economists steeped in the Washington Consensus agenda (fiscal discipline, deregulation, trade and capital-market liberalisation, privatisation, and so forth) were all too happy to fill the void. In the years since, waves of

## Misplaced Priorities

In concluding his chapter on intelligence agencies and their manner of functioning, former RAW chief AS Dulat wrote in his recent book that RAW is ‘pretty good, better than the ISI’. He left it at that, without explaining in what way and it would be interesting to learn how he arrived at this conclusion. To know whether something is good, bad or indifferent one must first ask what it is intended to do. What are the outcomes that are sought to be achieved? For the ISI, it has been two things. Firstly to tie down its giant neighbour so that the military and economic asymmetry is neutralised. Secondly that it control its western neighbour through proxies. That is to say that primary national security objectives have been tasked in large measure to the intelligence agency.

If it is possible for one to be a dispassionate observer in this matter, it appears that both outcomes have been achieved. Indeed, achieved so comprehensively that they have managed to get to the minds of the adversary and switch off his thinking, as Dulat’s book reveals, and as I wrote about here last week. To draw a comparison we must first know this: What are the outcomes RAW seeks to achieve? This is not clear because we have no national security doctrine or national security strategy. A ‘defence planning committee’ under the current national security advisor Doval was tasked five years ago to write up the doctrine and strategy but has not done it.

While we have not defined what the threat is in doctrine we know who the enemy is by instinct. Addressing his first combined commanders conference in October 2014, the Prime Minister said ‘the threats may be known, but the enemy (terrorism) may be invisible’. His NSA has spoken of, though not written about, something referred to as the Doval Doctrine. It also identifies Pakistan as the national security threat and terrorism as the primary problem. His solution is to do to the enemy what the enemy does to you, though he does not reflect on what that might mean in the long term.

To be clear this focus on terrorism is not just about the current government. Going back to 1990, the Indian state determined that Kashmir was where its national security strategy would be centred. The Army raised units called Rashtriya Rifles which would focus on counterinsurgency rather than on war. The Line of Control and bits of the international border were fenced off in a defensive act. The intelligence agencies would be focussed on counterterrorism. As head of RAW, Dulat refused to let go of the Kashmir portfolio he held in the Intelligence Bureau. Why the agency tasked with external intelligence (spying on other nations) was intruding into the space of the agency working on internal intelligence (tasked with internal security) is not explained. But it doesn’t have to be. For the entire Indian state apparatus Kashmir and Pakistan was the obsession.

This has been rudely taken apart by happenings on the eastern front. Till the clash in Galwan, of India’s 38 divisions only 12 faced China while the rest were ranged against Pakistan. Today 16 face China with more on the way. We have been yanked into a military posture that is conventional again. India has been compelled to do this against its will though there is of course no media uproar over why we were wasting time obsessing over the wrong thing.

For decades, instinctively and in a sort of primitive manner India showed ‘laal ankh’ to Pakistan. Years of refusal to engage with either the insurgents or the separatists means that we no longer have a meaningful intelligence game in Kashmir. And of course we have no agency to act either except through force. It is disappointing that this is how a democracy and a modern state responded but it is not surprising. Obsessing over something but also refusing to deal with it is a strange paradox but understandable if one is familiar with the Indian psyche as it has evolved on the communal question. Refusal to hire minorities and especially Muslims has likely also affected counterintelligence and espionage and operations capabilities. How many individuals in RAW and IB have Urdu and Pashto (or Mandarin)? It would be interesting to know.

Dulat’s book tells us that the approach by intelligence agencies including RAW followed that of the military. In the absence of defined threats and a doctrine, the system fell into a sort of sleepwalk mode. The political establishment and the media enthusiastically barked up the wrong tree. Building intelligence capability now to counter our primary threat – China – will not be easy. We will need to write the doctrine and the strategy and that will not be easy for a government that prefers certitude over doubt.

It will require above all for the nation to be weaned off the ideas that the problem is terrorism and the adversary is Pakistan and the belief that the current policy in Kashmir is meaningful or sustainable. None of this is of course going to happen. For this reason we will bumble along till forced to do something or compelled. The light that Dulat shines on the state of affairs is at once bright and illuminating and also depressing and scary.



Aakar Patel

**For decades, instinctively and in a sort of primitive manner India showed ‘laal ankh’ to Pakistan. Years of refusal to engage with either the insurgents or the separatists means that we no longer have a meaningful intelligence game in Kashmir**

SPECTRUM DIPLOMACY

## Strategic goals for the New Year

The New Year should be a turning point in India’s relationship with the world. India will be holding the presidency of two blocs – the G-20 and the SCO. The former may define India’s innovative world leadership reflecting her diplomatic acumen and the intrinsic strengths. The following are the areas that need careful treading and building on.

The preeminent sector to focus on is the economy. That is currently the measure of the power of a country. Although India has surpassed Britain to become the fifth largest economy, on many other parameters it is far from achieving its potential or meeting the expectations of the world. In particular, the investment that should have been diverted away from China has not come to India. New Delhi must ponder over the deficits that reflect such investments. Also, India was perceived to be the ‘skill capital’ of the world, and perhaps an alternative manufacturing hub. On both these, the progress is far from satisfactory.

The second sector which is indubitably the core strength of India is its culture, both political and socio-civilisational. India is the biggest democracy by dint of its sheer size. But is it a vibrant and authentic one that the other developing countries may like to emulate. By the present perception, the

answer is no. There are allegations of widespread violations of human rights, disruption of communal harmony and preponderance of a trend of intolerance. The leadership has to take these ominous trends on board and make course-correction if India should claim to become a world power.

The above reflection is based on the premise that a country’s foreign policy is a reflection of its domestic environment, which works as a determinant of the policy towards others. America’s foreign policy is based on its military and economic strength whereas China’s is purely driven by its newly-acquired economic prowess. New Delhi while building its military and economic power to match these two current big powers will have to use its social and cultural capital along with the emerging economic strength to promote its foreign policy.

In terms of concrete policies, New Delhi has to recalibrate its position on the biggest unfortunate development in February 2022. That is the ongoing war in Ukraine. New Delhi tilted towards Russia notwithstanding some murmuring disapproval in keeping with her own national interest. To be sure, India has considerable national interest associated with Russia. That said, New Delhi should rethink its Ukrainian policy by delinking current Russian President

Vladimir Putin from Russia.

National interest certainly is the guiding principle of any country’s foreign policy. But if the countries in the world completely skip international law, they endanger peace. This was the hypothesis successfully articulated by Immanuel Kant. There is now a window of opportunity for brokering peace between Ukraine and Russia. Both leaders are inclined to discuss a cease-fire or a peace deal for various respective reasons. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already offered his good offices to be an interlocutor. Modi should leave no stone unturned in making peace between these two countries at war.

The next strategic issue to tackle is China. I have repeatedly called out the South Block on its unsteady policy towards Beijing. The policy has been largely reactive not proactive. These often seem to be gulled by Chinese offer of peace and prosperity in partnership. But history shows that China is not known for keeping its word as it engages in deception diplomacy. South Block should take on China in a project mode with clearly defined VMGV – vision, mission, goals and values, and of course, a timeline and costs.

New Delhi should deepen its relations with the US structurally as well as functionally. At an appropriate time, sooner than later, New Delhi should think of a se-

curity treaty with the US which may work as a deterrent against any Chinese incursion or Pakistani meddling in Indian territory through sponsoring terrorism.

With the European Union and other Western powers, New Delhi must deepen its economic ties. It has been a long-neglected area. Europe needs to defocus on their trade and commerce whereas India needs to focus on it. The most difficult suggestion to make is about how India should conduct its presidency of SCO where both Russia and China are members. If this group provides an opportunity for normalising relations by building a climate of confidence through inter-personal conversations, so be it. Though, it does not seem to be happening.

New Delhi should strive innovatively to include in the SCO charter that the member countries should not use force or take unlawful unilateral action against each other. That should put some brake on both China and Pakistan. If such a spirit is not imbued in either spirit or action, why run a façade of cooperation in a structural way! Let these be self-invited challenges on India’s foreign policy for 2023.

*The writer is Professor, International Relations, JIMMVC.*

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WISDOM CORNER

It is the set of the sails, not the direction of the wind that determines which way we will go. **JIM ROHN**

If you tell the truth, you don’t have to remember anything. **MARK TWAIN**

The more you like yourself, the less you are like anyone else, which makes you unique. **WALT DISNEY**

WORDSWORTH

Enchiridion

In origin, an enchiridion is literally a small thing for holding in the hand, from Greek encheiridion, which is made up of the parts en, within, plus kheir, hand, plus the diminutive suffix -idion. In English, it has become a name for a handbook or concise treatise. A famous example of a treatise with this name is the one St Augustine wrote around the year AD421, the Enchiridion de Fide Spe et Caritate (a treatise on faith, hope, and charity), in whose title appears the Latin form of the original Greek, the version that English has borrowed. Another example was penned by Erasmus in 1503, Enchiridion Militis Christiani, in English “Handbook of a Christian Knight”. Outside references to such works, the word is extremely rare. It does appear in the novel Shadowfires by Dean R Koontz: Sharp had remade his reputation by the manipulation of electrons, and Eric Leben had attempted to remake himself from a corpse into a living man by the manipulation of his own genes, and to Sharp it was all part of the same wondrous enchiridion to be found in the sorcerer’s bag of twentieth-century science.

Engastrimyth

This comes from Greek en, in, plus gaster, belly, plus muthos, speech, so it is the exact equivalent of Latin ventriiloquist, which comes from venter, belly, plus loqui, speak. Engastrimyth is now hardly common (indeed it’s not in most current dictionaries) and on the rare occasions that it appears is never applied to the much debated “gottle of gear” entertainer’s chat with a dummy. Instead, it refers to the classical soothing phenomenon of speaking without appearing to speak, associated especially with prophetesses such as the famous Delphic Oracle, or with seers who acted as conduits for the voice of someone beyond the grave, such as the Biblical story of the Witch of Endor.

## 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)

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Caution for India

Sir, The elevation of Pushpa Kamal Dahal alias Pranchanda as the Prime Minister of Nepal after the fractured mandate of the November election is not entirely a surprise, even though the Nepali Congress emerged as the single largest party with 89 seats in the 275-member Parliament. This is the country’s second election since becoming a republic. With this Pranchanda becomes the Prime Minister of Nepal for the third time. An underground liberation war leader against the monarchy for ten years, Pranchanda’s party CPN (MC) contested the election in alliance with the Nepali Congress, but the two parties were at loggerheads over who would lead the coalition government first. When this dispute could not be resolved till the end, a few hours before the deadline given by the President, Pranchanda announced his exit from the alliance. Thereafter, things turned around quickly and with the support of Communist Party of Nepal leader KP Sharma Oli and other smaller parties, he staked claim to form the government. It has been agreed that Pranchanda will be PM for the first two and a half years of the five-year term and Oli for the subsequent period. The developments have major implications for India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi while congratulating Pranchanda has said that the unique relationship between India and Nepal rests on the deep cultural connection between the two countries and the emotional attachment of the people on both sides. But beyond these formal statements, the truth is that both Oli and Pranchanda are considered close to China. In such a situation, India has to be cautious.

**Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR**

Neglected district

Sir, Paralakhemundi, the headquarters of Gajapati district, is a historic town where Sri Krushna Chandra Gajapati was once the ruler. He connected the town with a railway line during the British rule. Many other projects were implemented for the welfare of the people during his time. Now, more than three decades have passed since a separate district of Gajapati was formed, yet there is no development in the district. The renowned palace of Paralakhemundi is in a dilapidated condition. There are many tourist spots in the district like Gandahati, Gudguda, Khasada and Mahendragiri where enough development work has not been taken up. The authorities should look into these matters at the earliest so that the town’s glory may be restored.

**Goura Hari Patnaik, PARALAKHEMUNDI**

# national

## of the day quote

India wants to have and maintain friendly relations with its neighbours, but it will not be done at the cost of national security



RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

The National Conference has long been synonymous with the aspirations of the people of J&K and that it exhibits its cultural, linguistic and religious diversity



FAROOQ ABDULLAH | NATIONAL CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

If the intention and policy of the BJP were not to delay the Uttar Pradesh local body election and hold it in a legal manner on time, instead of wasting time in Sangh appeasement by indulging in issues like conversion, hate, jihad and a madrasa survey, it would have focused on OBC reservation in the civic polls



MAYAWATI | BSP CHIEF

## SHORT TAKES

### 12 shops gutted

**Kolkata:** In an early morning fire at Newtown area in the outskirts of Kolkata on Saturday, as many as 12 shops were completely gutted. However, no casualty has been reported as because of the wee hours, no one was inside the shops at the time of the incident. According to officials of the fire services department, the fire broke out around 4.30 a.m. near the Mridha canal in Newtown area.

### Man arrested

**Junagadh:** Police in Gujarat's Junagadh have arrested a man for repeatedly raping a minor and impregnating her. Keshod Police Inspector D.B. Koli said that the 55-year-old accused Karsan alias Babu Malmer was arrested on Friday evening and will be produced before a court on Saturday. The incident came to light only on Thursday, when the 16-year-old victim complained of stomach ache and was taken to the hospital.

### 2 labourers dead

**Kolkata:** Two labourers from West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district have been reportedly killed in a landslide at Pelling in neighbouring Sikkim. They were killed while they were engaged in construction work for a skywalk in Pelling. Sources from the Jalpaiguri district administration said that a total of 11 workers from the district went to Pelling for that construction work, out of which two have been killed and three others have been injured.

### Gym owner killed

**New Delhi:** A 40-year-old gym owner was shot dead allegedly by two-three unidentified men in East Delhi's Preet Vihar area, an official said Saturday. The incident took place on Friday night. The deceased has been identified as Mahendra Agrawal. According to a senior police official, around 8 p.m. on Friday, Agrawal was sitting in his office when two to three men entered the gym and allegedly fired four rounds of bullets at him following which the victim died on the spot.

### Tourist booked

**Panaji:** Police in South Goa Saturday registered an offence against a Russian citizen for allegedly using a satellite phone which is banned in India. According to Colva Police Inspector Filomeno Costa, during the interrogation the Russian citizen by name Ilyas Abdrakhinov, 49, informed that he was not aware about the ban.

# BJP will go alone in K'taka polls: Shah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, Dec 31:** Urging party workers to ensure that BJP forms a government with two-thirds majority in Karnataka, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday asserted that the party will go alone in the 2023 assembly polls, and said it will be a direct contest as voting for JD(S) is like casting the ballot for Congress.

He also urged people to decide whether they are standing with a party of patriots, referring to the BJP, or with "tukde tukde gang" under the leadership of Congress. "There are clearly two sides and it is a straight fight this time. Journalists say there is a triangular fight. I said no, it is a straight fight, because voting for JD(S) means voting for Congress. So, is it a straight fight or not?" Shah asked.

Accusing the JD(S) of spreading rumours claiming that BJP will tie up with them, while addressing party workers here, he said: "I have come to tell the workers and the people of Karnataka that we will not go with any party. We will fight alone and form the government on our own."



## 100 days of stay with family or headquarters: Shah

**Bangalore:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced Saturday that the soldiers deputed in border areas of the country will get to stay with their families or in headquarters for 100 days in a year. Delivering a speech after inauguration and laying the foundation stone of various projects of Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) in Devanahalli, Bengaluru, Shah said, "They (soldiers posted in border areas) should have this opportunity to stay with their families or at headquarters for 100 days... We are preparing rosters for this purpose."

"There are clearly two sides. On one side, there is an organisation of patriots in the form of BJP and on the other side, tukde-tukde gang have come together under the leadership of the Congress. It is for

the people of Karnataka to decide now whether they are with the patriots or those who support people who want to divide this country," he added.

Shah was speaking at the BJP's

## 9 killed, 29 hurt in road accident

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Navsari, Dec 31:** Nine persons were killed and 29 others injured after a sports utility vehicle (SUV) collided with a luxury bus after jumping the road divider on a national highway in Navsari district of Gujarat early Saturday police said.

The accident occurred near Vesma village around 3.20 am when the bus was going towards Valsad, while the SUV was coming from the opposite direction, Navsari Superintendent of Police (SP) Rushikesh Upadhyay said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the accident and announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh to the next of kin of each deceased and ₹50,000 to the injured persons.



"The driver of the SUV lost control over the vehicle, due to which it jumped the divider and crossed over to the other side before colliding with the luxury bus on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad national highway. The impact of the collision left the SUV completely mangled," Upadhyay said.

Of the nine persons travelling in the SUV, eight died on the spot, while another occupant suffered grievous injuries. One of the bus passengers was also killed in the accident, he said. The SUV was going to Ankleshwar in Bharuch district, he added.

The accident left 29 passengers injured and they are being treated in hospitals in Navsari and neighbouring Valsad city, police said.

# Jallikattu preparation peps up TN's hinterland

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Madurai, Dec 31:** Sand moves up through the air as the gigantic bull 'Vengai' kicks up dirt by lowering its horn as soon as it sights a few men. Its bellow becomes more powerful when they try to walk closer and stops when they stand still.

The farmland of P Rajasekaran, President of Jallikattu Peravai-Tamil Nadu is buzzing as the sport's annual season nears. 'Seriyaikkuthu', he says referring to the bull's roar, a word largely unknown to people in urban areas.

The Tamil word denotes a loud sound made by the bull. "That sound is the first signal that he has noticed people in his turf and he is ready for a fight." Pointing to the animal rubbing its horn against the tree, he says it is a natural way followed by bulls to sharpen their horns.

As familiar people approach to take him for training like 'swimming and running,' the sound he



An auto-rickshaw passes by a mural created on the walls of a dumpyard as part of preparedness for the G20 summit, near Rajghat in New Delhi

## 172 terrorists killed in Kashmir in 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, Dec 31:** A total of 172 terrorists, including 42 foreigners, were killed in more than 90 operations carried out by the security forces in Kashmir in 2022, a senior police officer said here on Saturday, even as he asserted that there was a 37-per cent decline in the recruitment of youngsters into terror ranks.

"During year 2022, total 93 successful encounters took place in Kashmir in which 172 terrorists including 42 foreign terrorists got neutralised," Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Kashmir, Vijay Kumar wrote on Twitter.

He said 108 of the slain terrorists belonged to Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) or its offshoot, The Resistance



Front (TRF), followed by 35 from Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM), 22 from Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), four from Al-Badr and three from Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (AGuH).

In a series of tweets, the valley's top cop also said 26 security forces personnel, including 14 Jammu and Kashmir Police (JKP) personnel, were killed in terror attacks and encounters in 2022. "Majority of terrorists involved in these terror crimes have

been neutralised," Kumar said.

He said 29 civilians were killed by terrorists in the valley. Of the 29 civilian casualties, 21 - six Hindus, including three Kashmiri Pandits, and 15 Muslims - were locals and eight were from other states.

"All terrorists involved in these terror crimes have been neutralised except Basit Dar and Adil Wani who will be neutralised soon," the ADGP said. The year saw 100 fresh recruitments into terrorist ranks - a decline of 37 per cent compared to the previous year - Kumar said.

"Maximum (74) joined LeT. Out of total recruitment, 65 terrorists neutralised in encounters, 17 terrorists arrested and 18 terrorists are still active," he added. Kumar said the life span of the newly-recruited terrorists has also declined drastically.



makes diminishes and 'Vengai' gradually stops lowering its horn to knock on the ground. Vengai means leopard and the bull is much larger, taller and heavier than the animal rubbing its horn against the tree, he says it is a natural way followed by bulls to sharpen their horns.

While regular agriculture related work is on, the focus at his farm in Varichur village in

Sivaganga Road near Madurai is on Vengai and other bulls. Given the aggression of the bulls, it does not appear to be easy to handle them unless a person gets the knack of it. When the herdsman shouts, calling another bull 'Sevalai,' it acknowledges immediately by shaking its head and making a sound.

Elsewhere, in another village, G Keerthana, a transperson is busy

## BSF CAPTURED 22 DRONES

The BSF, Punjab Frontier, responsible for safeguarding the 553-km-long tough and challenging Indo-Pakistan International Border, Saturday said it captured 22 drones and seized 316.988 kg heroin in 2022



## Basic rights are now luxuries: Mehbooba

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, Dec 31:** Basic rights in the country have now become "luxuries" and "entitlements" bestowed upon only those who toe the government's line on political, social and religious matters, former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti said Saturday.

In a letter to Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, she also alleged that the trust deficit and growing alienation has only widened in Jammu and Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

"I write to you with a deep sense of concern and worry about the prevailing situation in the country especially J-K. Your recent observations on the inability of lower judiciary to grant bail in ordinary cases in a functioning democracy as ours should have been adopted as a directive rather than just being consigned to a single column story churned out in newspapers," Mufti said in the letter posted on her Twitter handle.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Andhra Pradesh Judicial Academy on Friday, CJI Chandrachud had said that over 63 lakh cases across the country have been considered to be delayed due to non-availability of counsel and over 14 lakh cases are delayed as they await some kind of document or record.

He had said that people must get rid of the colonial mindset of referring to and treating district courts as subordinate judiciary in hierarchy and in practice. Mufti, the PDP president, said the fundamental rights enshrined in the Indian constitution and guaranteed to all Indian citizens "are being brazenly impinged upon".

"Unfortunately, it is these basic rights that have now become luxuries and entitlements bestowed upon only those select citizens who toe the Government's line on political, social and religious matters. "And more worryingly, to those who actively contribute and not obstruct GOI's idea of an India where its strengths of diversity, religious pluralism and tolerance must be weeded out and crushed to lay the foundations of a one religion nation where minorities are relegated to the social, political and economic fringes," she said.

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader further alleged that since 2019, the fundamental rights of every resident of Jammu and



She said hundreds of youngsters are languishing in jails outside the Union territory as undertrials and their condition is exacerbated since they belong to poor families who lack the wherewithal to get legal aid

Kashmir have been suspended arbitrarily and the constitutional guarantees given at the time of its accession were suddenly and unconstitutionally abrogated.

She said hundreds of youngsters are languishing in jails outside the Union territory as undertrials and their condition is exacerbated since they belong to poor families who lack the wherewithal to get legal aid.

"All this is happening at a time when the trust deficit and growing alienation has only widened since 2019. Passports being a fundamental right are impounded with full impunity. Journalists are being jailed and even prevented from flying out of country," she said.

While Mufti said the only ember of hope in these "bleak circumstances" is the judiciary which only can right these "wrongs", she added, "however, it saddens me to say that so far our experience with the judiciary has not inspired much confidence".

She said it took the Supreme Court well over a year to order her release after she was detained under the Public Safety Act (PSA) in 2019. She, however, expressed hope that with the CJI's intervention, justice is delivered and the people of J-K see their expectations of dignity, human rights, constitutional guarantees and a democratic polity realised which had inspired their forefathers to join Mahatma Gandhi's India.

## Tunisha death: Sheezan sent to 14-day judicial custody

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Palghar, Dec 31:** A court in Maharashtra's Palghar district Saturday remanded actor Sheezan Khan, arrested for allegedly abetting the suicide of his co-actor Tunisha Sharma, in 14-day judicial custody.

Khan was produced before a magistrate's court in Vasai after his police custody ended on Saturday. The police custody had been extended by a day on Friday.

The magistrate remanded Khan to judicial custody for 14 days.

The 27-year-old actor was arrested by Valiv Police in Palghar district on December 26 for allegedly abetting Sharma's suicide.

A case under section 306 (abetment to suicide) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered against him.

Sharma, 21, who was acting in



the TV serial 'Ali Baba: Dastaan-E-Kabul', was found hanging in the washroom on the set of the show near Vasai on December 25.

Sharma's mother has alleged that Khan had cheated and "used" her daughter. She also claimed that Khan had slapped her daughter on the set of a TV show they were part of, and was teaching Sharma Urdu and wanted her to wear a hijab.

**REGIONAL OFFICE: 108 - B, Unit-VII, Surya Nagar, Gopabandhu Square, Bhubaneswar-751003, Ph.: 0674-2397551, 2397199**

**TENDER FOR FURNISHING & ELECTRICAL WORK**

Central Bank of India invites tender from interested contractors for furnishing (Furniture, Interior, Electrical, Data Cabling & Air-Conditioning) work at its new premises situated at 108D, First Floor, Near Master Canteen Square, Janpath, Bhubaneswar - 751001. The details regarding said tender is available on Bank's website <http://www.centralbankofindia.co.in/English/TendersPage.aspx> and/or can be obtained from our office on any working days. The last date for submitting tender to our office (duly filled in all respect with required enclosures) is **16.01.2023 upto 3.00 P.M.** Bank reserves its right to accept/reject all or any tender(s), without assigning any reason thereof.

**Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 31.12.2022 Sd/- Chief Manager**

# international

## of the day quote

The world is not at peace. China will always steadfastly advocate for peace and development and unswervingly stands on the right side of history

XI JINPING | PRESIDENT, CHINA

Today the state of our relations with China is not very normal because we will never agree to any attempt to change the Line of Actual Control unilaterally

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER, INDIA

Pakistan should learn from China about economic and technological development

AHSAN IQBAL | PLANNING MINISTER, PAKISTAN

## SHORT TAKES

### 4 Indian students die in car mishap

**New Delhi:** Four Indian medical students died on the spot after the car they were travelling in crashed into a tree in Simferopol, Crimea, the media reported. While two students were in their third year of college, two others were in the fourth year, according to Russian news agency RIA Novosti. The police are investigating the brutal accident that happened Thursday, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the Republic of Crimea. A preliminary probe revealed that the driver lost control of Renault Logan, which crashed into a tree.

### N Korea fires 3 ballistic missiles

**Seoul:** North Korea fired three ballistic missiles toward the sea east of the Korean Peninsula Saturday, the South Korean military said. The launches were the latest in an unprecedented number of missile tests conducted by North Korea this year, as Pyongyang presses on with weapons development amid speculation it could test a nuclear weapon for a seventh time. The three short-range ballistic missiles were fired from North Hwanghae Province, south of the capital Pyongyang.

### 'Violation' Of Palestinian Rights

### India abstains on UNGA resolution

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**United Nations, Dec 31:** India has abstained in the UN General Assembly on a resolution that asked the International Court of Justice for its opinion on the legal consequences of Israel's "prolonged occupation" and annexation of the Palestinian territory.

The draft resolution 'Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem' was adopted by a recorded vote Friday, with 87 votes in favour, 26 against, and 53 abstentions, including by India.

The resolution decided to request the UN's highest judicial body to "render an advisory opinion" on "what are the legal consequences arising from the ongoing violation by Israel of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, from its prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and from its adoption of related discriminatory legislation and measures."

The US and Israel voted against the resolution, while Brazil, Japan, Myanmar, and France were among those that abstained.



I'm not going to pretend that all our problems will go away in the New Year. But 2023 will give us the opportunity to showcase the very best of Britain on the world stage defending freedom and democracy wherever we find it under threat

RISHI SUNAK | PRIME MINISTER, UK

### ALOK SHARMA KNIGHTED

Agra-born Alok Sharma, an Indian-origin former minister who oversaw UK's COP26 climate summit presidency, has been knighted for his contribution to combatting climate change by King Charles III in his first New Year Honours list released in London



# Former Pope Benedict, hero to Catholic conservatives, dies

Catholic conservatives looked to the former Pope as their standard bearer and some ultra-traditionalists even refused to acknowledge Francis as a legitimate pontiff

REUTERS

**Vatican City, Dec 31:** Former Pope Benedict, the first pontiff in 600 years to resign and a standard bearer for conservatives who yearned for a more traditional Church, died Saturday, ending an extraordinary period in which two men wearing white lived in the Vatican.

Benedict, 95, died in a former monastery where he had lived since his shock resignation in 2013.

Bells tolled in Rome as news of his death, which followed a rapid decline in his health over Christmas, spread to the faithful on an unusually warm winter's day. Many went to pray in St Peter's Square

on hearing the news.

The Vatican said his body would lie in state from Monday in St Peter's Basilica and that Pope Francis will preside at his funeral Thursday morning in the same square where Benedict, who was then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, said the funeral Mass for his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, in 2005.

"With sorrow I inform you that the Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI, passed away today at 9:34 in the Mater Ecclesiae Monastery in the Vatican," Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said.

"Following the desire of the Pope Emeritus, the funeral will take place in a sign of simplicity,"

- POPE FRANCIS WILL PRESIDE AT FUNERAL THURSDAY
- FUNERAL TO BE HELD IN ST PETER'S SQUARE
- BENEDICT WANTED SIMPLE FUNERAL, VATICAN SAYS
- BENEDICT'S PAPACY WAS MARRED BY SCANDALS, LEAKS OF DOCUMENTS



Bruni said, adding that the service would be "solemn and sober".

The Vatican has painstakingly elaborate rituals for what happens after a reigning pope dies but no publicly known ones for a former

pope - one of the many complications created by Benedict's resignation.

Pope Francis disclosed Wednesday that his predecessor was "very sick". Bruni said

Benedict had received last rites, once known as Extreme Unction and now called "the anointing of the sick", on the same day.

Leaders were swift in sending their condolences for Benedict, who was the first German pope in 1,000 years.

### SCANDALS AND LEAKS

For nearly 25 years, as Cardinal Ratzinger, Benedict was the powerful head of the Vatican's doctrinal office, then known as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) and considered one of the Church's greatest theologians.

In that role, he crushed dissent by Liberation Theologians, saying they were mixing Marxist thought and Christianity.

He was elected pope April 19, 2005 to succeed the widely popular John Paul, who had reigned for 27

years. Cardinals chose him from among their number seeking continuity and what one called "a safe pair of hands".

Child abuse scandals hounded most of his papacy but he is credited with jump-starting the process to discipline or defrock predator priests after a more lax attitude under his predecessor.

But Benedict himself acknowledged that he was a weak administrator, saying he showed a "lack of resolve in governing and decision taking" during his eight-year papacy which was marked by missteps, particularly in relations with Islam and Judaism.

The year before his resignation was dominated by the "Vatileaks" scandal, in which private papal documents appeared in the media, exposing a dysfunctional Vatican riven with internal strife, corruption and feuding.

# New year but old Putin

AS THE WAR DRAGS INTO ITS 11TH MONTH WITH NO END IN SIGHT, THE KREMLIN HAS SLOWLY PUT SOCIETY ON MORE OF A WAR FOOTING - CALLING UP MORE THAN 300,000 RESERVISTS, OFTEN IN CHAOTIC FASHION, RETOOLING AN ECONOMY HURT BY A BARRAGE OF WESTERN SANCTIONS AND SAYING PUBLICLY THAT THE CONFLICT MAY BE LONG

REUTERS

**Moscow, Dec 31:** Russian President Vladimir Putin devoted his annual New Year's address Saturday to rallying the Russian people behind his troops fighting in Ukraine and pledging victory over Ukrainian "neo-Nazis" and a West supposedly intent on "destroying Russia".

In a stern and combative recorded video message, broadcast on national television, Putin cast the war - which he calls a "special military operation" - as a near-existential fight for the future of Russia.

Its soldiers, he said, were fighting for "our motherland, truth and justice... so that Russia's security can be guaranteed".

For months, the Kremlin presented the conflict as a limited campaign that would not affect most Russians' lives. But the speech, delivered in front of grim-faced soldiers in combat uniform, put the war squarely centre-stage, telling families gathered for the year's main celebration that the months ahead would require support and sacrifice from everyone.

The message was being broadcast into millions of homes on state TV just before the clocks struck midnight in each of Russia's 11 time zones, as families tucked into a festive meal and exchanged gifts.

### 'WE WILL TRIUMPH'

Moscow was unprepared for the staunch resistance and the billions of dollars in Western



- Blunt address on main family festival puts war centre-stage
- Putin casts war as fight for survival that requires sacrifices
- Russia is "defending our people and our historical territory"
- President accuses West of provoking conflict

The West lied about peace. It was preparing for aggression and now they are cynically using Ukraine and its people to weaken and split Russia. We have never allowed this, and never will allow anybody to do this to us

VLADIMIR PUTIN | PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

weapons that have turned the tide in Ukraine's favour, and Russian troops have been forced out of more than half the territory they took in the war's first weeks.

In the nine-minute address - the longest of his 22 years in power - Putin targeted those opposed to the conflict, a personal crusade that now defines his tenure and Russia's relations with the world.

The past year, he said, had "put a lot of things in their place - clearly separating courage and heroism from betrayal and cowardice".

In a rejection of Kyiv's calls for

Russian troops to leave as a precursor to negotiations, Putin said Russia was "defending our people and our historical territory".

He also accused the West of lying to Russia and of provoking Moscow to launch its military campaign.

Kyiv and the West reject Putin's oft-repeated allegation that the Western NATO alliance planned to use Ukraine as a platform to threaten Russia, and say he launched a baseless war of aggression in a bid to seize territory and install a regime more to his liking. Although Russia has not

### ATTACKS CONTINUE

**Kyiv:** Russia carried out its second major round of missile attacks on Ukraine in three days Saturday, Ukrainian officials said, with explosions reported throughout the country on New Year's Eve. Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said at least one person had been killed and eight wounded after a series of explosions in the capital. Reuters correspondents reported hearing 10 loud blasts in the city. "The terrorist country launched several waves of missiles. They are wishing us a happy New Year. But we will persevere," Kuleba wrote on Telegram in a separate post after explosions shook the capital. Other cities across Ukraine also came under fire. In the southern region of Mykolaiv, local governor Vitaliy Kim said on television that six people had been wounded. In a separate post on Telegram, Kim said Russia had targeted civilians with the strikes, something Moscow has previously denied. Ukraine's defence ministry responded with a defiant message posted on Telegram. "With each new missile attack on civilian infrastructure, more and more Ukrainians are convinced of the need to fight until the complete collapse of Putin's regime," it wrote.

made any major battlefield gains in the past six months, Putin promised ultimate victory.

"Together, we will overcome all difficulties and preserve our country's greatness and independence," he said. "We will triumph, for our families and for Russia."

# Europe tightens Covid rules for China flights

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Paris, Dec 31:** France, Spain and England will implement tougher Covid-19 measures for passengers arriving from China, authorities said Friday.

France's government is requiring negative tests, and is urging French citizens to avoid nonessential travel to China. France is also reintroducing mask requirements on flights from China to France.

French health authorities will carry out random PCR tests at airports on passengers arriving from China to identify potential new coronavirus variants. The new rules take effect Sunday, but officials said it would be a few days before they are fully in place.

The UK government announced that anyone travelling to England on direct flights from China would be required to take a pre-departure test from January 5.

Health Secretary Steve Barclay said that the UK was taking a "balanced and precautionary approach." He described the measures as "temporary" while officials assess Covid-19 statistics.

France and Spain said they would continue to push for a Europe-wide policy. France's hospitals have struggled in recent weeks with a large number of patients because of three concurrent outbreaks: the seasonal flu, a wave of bronchitis cases and Covid-19.

Earlier, Spain's government said it would require all air passengers coming from China to have negative tests or proof of vaccination.

Spain made the announcement after Italy said it would require coronavirus tests for airline passengers from China. Health offi-



### WHO urges for regular update

The World Health Organization has again urged China to regularly share specific and real-time data on the Covid-19 situation in the country, amid a surge in coronavirus cases after Beijing relaxed its strict "zero-Covid" policy. The global health agency has asked Chinese health officials to share data on genetic sequencing, hospitalisations, deaths and vaccinations. A high-level meeting took place between officials from WHO and China on the current surge in Covid-19 cases to seek further information on the situation, and to offer WHO's expertise and further support, a WHO statement said Friday. WHO reiterated the importance of vaccination and booster doses to protect against severe disease and death for people at higher risk.

Officials from the 27-member European Union Thursday promised to continue talks on seeking a common approach but held back from imposing restrictions.

India has joined the United States, Japan, Italy and Taiwan in imposing mandatory Covid tests for travellers from China, amid a Covid-19 surge there after authorities relaxed strict "zero-Covid" rules.

# Barbara Walters, news pioneer, 'The View' creator, passes away

Walters made headlines in 1976 as the first female network news anchor, with an unprecedented \$1 million salary that drew gasps

ASSOCIATED PRESS



**New York, Dec 31:** Barbara Walters, the intrepid interviewer, anchor and program host who blazed the way as the first woman to become a TV news superstar during a career remarkable for its duration and variety, has died. She was 93.

ABC broke into its broadcast to announce Walters' death on air Friday night. "She lived her life with no regrets. She was a trail-blazer not only for female journalists, but for all women," her publicist Cindi Berger also said in a statement, adding Walters died peacefully at her New York home. Barbara was a true legend, a pioneer not just for women in journalism but for journalism itself."

During nearly four decades at ABC, and before that at NBC, Walters' exclusive interviews with rulers, royalty and entertainers brought her celebrity status that ranked with theirs, while placing her at the forefront of the trend that made stars of TV reporters.

Late in her career, she gave infotainment a new twist with "The View," a live ABC weekday koffee klatsch with an all-female panel for whom any topic was on the table and who welcomed guests ranging from world leaders to teen idols. With that side venture and unexpected hit, Walters considered "The View" the "dessert" of her career.

A statement from the show said Walters created "The View" in 1997 "to champion women's voices." "We're proud to be part of her legacy," the statement said.

Walters made headlines in 1976 as the first female network news anchor, with an unprecedented \$1 million salary that drew gasps. Her drive was legendary as she competed - not just with rival networks, but with colleagues at her own network - for each big "get" in a world jammed with more and more interviewers, including female journalists following in her trail.

# World welcomes 2023 amid Covid, war

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Washington, Dec 31:** The world's eight billion people Saturday prepared to usher in 2023 and farewell a turbulent 12 months marked by war in Europe, stinging price rises and Lionel Messi's world cup glory.

After a few pandemic-dampened years, many will be looking to cut loose this New Year's Eve - setting aside pinched budgets and a virus that is increasingly forgotten, but not gone.

Sydney will be among the first major cities to celebrate 2023, restaking its claim to be the "New Year's Eve capital of the world" after two years of lockdown and Omicron-muted festivities. Australia's borders have now reopened, and more than one million people are expected to line Sydney's sparkling harbour to watch 100,000 pyrotechnics illuminate the southern sky.

Sydney authorities expect almost half a billion more people will see the festivities online or on TV. For some, 2022 was a year of Wordles, the Great Resignation, a new Taylor Swift album, an Oscar slap and billionaire meltdowns.

It also saw the deaths of Queen Elizabeth II, Brazilian football icon Pele, Mikhail Gorbachev, Jiang Zemin and Shinzo Abe.

But 2022 is most likely to be remembered for armed conflict returning to Europe - a continent that was the crucible of two world wars.

**'A peaceful sky'**  
More than 300 days into Russia's



botched invasion of Ukraine, about 7,000 civilians have been killed and 10,000 more injured, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. About 16 million Ukrainians have fled their homes. For those who remain, an 11:00 pm to 5:00 am curfew will be in place amid periodic blackouts and Russian missile barrages.

While some will mark the occasion with quiet candlelit prayers, others intend to party through the night in a collective show of resolve.

In past years, "people always stayed with us until three or four in the morning, so staying here for another hour or two will not be a problem," said Kyiv restaurateur Tetyana Mytrofanov.

In Vladimir Putin's Russia, there seems to be a dulled appetite for grand celebrations.

Moscow has cancelled its traditional fireworks show after Mayor Sergei Sobyanin asked residents to vote on how to mark the occasion.

Muscovites like Irina Shapovalova, a 51-year-old nursery worker, said their main wish for 2023 was for "a peaceful sky above our heads".

State-owned broadcaster VGTRK has promised to provide a "New Year's atmosphere, despite the changes in the country and the world". But this year's broadcast will be conspicuously without stalwart performer and key presenter Maxim Galkin, who fled to exile after denouncing the Ukraine war. He has

since been branded a "foreign agent" by Russian authorities.

**Covid shadow**  
While Covid-19 vaccines have allowed life to return to semi-normal in most parts of the world, in China, the virus is continuing to thwart attempts to move on.

Hospitals in the world's most populous nation have been overwhelmed by an explosion of cases following Beijing's decision to lift strict "zero-Covid" rules.

New Year's Eve parties are still planned in innumerable bars, theatres and malls.

But authorities in Shanghai have stated there will be no formal activities on the city's famed Bund waterfront.



**“We have always been open to informed criticism, and we have never shied away from sharing our facts and figures. But criticism is one thing, and cynicism is quite another”**  
BYJU RAVEENDRAN | FOUNDER & CEO, BYJU'S

## GOLDMAN SACHS JOINS LAYOFF SEASON

The boss of Goldman Sachs has told staff that he will make job cuts early next month, as the US investment bank seeks to improve its profits amid concerns over the global economy. The bank is reportedly considering cutting about 8 per cent of its 49,000 employees, which could equate to as many as 4,000 job losses



## of the day quote

The government will launch a Digital India Innovation Fund that will support deep-tech startups

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR | MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND IT

The government's Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) has established its baby footprint in 85 cities with 800 merchants and 26 participants and is set for a fruitful 2023 with the support of industry players

T KOSHY | MD AND CEO, ONDC

Overall, the agriculture sector performed well in 2022 but for weather aberrations that affected some crops. We are hopeful the next year will be better and as of now wheat crop prospects seem to be bright

ASHOK DALWAI | CEO, NATIONAL RAINFED AREA AUTHORITY

## SHORT TAKES

### New food security scheme from today

**New Delhi:** The rollout of the Centre's new integrated food security scheme is set to begin January 1, 2023, officials said Saturday. As per the decision made by the Cabinet, the new scheme would provide free food grains to 81.35 crore beneficiaries under NFSA, for the year 2023. The scheme would also ensure effective and uniform implementation of the National Food Security Act (NFSA). According to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, the government has social and legal commitment to the people of the nation -- a dignified life by ensuring them access to food and nutritional security through availability of adequate quantity of quality foodgrains.

### BoM holds credit outreach prog

**New Delhi:** State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) has organised a credit outreach programme under which it has sanctioned loans worth about Rs 1,300 crore. These loans were distributed by the bank's Executive Director Asheesh Pandey and General Manager Chitra Datar across various segments including housing, education, MSME and agriculture, BoM said in a statement Saturday. Loans were sanctioned to over 200 customers across Delhi, Noida and Chandigarh December 27. Speaking at the event, Pandey said the bank is also planning to integrate technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to give their users a better experience. The focus of the lender on the RAM -- Retail, Agriculture and MSME -- segment and the services offered by the bank to salaried class is second to none, Datar said. The bank provides the lowest rate of interest on housing and personal loans across the industry, she claimed.

### AMG Media raises its stake in NDTV

**Ahmedabad:** AMG Media Networks Ltd (AMNL), through its indirect subsidiary RRRP, has acquired 27.26 per cent stake in NDTV from Radhika Roy and Pranroy Roy, resulting in a controlling stake of 64.71 per cent in NDTV by AMNL through its subsidiaries, a statement said. The Roys continue to hold a 5 per cent stake in NDTV, a welcome presence in NDTV's new chapter, it said. Gautam Adani, Founder and Chairman of the Adani Group said: "The Adani Group is privileged to further bolster NDTV with world-class infrastructure and talent and transform NDTV into a thriving multi-platform global news organisation."

## RECESSION FEARS GROW

# Wall St bleeds most in '22 since '08

Growth stocks have been under pressure from rising yields for much of 2022 and have underperformed their economically linked value peers, reversing a trend that had lasted for much of the past decade

REUTERS

**Washington, Dec 31:** US stocks closed out 2022 lower Friday, capping a year of sharp losses driven by aggressive interest rate hikes. The benchmark S&P 500 index, down between 28% and 66% in 2022, has fallen about 30.1% this year, while the value index is down 7.4%, with investors preferring high dividend-paying sectors with steady earnings such as energy. Energy has recorded stellar annual gains of 59% as oil prices surged. Ten of the 11 S&P sector indexes dropped Friday, led by real estate and utilities.

Wall Street's three main indexes booked their first yearly drop since 2018 as an era of loose monetary policy ended with the Federal Reserve's fastest pace of rate hikes since the 1980s.

The benchmark S&P 500 has shed 19.4% this year, marking a roughly \$8 trillion decline in market capitalisation. The tech-heavy Nasdaq is down 33.1%, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average

(.DJI) has fallen 8.9%. The annual percentage declines for all three indexes were the biggest since the 2008 financial crisis, largely driven by a rout in growth shares as concerns over Fed's rapid interest rate hikes boost US Treasury yields. Apple Inc, Alphabet Inc, Microsoft Corp, Nvidia Corp, Amazon.com Inc, Tesla Inc are among the worst drags on the S&P 500 growth index, down between 28% and 66% in 2022.

The S&P 500 growth index has fallen about 30.1% this year, while the value index is down 7.4%, with investors preferring high dividend-paying sectors with steady earnings such as energy. Energy has recorded stellar annual gains of 59% as oil prices surged. Ten of the 11 S&P sector indexes dropped Friday, led by real estate and utilities.



The primary macro reasons came from a combination of events: the ongoing supply chain disruption that started in 2020, the spike in inflation, the tardiness of the Fed beginning its rate tightening program in the attempt to corral the inflation

SAM STOWALL | CHIEF INVESTMENT STRATEGIST, CFRA RESEARCH

The focus has shifted to the 2023 corporate earnings outlook, with growing concerns about the likelihood of a recession.

Still, signs of US economic resilience have fueled worries that rates could remain higher, though easing inflationary pressures have raised hopes of dialed-down rate hikes.

Money market participants see 65% odds of a 25-basis-point hike in the Fed's February meeting, with rates expected to peak at 4.97% by mid-2023.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 73.55 points, or 0.22%,

to 33,147.25; the S&P 500 lost 9.78 points, or 0.25%, at 3,839.50; and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 11.61 points, or 0.11%, to 10,466.48.

Volume on US exchanges was 8.50 billion shares, compared with the 10.79 billion average for the full session over the last 20 trading days. Declining issues outnumbered advancers on the NYSE by a 1.50-to-1 ratio; on Nasdaq, a 1.03-to-1 ratio favored decliners.

The S&P 500 posted no new 52-week highs and no new lows; the Nasdaq Composite recorded 85 new highs and 134 new lows.

## Elon Musk first person ever to lose \$200 billion

AGENCIES

**Washington, Dec 31:** Billionaire Elon Musk was the second person ever to amass a personal fortune of more than \$200 billion, breaching that threshold in January 2021, months after Jeff Bezos.

The Tesla CEO has now achieved a first milestone of his own: becoming the only person to erase \$200 billion from their net worth.

Musk, 51, has seen his wealth plummet to \$137 billion after Tesla shares tumbled in recent weeks, including an 11% drop Tuesday, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. His fortune peaked at \$340 billion November 4, 2021, and he remained the world's richest person until he was overtaken this month by Bernard Arnault, the French tycoon behind luxury-goods powerhouse LVMH. The round-number milestone reflects just how high Musk soared during the run-up in asset prices during the easy-money pandemic era. Tesla exceeded a \$1 trillion market capitalization for the first time in October 2021, joining the likes of ubiquitous technology companies Apple, Microsoft, Amazon.com and Google parent Alphabet, even though its electric vehicles represented only a sliver of the overall auto market.

## TARIFF HIKES LIKELY TOO

# Telecom space set for 5G, to attract ₹1.5L-cr investments

Once the poster boy of India's growth story, then a debt-laden segment that saw many players withering away and now riding the wave of reforms as well as big-ticket investments, the telecom sector turned a new chapter in 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 31:** From connecting people with 5G services to lowering the cost of operations, the country's revitalised telecom sector is witnessing the bloom of reforms, and is set to attract more than Rs 1.5 lakh crore investments to build up networks in the new year. While the Adani group is yet to unveil its full-fledged plan for the telecom business, Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani has committed Rs 2 lakh crore investment for rolling out a 5G network across the country by December 2023.



RELIANCE JIO HAS COMMITTED RS 87,946.93 CRORE

AIRTEL EXPECTED TO INVEST RS 27,000-28,000 CRORE

BSNL TO INVEST AROUND RS 16,000 CRORE IN 2023

Reliance Jio has committed Rs 87,946.93 crore for the spectrum that it has to pay over a period of 20 years, leaving a balance of Rs 1.12 lakh crore. While the company had invested a partial amount in building its own 5G core, it will invest the majority of the Rs 1.12 lakh in capex for 5G in 2023, as per sources. Bharti Airtel is expected to invest in the range of Rs 27,000-28,000 crore and state-owned BSNL around Rs 16,000 crore in 2023 for rolling out an indigenously developed 4G network by TCS and C-DoT-led consortium. Later, the system will be upgraded to 5G.

Together, investments worth more than Rs 1.5 lakh crore are expected in the telecom sector. Telecom gear majors -- Nokia and Ericsson -- have ramped up

their manufacturing in India. The government has also received investment commitments of Rs 4,115 crore from 42 firms shortlisted under the Production Linked Incentive scheme for making telecom gears. Nokia said it is witnessing the world's fastest rollout of the 5G network in India.

While telecom operators are investing billions in building a 5G network, a senior Airtel official said there are no applications as of now that can help companies monetise 5G.

The annual tariff hike by telecom operators -- Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and Jio -- in the range of 18-42 per cent has brought the companies a sustainable level of Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) situation in 2022.

# What ancient wisdom can teach businesses about sustainable finance?

The growing global green finance movement is certainly a step in the right direction, but more radical changes in financial theory are required to address the environmental crisis and make all business more sustainable

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Dec 31:** The world of business tends to prioritise concepts of profit maximisation, economies of scale and the importance of shareholder value. As the industry has developed over centuries, these concepts have become deeply embedded in global financial systems.

But some businesses in certain parts of the world operate based on respect for all living beings, not just humans -- particularly in countries that adhere to dharmic religions such as Jainism and Hinduism (primarily across the Indian subcontinent, southeast and central Asia). Learning about such ways of working could help the global business world to become more sustainable and address the climate crisis.

Research shows that nature has long been treated as a resource or something "outside" the economic system, that exists for the benefit of humans. But the fact that the rate

of species extinctions as a result of human activity is at least 1,000 times the natural rate shows just how interdependent humans and nature are. The effects of business on our climate are also clear, with 71% of the world's fossil fuel emissions coming from just 100 multinational corporations.

Addressing this attitude to nature in much of the business world would require changing economic theory and belief systems to recognise the sentience of all life on earth and the need to protect other living beings. This would require profound behavioural and cultural transformation to meet the environmental challenges the world faces right now.

But economics and finance professionals often remove this issue from their equations, adding to social and ecological devastation.

### Religious inspiration

The research shows how finance could draw on certain ancient religious traditions to encourage



such behavioural and cultural shifts. Indeed, there are many belief systems that do not separate nature from humanity, but rather encourage its preservation. Businesses can follow such doctrines and still be successful.

Dharma, for example, is generally understood to mean moral virtue and outlines a path towards sustainable living. The dharmic religions of India -- the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and Jain belief systems -- have never separated man from animals and nature. These belief systems were never anthropocentric (regarding humans

as central to life on earth). Their traditions date back thousands of years and were shaped long before humanity faced the existential crises that we do now.

What is even more prescient about these ancient religions, especially for the world of business and finance, is that their sustainable practices are actually hiding in plain sight. Their leaders are already practising business sustainably, simply because they have always seen it as the right way to operate -- their motivations are driven by culture, belief and tradition.

# India Inc high on acquisitions in '22

CEMENT, RETAIL, PHARMACEUTICALS AND QUICK COMMERCE WERE THE SECTORS THAT WITNESSED MULTI-CRORE DEALS AS PLAYERS SOUGHT TO ENHANCE THEIR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS IN THE INDUSTRY



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 31:** As India remained a bright spot in an otherwise gloomy global economic scenario, the country's corporate sector showed a good appetite for acquisitions in 2022, a year which also saw the downfall of some of its prominent leaders.

India Inc also lost two of its leaders -- former Tata Sons chairman Cyrus Mistry in an accident that brought to the fore the need to wear seat belts even while seated on rear seats, and Vikram Kirloskar, vice-chairman of Toyota Kirloskar Motor due to a heart attack.

The cement industry hogged the limelight in 2022 as far as acquisitions were concerned, with Asia's richest man Gautam Adani-led Adani Group acquiring the cement business of Swiss building material major Holcim, consisting of Ambuja Cement and ACC, through a USD 6.4 billion deal in September.

The acquisition gave the ports-to-power conglomerate Adani Group a foothold in the cement sector, making it the second largest company after Aditya Birla Group firm UltraTech Cement, which had earlier announced a nearly Rs 13,000 crore expansion to maintain its lead.

In December, debt-ridden Jaypee Group announced the sale of its cement business to Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Ltd at an enterprise value of Rs 5,666 crore, exiting from the segment. Interestingly, in the retail sector, it was the collapse of the Rs 24,713-crore deal of Reliance to acquire the retail business of the Kishore Biyani-led Future group in April which stood out.

Yet, billionaire Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance ended the year acquiring the Indian cash and carry business along with assets of Germany's METRO AG in a Rs 2,850 crore deal. It comprised the operative businesses of all 31 Metro India stores as well as the real estate portfolio that includes six store-occupied properties and gave Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL), the retail arm of Reliance Industries, a significant boost.

Earlier in the year, RRVL announced its foray into the FMCG business and acquired the home-grown soft drink brand Campa,

among some other brands. It also introduced its own brand for staples, processed foods, beverages and other daily essentials. Now Reliance will take on the FMCG food businesses of ITC, Tata Consumer Products Ltd and Adani Wilmar.

Reliance Retail has become India's biggest brick-and-mortar retailer with over 16,600 stores. It is ranked 56th amongst the top global retailers with \$18 billion in revenues and is the world's second-fastest-growing retail company behind only South Korea's Coupang.

However, for Kishore Biyani -- the pioneer of modern retail in India -- it was a year to forget as his Future Retail empire witnessed a near collapse.

Once a prominent player in the Indian retail industry with around 1,500 stores under formats such as Big Bazaar, Easyday Club, smaller neighbourhood stores such as Nilgiri's, Heritage fresh, and fashion retailers such as FBB and Central, among others, it went into insolvency with many of the group firms repeatedly defaulting on repayments to lenders.

With the pandemic accelerating growth of e-commerce, specially quick commerce in India, online food delivery platform Zomato announced the acquisition of Blink Commerce Pvt Ltd (formerly known as Grofers) for Rs 4,447.48 crore in a share swap deal as part of its strategy of investing in quick commerce business.

On the other hand, salt-to-software conglomerate Tata group launched its super app Tata Neu, bringing all its brands on one platform as it sought to play a major role in the Indian e-commerce space dominated by the likes of Amazon and Walmart's Flipkart.

The media and entertainment sector also had its share of consolidations with the finalisation of Zee Entertainment's merger with rival Culver Max Entertainment (earlier Sony Pictures Network India).

Similarly, India's leading multiplex operator PVR announced a merger with rival Inox Leisure, creating an entity operating nearly 1,500 screens across the country.

Jains, for example, have for thousands of years believed in respect for all living beings including plants and animals. The central philosophy of Jainism -- one of the world's oldest religions -- is called Ahimsa and is based on non-violence in thought, word and deed.

The research interviewed several prominent Jain business leaders that follow this way of thinking, including Vallabh Bhansali, co-founder of Indian investment company Enam Securities Group and Abhay Firodia, chairman of Indian automaker Force Motors and whose father invented Asia's most popular affordable transport vehicle, the auto-rickshaw.

For many Jains, as well as those from other dharmic religions such as Sikhs and Hindus, philanthropy is "a duty not a choice". They aim to work within the nature and limits of money to practise a compassionate form of capitalism. But this attitude is not limited to dharmic religions.

Research shows that before colonisation, many parts of Africa used strong social and communal networks of shared ownership. And the Swedish bank Handelsbanken was established in 1871 to operate in an organic way by building trust and relationships that are local and sustainable. It provides vital funding to smaller businesses that can be neglected by major high street banks.

**Beyond finance** Finance has often been a destructive force in communities, society and nature. It promotes individualism and can cause inequality instead of co-operation and income parity.

Ignorance of the variety of capitals beyond the financial -- culture, relationships, trust, leadership, spirituality and community capital -- and their importance in building contented and harmonious societies, could be addressed by looking to these other, ancient traditions. Learning about these other types of capital could help to revive and elevate their importance in the business world.

Faith was central to finance for thousands of years -- even the City of London had 104 churches before the world wars -- but it is often ignored in contemporary financial research and education. By making business education much more inclusive of diverse cultures and wisdoms, more industry leaders can learn to operate with conscience, contentment and responsibility.

# leisure



## OLIVIA STOLE SOMETHING FROM 'THE CROWN' SET

Actress Olivia Colman may have moved on from 'The Crown' after season four, but she still carries a piece of the show with her. The Oscar winner, who played Queen Elizabeth II on seasons three and four of Netflix's 'The Crown', managed to snag a special memento before she left Buckingham Palace behind for good.

## MILEY IS DETERMINED TO BE A GOOD LISTENER IN 2023

Singer Miley Cyrus has revealed her New Year's resolution for 2023. Promising to listen more, both to herself and others next year, the 30-year-old pop star explained the vow was inspired by a conversation with her Godmother Dolly Parton who admitted that she got a telling off from her husband Carl Thomas Dean.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Think positive today and watch the world around you changing. Regardless of how difficult things may seem, Ganesh advises you to take it without getting upset. If you set your mind to something, you can do it. You have the Midas touch today, so it is a good time to introduce a new strategy.

**TAURUS**  
Ganesh urges you to be prepared for setbacks and disappointments today. Your efforts may end in being a waste of precious time and energy. The results you get are likely to be far below your expectations. Falling short of your target is likely to weigh you down with stress and anxiety.

**GEMINI**  
You will be in a state of heightened sensitivity today. Therefore you need to curb down on your emotions. You will be able to successfully express your feelings to someone, and your feelings will play a vital part in your life, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
Ganesh suggests you not to be sentimental or hasty. Try to handle things deftly in stead of dodging bad episodes or turning a blind eye to them. You will give priority to domestic and private life in stead of career or business aspects.

**LEO**  
You will feel more emotional today and share your feelings with your friends and near ones. For those who are searching for a life-partner, this might be the time when you will get hitched. You will develop a new perspective on some issues in the office. Your day will be different than normal, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
Ganesh predicts that you will be rewarded today for all the good work done earlier. You will prefer to manage things in your own way, rather than taking orders from others. However, Ganesh advises you not to throw your weight around, but to stay calm and composed.

**LIBRA**  
Nothing comes for free – keep this in mind as you may have to pay your dues for the success you desire today, especially if it is a new project that you have undertaken. Be prepared to invest a considerable amount of time and effort in your endeavours. Spare money can be used to purchase new assets that may pay dividends in the future.

**SCORPIO**  
In all probability, your mood is extremely hawkish today. Your belligerence may even put off Lady Luck for the time being. Ganesh advises you to stay away from confrontations and troubles of any kind. The evening, however, promises to be relaxing.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Lady luck is all smiles for you today, predicts Ganesh. Suddenly, you feel like multi-tasking and becoming a jack of all. This is likely to keep you busy, almost throughout the day. If need be, your colleagues and peers will lend a helping hand.

**CAPRICORN**  
You are in hot water, but do not lose hope during these turbulent times. Maintain a calm head over your shoulders and deal with the problems, guides Ganesh. Also, do not jump to conclusions or be argumentative with the people around you, as you may end up being at the losing end.

**AQUARIUS**  
You will not need a reason to party today. Be it the news of a friend getting married or you buying a new car, you are in a mood to celebrate life like anything! Apart from this, you will have a smooth sailing through out the day, foresees Ganesh. If you are a businessman or a professional, you will move one step closer to your target.

**PISCES**  
A day of mixed fortunes awaits you, where taking risks could prove to be your undoing, or provide you with handsome returns, says Ganesh. This is because you could come out on top by trading cautiously, but uncalculated risks will probably throw your calculations out of gear. Your success rate is unlikely to be too high; hence it may be a tough day for you. However, it will end on a promising note.

## Yami opens up on roundtable interviews

**Mumbai:** Actress Yami Gautam faced negative reviews for her performance in the film 'Dasvi'. In an interview, Yami said that she is not participating in the year-end roundtable discussions, which have long been perceived as exclusive events that give a performer a public stamp of approval. The actress said, "I am not doing any roundtables and I say this with due respect to everyone, and whoever is inviting; most of the actors have grown in their careers while being interviewed. It has nothing to do with the journalists. It has to do with the whole system, because now there are so many." The actress further said that it's just like award functions. But for her as an actor, there was a time when she felt that she, too, should have been on the panel, but not invited. That is not a validation for her that she has arrived. If she is good at her work, and if the audience likes her work, she will know it.



## Being star is a burden: Hrithik

**Mumbai:** Actor/model Hrithik Roshan in an interview talked about how being a star feels like a burden to him, compared with being called an actor. However, he said he is grateful for his stardom. Adding that he's thankful for his stardom, he pointed out how he feels about being termed as a star versus as an actor. Opening up about his films, Hrithik said, "Every time there's a Vedha, Super 30 life actually becomes very easy because all you have to do, is your job as an actor. When you do films like Bang Bang, War or Fighter then you have the whole weight of being a star. But when you got to take up the job of a star, it is unhealthy actually in many many ways." The star is the responsibility. I am very grateful for it; don't get me wrong. I know it's been given to me, it's a gift but it's a burden that I carry. And, I have to work very hard to thrive. I don't want to survive I want to thrive in it, but it's a journey. As an actor I feel very, very relaxed when there are no expectations."



## Genelia on homemakers

**Mumbai:** Genelia D'Souza has impressed the audience with her roles in movies like 'Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na', 'Force' and 'Tera Naal Love Ho Gaya'. The actress had taken a break from showbiz after getting married to Riteish Deshmukh and later becoming a mom to sons Riaan and Rahyl. Now, she has made a comeback with a romantic drama 'Ved' helmed by Riteish himself. Recently in an interview, Genelia reflected on her life as a homemaker and revealed that is not an easy job. She said that for the last 10 years she has been a homemaker and she did nothing. She was there for relationships and that was her life for the last 10 years. Homemakers' jobs are the toughest.



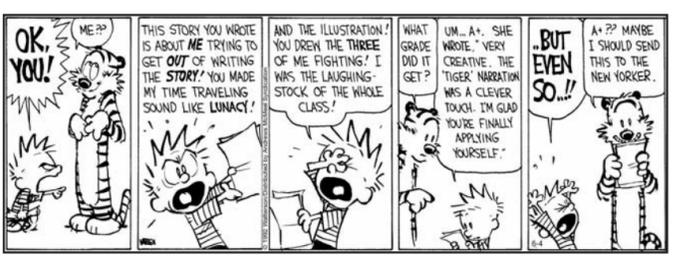
## Cannes debut was breakthrough for me: Urvashi

**Mumbai:** Actor Urvashi Rautela had quite an eventful year as she made her debut at the prestigious 75th Annual Cannes Film Festival. Looking back at 2022, Rautela calls it the "biggest and most precious moment" of the year. "It was a breakthrough for me as I met the whose who of the industry; and walked three red carpets. I was also a part of amFar Cannes Gala, which in itself is a huge thing," says the actor, adding that she only had one dream, which was to bag Miss India title. "Everything else that I have achieved over and above is a bonus. Even my family tells me the same thing that I have done more than they could have asked from me," she gushes. "It's going to be the start of a beautiful professional relationship with one of the best filmmakers in the country. Also, I've done several classy numbers in Bollywood, but it's for the first time that I'm doing a massy song like I have in this one. In fact, I was told by Cheeranji sir that, 'You have no idea about the reach our film and your song will have'. So, I am very excited," says Rautela.

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

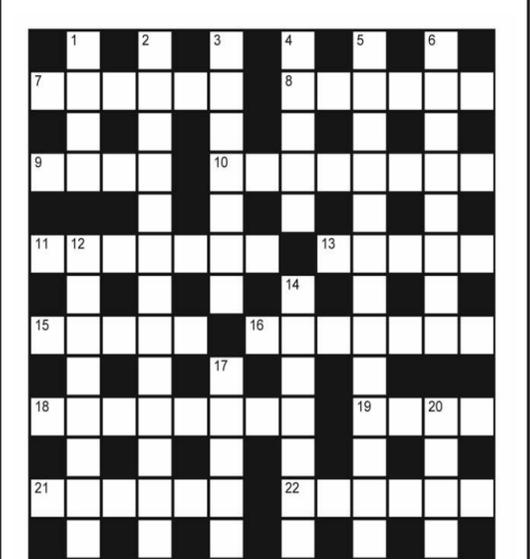


### BREVITY



### FUN post

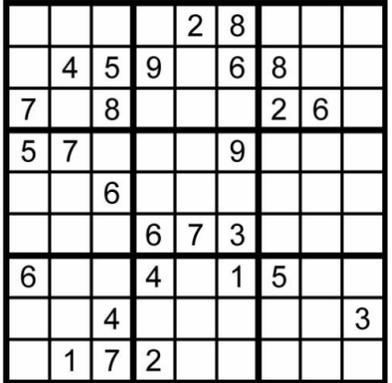
### CROSSWORD



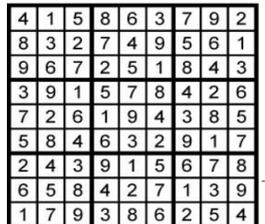
- Across**
- 7 Significance
  - 8 Coarse-furred burrowing rodent
  - 9 Small indentation
  - 10 Trump, mentally
  - 11 Type of vehicle (3-4)
  - 13 Suggest
  - 15 Complain
  - 16 Tickler of the ivories
  - 18 Disposed to agree
  - 19 Dried-up
  - 21 Aft
  - 22 Schedule
- Down**
- 1 Shot, for short
  - 2 Sporting dog (6,7)
  - 3 Footstool
  - 4 Whack
  - 5 Head of state (5,8)
  - 6 Like some discount airlines (2-6)
  - 12 Ranking above all others
  - 14 Stoker
  - 17 Hard dark-colored heartwood
  - 20 Went by car

### 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



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# CR7 joins Al Nassr



Portuguese's Saudi move signals likely end of an elite club career

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, Dec 31:** Less than two weeks after his great rival Lionel Messi lifted the World Cup, Cristiano Ronaldo has completed a move to Saudi Arabian club Al Nassr and likely signalled the end of his career in elite club football.

In agreeing a contract until 2025, the five-time Ballon d'Or winner has ended speculation about his future after having his contract terminated by Manchester United last month.

"I am fortunate that I have won everything I set out to win in European football and feel now that this is the right moment to share my experience in Asia," Ronaldo said.

Al Nassr described the deal as "history in the making," however, it is likely to raise questions about Ronaldo's ambition at this stage of his career.

While Messi finally won the one major trophy that had evaded the two men widely regarded as the greatest players of their generation, after leading Argentina to the World Cup in Qatar, Ronaldo will be playing outside of top level European football for the first time in his career.

Media reports have claimed the 37-year-old Portugal international could earn up to USD 200 million-a-year from the move, but he will miss out on the chance to extend his record as the all-time leading scorer in the Champions League with his record currently standing at 140 goals. Messi is on 129 goals in the competition.

Ronaldo is also unlikely to add to his Ballon d'Or collection - the trophy awarded to the best player in the world.

## Pant's condition improves greatly: Close family aide

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dehradun, Dec 31:** There is substantial improvement in the condition of cricketer Rishabh Pant and doctors are yet to decide if he has to be shifted to some other facility, according to his family friends and others who visited him at the hospital here Saturday.

Pant's mother Saroj Pant and his sister Sakshi, who arrived from London Saturday morning, are with him at the hospital, they said.

Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) Director Shyam Sharma and Bollywood actors Anil Kapoor and Anupam Kher were among those who met Pant at the hospital.

"There are no immediate plans to shift him anywhere as his condition has improved substantially since yesterday," said Umesh Kumar who has been constantly with the family at the Max Hospital here. "A plastic surgery on his forehead had been performed on Friday itself. Its first dressing was also done today," he said.

The 25-year-old, who was on his way to his hometown Roorkee to surprise his mother, suffered injuries on his head, back and feet in a road accident Friday morning, according to police. Hospital authorities have said that his condition is stable.

Meanwhile, Messi will be among the favourites to win that trophy for an eighth time next year after his World Cup triumph. He also has the chance to win the Champions League with Paris Saint-Germain, having lifted European club football's biggest prize on four occasions with Barcelona. Ronaldo won the Champions League five times during spells with United and Real Madrid.

Six months ago Ronaldo wanted to join a team playing in the Champions League after United failed to qualify for this season's competition. However, a move never materialized, with the most serious interest in him coming from an unnamed Saudi Arabian club.

It is not known what other serious offers were made after he became a free agent last month, but the move to Al Nassr represents a significant step down compared to the level he has operated at throughout his career.

Still it is a major coup for football in the Middle East and will add to the debate over Saudi Arabia's attempts to use so-called "sportswashing" to improve its reputation internationally after its sovereign wealth fund led a buy-out of Premier League club Newcastle United last year.

"This is more than history in the making. This is a signing that will not only inspire our club to achieve even greater success but inspire our league, our nation and future generations, boys and girls to be the best version of themselves," Al Nassr posted on social media.

Ronaldo remains one of football's biggest global icons, but the move comes at a time when he has faced questions over his ability to still produce his best form at the

highest level. He managed just three goals for United in 16 games this season, with one of those coming from the penalty spot.

He became the first male player to score in five World Cups with his penalty in Portugal's 3-2 win against Ghana in Qatar, but ended the tournament having been dropped for his country's last two games before going out to Morocco in the quarter-finals.

By comparison Messi inspired Argentina's third World Cup triumph, scoring seven goals, including two in the 4-2 penalty shootout win against France in the final after a 3-3 draw through extra time.

Ronaldo and Messi have had their achievements compared throughout their careers. Messi's World Cup win saw him emulate football greats Pele and Diego Maradona by lifting the sport's biggest prize. To many, it will also have given him the edge in his personal rivalry with Ronaldo. And at the age of 35, he still has time to further embellish his career in top level football.

Meanwhile, Ronaldo has earned headlines in recent months for his antics away from the field. He was dropped and made to train away from United's first team when refusing to come on as a substitute in a game against Tottenham in October.

He then conducted an explosive interview with Piers Morgan in which he criticized manager Erik ten Hag and United's owners the Glazer family. It led to the termination of his contract, his eventual move to Al Nassr and the next chapter of his career away from the glare of top flight European football.

# BRAZIL MOURNS PELE'S DEMISE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Bocaina de Minas (Brazil), Dec 31:** Down a dirt road in the mountains of Minas Gerais, Pele's home state, Jorge Tavares received the news of the star's death from a 4 am newscast.

As a boy, Tavares and his cousins listened to Pele's World Cup games on the radio. His dazzling performance inspired them to play a game they had never seen, at first using a ball of socks and string.

"He leaves a legacy, a person of color who was crowned king of football, and he also brought a lot of peace outside Brazil," Tavares, a 67-year-old school-van driver, said at the barbed-wire fence outside his home. "He represented Brazil to everyone abroad."

With Pele's death, Brazilians have lost a piece of their hearts. On Rio de Janeiro's Ipanema beach, the news broke when Paulo Vinicius was playing football with his 9-year-old nephew.

"Pele represents the best of Brazil: its people, its working class," said Vinicius, 38, a physical-education instructor. "Pele gives a sense of identity to the Brazilian people."

Roseli Augusto, 55, was at her little bar in the mountains of Minas Gerais when she heard the news. "Pele is an idol, the best player in the world," said Augusto. She recalls her father taking a bus to the coastal city of Santos to watch Pele play. "Many kids, many players, were inspired by him. He is our biggest sports idol."

As a girl, Lucia Cunha listened to Pele's World Cup exploits while huddled around a radio with her siblings. She read about him in newspapers used to wrap bread. "He was a symbol of football, a great player, a simple, humble per-



Fans gathered outside the Vila Belmiro de Santos Stadium to pay their respects to Pele



The 'Christ the Redeemer' statue was lit up in the colours of the Brazilian flag to pay homage to the legend

son, a person of God, a good person, who did everything that he could," Cunha said.

In Santos, Nicolas Oliveira, 18, was outside the stadium along with about 200 other people. Oliveira

said that even replays of Pele's sensational playing make him swell with emotion. "Pele is a Black man from the interior of Minas Gerais state," Oliveira said.

"I'm here because of what he

did, for the football he played, for the football he improved and for the future players he helped mold and inspire."

Everton Luz, a 41-year-old lawyer, was crying outside the hospital with a Santos club flag wrapped around him. He had come directly from work to pay tribute to the player whose performances had electrified his own dad, and prompted decades of stories.

Luz recounts those stories to his own two children, and shows them videos of the idol. He recalled seeing Pele in person once, watching a game at a stadium. "We managed to get close to his box, and he waved goodbye," Luz said. "He was an example of the Brazilian, of what we could become."

# Faes' own goals hand Liverpool win

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Liverpool, Dec 31:** Leicester defender Wout Faes had an evening to forget as Liverpool ended the year by closing the gap to the Premier League's top four.

Faes became just the fourth player to score two own goals in a Premier League game, helping Liverpool come from behind to beat Leicester 2-1 Friday in a match marked by defensive errors from both sides.

After a tough start to the season, Liverpool are now just two points behind fourth-place Tottenham heading into 2023 following a run of four straight wins.

West Ham, meanwhile, are staring at a crisis after a fifth straight loss. David Moyes' team conceded two goals against the run of play to lose 0-2 at home against Brentford, and the London club could find itself in last place once the rest of the weekend games are played.

At Anfield, Liverpool gifted the hosts the lead in the fourth minute with some calamitous defending as Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall was allowed to run straight down the middle of the pitch unopposed after a long goal kick to chip the ball



A NIGHT TO FORGET: Wout Faes (R) was consoled by Leicester's goalkeeper after an own goal by the former against Liverpool, Friday

over Alisson Becker.

But on a night when Liverpool's forwards were repeatedly off tar-

get, they got some much needed help from Faes. The Belgian center-back had disastrous seven-minute

spell before halftime as he first ignored a shout from his goalkeeper Danny Ward to leave a low cross from Alexander-Arnold and lunged in to make an attempted clearance, only to mis-hit the ball so it looped over Ward and in at the far post.

Darwin Nunez was then played through on goal by Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain and dinked a shot over Ward that bounced back off the far post. The back-tracking Faes tried to clear the ball but only succeeded in hammering it into the net — and then had to endure taunts of "shoot" from the Liverpool fans every time he touched the ball.

It was far from a vintage performance from Jurgen Klopp's team but Liverpool now has four successive league victories for the first time since April.

West Ham would be more than happy to get an ugly win, after out-playing Brentford for large parts of the game and still losing. The team was booed off the field after first-half goals from Ivan Toney and Josh Dasilva inflicted another damaging loss on Moyes.

Brentford climbed to ninth, although the win was came at a cost as Toney left on a stretcher in stoppage time after landing awkwardly.

# Benzema brace scripts Real victory



ON A ROLL: Karim Benzema (C) was ecstatic after scoring a goal against Valladolid, Friday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Madrid, Dec 31:** Playing his first match since his World Cup hopes were dashed by an injury, Karim Benzema came the rescue of Real Madrid with a pair of late goals to snatch a 2-0 victory at 10-man Valladolid.

Benzema had a subdued showing in his first competitive match since November 2 following injuries that had limited his availability for his club and finally sidelined him for his France at football's

elite competition.

But the Ballon d'Or winner came through in the final minutes on Friday to give Carlo Ancelotti's side the three points it needed to provisionally move to the top of the Spanish league standings.

Madrid also relied on goalkeeper Jordi Thibaut Courtois to keep the score deadlocked as it struggled to create chances in its first game since the league paused for seven weeks for the tournament in Qatar.

Valladolid defended well and threatened on the break at its José

Zorrilla stadium until the game finally swung in Madrid's favor when the video assistant referee spotted a handball in the area by defender Javi Sanchez.

Benzema stepped up and coolly slotted his penalty kick into the left corner as goalkeeper Jordi Masip fell the other way to grab the lead in the 83rd minute.

Valladolid's chances of hunting for a late equalizer were hurt when striker Sergio Leon, one of its most incisive players, was shown a direct red card apparently for using in-

appropriate language while protesting the penalty decision.

Benzema then got his brace in the 89th after a pass by substitute Eduardo Camavinga.

Before Benzema put Madrid ahead, Courtois made two great saves to deny Leon and midfielder Alvaro Aguado. Courtois used a one-handed diving save to stop Aguado's long-range strike in the first half. He then got low to turn back Leon's header in the 68th.

Valladolid slid into 15th place. Madrid temporarily moved one point ahead of Barcelona at the top of the standings before Xavi Hernandez's side were held to 1-1 thrilling draw in the Catalan derby against Espanyol Saturday.

Before kickoff, a moment of silence was held in memory of Brazil great Pele, who died on Thursday. Ronaldo, the former Brazil and Madrid star and the current owner of Valladolid, stood alongside Real Madrid president Florentino Perez in the stands during the tribute. Brazil forward Vinicius Junior closed his eyes and lifted his head upwards in midfield with the other players.

Sevilla remained in the relegation zone after a 1-1 draw at Celta Vigo. Celta's Gabri Veiga chipped Morocco goalkeeper Yassine Bounou in the 33rd after Iago Aspas met his run with a perfectly weighted pass after Veiga had recovered the ball. It was the 20-year-old Veiga's fourth goal of the season.

# Nadal loses in 3 sets to Norrie at United Cup



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Sydney, Dec 31:** Rafael Nadal has ended an up-and-down 2022 with a 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 loss to Britain's Cameron Norrie at the United Cup mixed teams tournament Saturday.

Nadal won the Australian Open and French Open to take his career Grand Slam singles total to a leading 22. But foot, rib and abdomen injuries meant he played only four events after Wimbledon in July.

Norrie's win gave Britain a 1-0 lead over Spain. Norrie had failed to win a set in his four previous matches against Nadal.

In other matches, Top-ranked Iga Swiatek gave Poland an early lead over Kazakhstan when she beat Yulia Putintseva 6-1, 6-3 at Brisbane. At Perth, Bulgaria and Belgium

were level at 1-1 after the first day. Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov beat David Goffin 6-4 7-5 after Alison Van Uytvanck had a 6-13-6-6-2 win over Isabella Shinikova to give Belgium the early lead.

Earlier, Jiri Lehecka scored a 6-4, 6-2 upset win over world No.12 Alexander Zverev to help give the Czech Republic a 2-0 lead. The 21-year-old Lehecka, ranked No.81, broke four times in the Group C match at Ken Rosewall Arena in Sydney to bounce back from an opening singles loss to Taylor Fritz of the United States Thursday.

Marie Bouzkova later beat Jule Niemeier 6-2, 7-5 in the second match to give the Czechs a 2-0 lead. Czech women's No.1 Petra Kvitova can clinch the tie on Sunday when she faces Laura Siegemund.

**JANUARY**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**MARCH**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

**MAY**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**JULY**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30	31					1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

**SEPTEMBER**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

**NOVEMBER**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		



**FEBRUARY**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

**APRIL**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

**JUNE**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

**AUGUST**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

**OCTOBER**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**DECEMBER**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
31					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

**HOLIDAY LIST**

- Jan 14: Makar Sankranti / Pongal
- Jan 26: Republic Day
- Feb 18: Maha Shivaratri
- Mar 8: Holi
- Mar 30: Ram Navami
- Apr 7: Good Friday
- Apr 14: Dr Ambedkar Jayanti
- Apr 22: Eid -al- Fitr
- July 29: Muharam
- Aug 15: Independence Day
- Sep 7: Janmashtami
- Sep 28: Eid e Milad
- Oct 02: Gandhi Jayanti
- Oct 24: Dussehra
- Nov 12: Diwali
- Nov 27: Guru Nanak Jayanti
- Dec 25: Christmas Day



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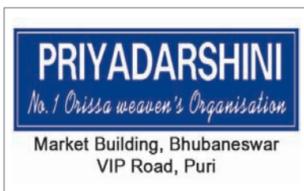
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