



SAIEE'S NEW PROJECT

Actor Saiee Manjrekar will play the female lead in director Neeraj Pandey's next romantic-thriller

LEISURE P2



SUNAK'S PROMISE

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak promises to provide tanks and artillery systems to Ukraine

INTERNATIONAL P10



TOUGH CHALLENGE

After passing tricky Spain test, India face another tough challenge from England in FIH Men's World Cup

SPORTS P12



SCINTILLATING SHOW: Artistes performing the traditional 'Ranapa' dance (walking on stilts) on the second day of the 'Silk City Fest-2023' in Berhampur, Saturday

BELGIUM SUBDUE HAPLESS KOREA

Easy wins for Germany, Kiwis, the Netherlands

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Defending champions Belgium thrashed Korea 5-0 to begin the defence of their title in style while two-time champions Germany beat reigning Asian Games champions Japan 3-0, at the Kalinga Stadium here Saturday. In matches played at the Birsa Munda Stadium in Rourkela, three-time champions, the Netherlands outplayed Malaysia 4-0, while New Zealand overcame plucky debutants Chile 3-1.

The goals for Belgium were scored by Hendrickx Alexander (31st), Cosyns Tanguy (42nd), Van Aubel Florent (49th), Dockier Sebastian (51st) and De Sloover Arthur (57th). In the second Pool B match between Germany and Japan, it was a goalless first half. However, two-time champions Germany picked up pace in the second half and scored through Grambusch Mats (35th), Ruhr Christopher (40th) and Prinz Thies (48th).



Belgium players celebrate after a goal, Saturday

Sam Hiha was the star of the show for New Zealand scoring a brace (11th and 18th) while the third goal was scored by Sam Lane. The only goal for Chile was scored by Ignacio Contardo (49th).

The Netherlands scored through Thijs van Dam (20th), Jip Janssen (24th), Teun Beins (46th) and Jorrit Croon (59th) in the tie against Malaysia.

T-BRIDGE STAMPEDE 1 dead, 20 injured

CM ANNOUNCES ₹5 LAKH FOR DECEASED'S FAMILY, FREE TREATMENT FOR ALL INJURED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: One person was killed and 20 others suffered injuries in a stampede in Cuttack district Saturday. The conditions of four of the injured are stated to be critical. The accident took place as more than a lakh of devotees congregated on Badamba-Gopinathpur T-Bridge on the occasion of 'Makar Mela'.

Badamba-Narsinghpur MLA and former minister Debi Prasad Mishra confirmed that one woman, identified as 45-year-old Anjana Swain, died in the accident, while four seriously injured people have been admitted to SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack city. Mishra added that the other injured persons are undergoing treatment at the (CHC) in Badamba.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed grief over death of a person in the stampede and announced an ex-gratia of ₹5 lakh for the family of the deceased. The Chief Minister also instructed all concerned officials to provide free treatment to all the injured persons. "The injured people will get free treatment and I wish their speedy recovery," Patnaik said in a statement.

Atharaghar sub-collector Hemanta Kumar Swain said the incident took place due to a sudden increase in the number of devotees, including women and children, in the afternoon, to visit a fair organised



The T-Bridge where the stampede happened; (Inset): The huge crowd that had gathered at the 'Makar Mela'

on the occasion and also to pay obeisance to Lord Singhanath.

The district administration said the congregation was massive as people were visiting the temple after a gap of two years due to Covid-19 pandemic. Devotees from Cuttack, Khurda, Puri, Angul, Dhenkanal, Boudh and Nayagarh districts had come to the temple in huge numbers, the sub-collector said.

Locals alleged that the administration was not fully equipped to manage such a large number of devotees. Adequate number of police personnel was not put in place, they alleged. Cuttack (Rural) Additional SP Ranjit Prusty in-

formed that three platoons had been deployed to control the crowd

- **MARCH 9, 2022:** Two people killed and one grievously injured after a portion of a bridge connecting Chhatra Bazar and Malgodown in Cuttack collapse.
- **JAN 10, 2021:** One labourer killed and three injured when an under-construction bridge collapses in Nabarangpur district.
- **SEPT 10, 2017:** A portion of an under-construction flyover collapses near Bomikhal in Bhubaneswar, killing at least one man and injuring 11 persons.

on the bridge. However, no one anticipated that such a huge number of people will turn up at the venue, Prusty added.

SCB Medical College and Hospital officials informed that four persons injured in the stampede are undergoing treatment at the Casualty Ward. Doctors of neurology, orthopaedic and other departments have been engaged for their treatment, they said.

Cuttack District collector Bhabani Shankar Chayni said the administration has imposed prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC to prevent overcrowding at the stampede site.

DMK death threat to TN Gov

The latest row between the Governor and the state government started when the former walked out of the Assembly in a huff Monday

AGENCIES

Chennai, Jan 14: The ongoing row between Tamil Nadu's ruling party, the DMK and Governor RN Ravi took an ugly turn Saturday, with a spokesperson of the party issuing a direct threat against the Constitutional head of the state.

Shivaji Krishnamurthy, DMK platform speaker said if Governor Ravi can't take (BR) Ambedkar's name, then he should go to Kashmir so that he would be gunned down by extremists.

"In Tamil Nadu, if this man refuses to utter the name of (BR) Ambedkar, my forefather who gave the Constitution to India, do I have



the right to hit him with a slipper or not? Didn't you take an oath in the name of the Constitution? Wasn't it Ambedkar, my grandfather, who wrote it? If you won't say his name, you go to Kashmir. We ourselves will send an extremist. Let him gun Ravi down," Krishnamurthy said.

The DMK however, distanced itself from the remarks. In a late night development, the party sus-

pending Krishnamurthy for abusing the Governor.

Meanwhile the Tamil Nadu Raj Bhavan and BJP have approached police with separate complaints. Both have sought action against Krishnamurthy for his 'abusive and intimidatory' speech, targeting Ravi. In its complaint to Chennai Police Commissioner, Shankar Jiwal, an official of Raj Bhavan, said a video of a person, known as Shivaji Krishnamurthy using most abusive, defamatory and derogatory language and intimidation against Governor Ravi has been uploaded on various social media platforms, which is 'going viral'. **Continued on P4**

Cong MP dies during BJJ

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chandigarh, Jan 14: Congress MP from Jalandhar, Santokh Singh Chaudhary died Saturday after suffering a cardiac arrest during the Bharat Jodo Yatra (BJY), following which the march was halted. He was 76.

The two-time MP was taking part in the Rahul Gandhi-led march in Phillaur in Jalandhar where he fainted, said senior party leader Partap Singh Bajwa, who was also marching in the yatra. He said Chaudhary was rushed to a hospital in Phagwara in an ambulance.

Meanwhile the Congress suspended its Bharat Jodo Yatra, for a day as a mark of respect for Chaudhary. Rahul also postponed his scheduled press conference at Jalandhar January 15, and it will now take place January 17 at Hoshiarpur.

"Bharat Jodo Yatra will be suspended for 24 hours as a mark of respect for Santokh Singh Chaudhary, Congress MP from Jalandhar who passed away this morning. The Yatra will resume tomorrow (Sunday) afternoon," AICC general secretary Jairam Ramesh said on Twitter.

SHORT TAKES

Pachyderm deaths continue unabated

Cuttack: Odisha continued to be the graveyard for elephants with another carcass found Saturday in a sugarcane field at Sankhapoi under Atharaghar Forest Range. Though the reason behind the death of the pachyderm, aged about 20, is yet to be ascertained, the animal had severe injury marks on its trunk, sources said. Forest officials however, suspected electrocution as the cause of death. This development comes a day after the carcass of an elephant calf was found at Karada range on Ganjam-Kandhamal border. As per an RTI, the state has registered more than 400 elephant deaths in the last five years.

China reports 60K Covid-related deaths

Beijing: China reported Friday 59,938 new coronavirus deaths in hospitals across the country over the last 35 days, amid criticism from WHO that Beijing was 'heavily under-reporting' the magnitude of the pandemic. The toll was from the period December 8 to January 12, the country's national health commission said. It's director Jiao Yahui said medical institutes recorded 5,503 deaths as a result of respiratory failure triggered by Covid-19 infections and 54,435 fatalities with underlying conditions, such as cancer or cardiovascular diseases, combined with Covid-19. The average age of those who died was 80.3 years, and 90 per cent of the fatalities were aged 65 years or over, the Hong Kong-based 'South China Morning Post' reported. With this, China's official toll climbed to 65,210 since Covid-19 first broke out in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Court has censured TV news channels for hate speech. We, as responsible politicians, are free to make it

Hockey mom hopes for Aussie-Kiwi final

ELLIE HAYWARD IS HAPPY THAT ONE OF HER SONS IS REPRESENTING AUSTRALIA, WHILE THE OTHER IS WITH NEW ZEALAND

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: She knows that what she is hoping for may not happen at all. However, hockey mom Ellie Hayward is praying for an Australia-New Zealand final in the ongoing FIH Men's World Cup hockey tournament currently being played here and in Rourkela.

The reason why Ellie is pining for an Australia-New Zealand final is because her two sons are representing the two countries. While Jeremy Hayward is representing the Aussies, his elder brother Leon is in the Black Sticks' squad.

Both Australia and New Zealand have started their campaigns in the tournament on a winning note. Australia outplayed France 8-0 at the Kalinga Stadium here Friday, with Jeremy registering a hat-trick. The Kiwis on the other hand overcame a resolute Chile 3-1 at



Hockey players Jeremy Hayward (left) and Leon Hayward

Rourkela. Jeremy is a forward while Leon is a goalkeeper. With both their sons playing in the World Cup, Ellie and her husband Brad have come all the way from Melbourne to support them.

Ellie said that since she is of Kiwi origin, Leon got the chance to play for New Zealand. "Both played domestic-level tournaments in Australia. Jeremy made it to the national squad, but Leon

couldn't. So he opted to represent New Zealand," Ellie, who herself was a state-level hockey player in New Zealand, informed.

"I am happy for both of them. I have inspired them to play hockey and nothing can be better than representing the national side. Yes, they may be representing two different countries, but the fact that they are wearing national colours is a matter of immense pride for me. They have fulfilled my dream," Ellie added.

Ellie however, is yet to watch her elder son play as the Kiwis play their

first couple of games in Rourkela. "It is a journey I did not want to undertake. Hopefully New Zealand will win their group games and play at the Kalinga Stadium. Then I will be able to watch Leon in action," the 56-year-old Ellie was quoted as saying by a website.

According to Ellie, hockey is not a very lucrative game in either of the two countries. She informed that both her sons have to pursue different professional careers to indulge in their passion - hockey. "There is not much money in hockey, so both of them have to work elsewhere to earn a living. Leon is working as a school teacher while Jeremy is an accountant," Ellie said. "Thankfully they have got the leaves from their workplaces to play in the World Cup," she added.

However, Ellie expressed a lit bit of displeasure for not being allowed to carry a water bottle inside the Kalinga Stadium.

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
MAX	31.6°C	30.5°C	
MIN	17.0°C	17.2°C	
Humidity	69%	62%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	
Forecast: Foggy weather mostly			

leisure



JAMES GUNN CLARIFIES ON EUPHORIA STAR NOT PLAYING SUPERMAN

Filmmaker James Gunn, who earlier removed Henry Cavill as Superman, has taken the air out of fanboy reports that *Euphoria* actor Jacob Elordi is rumoured to play Superman in the filmmaker's early-days iteration of the *Man of Steel*.

KATY PERRY VOWS TO BECOME 'GRANDMA POP STAR'

Katy Perry has vowed to still be a pop star when she's grey and old. She said, "I wanna be a grandma pop star. You don't see a lot of grandmas or grandpas in my field, but I'm going to be one of them. I wanna do it for my daughter, for my family, my partner".



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You are feeling nervous today. There may be something particular playing on your mind which makes you circumspect. Ganesha advises you to make the best of the evening, when you might be invited to a party or a social gathering. Things may turn out to be in your favour.

TAURUS
You need to exercise great discretion in planning your agendas and taking important decisions. Do not undertake anything simply because it appeals to your nature. Be sure that, this day, you are going to feel uncomfortable in taking uncomfortable firm decisions on your own.

GEMINI
A hectic day at the home-front awaits you. You will spend your entire time taking care of household matters and projects. You will only be able to successfully pay attention to your work post noon, says Ganesha.

CANCER
You plan a slow but steady strategy to achieve your goals. Your business rivals can come nowhere you in efficiency or expertise. You will win all-out praise for this from all quarters. And, Ganesha is highly delighted.

LEO
You will be bothered by health related issues. Your diet will be a major cause of worry. You will have opportunities to progress in your professional life. You need to make the most of this favourable period and seize all the opportunities that present themselves to you, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Ganesha advises you to work really hard so that your peers and superiors notice your efforts. However, recognition will not be forthcoming to the same extent. You may relax at the end of the day with the consolation that you have given it your best shot.

LIBRA
Ganesha says you will be able to spend unforgettable moments with your beloved. To please your beloved and be able to propose to them you will spend a happy evening with them and take them out for a romantic dinner. All those dreams that you have seen about a lovely romantic relationship will be coming true for you soon.

SCORPIO
The day will usher refreshing changes into your personal life, foresees Ganesha. No matter which side of the bed you woke up on, the day promises to present itself in a cheerful light. You will build and enjoy harmonious and cordial relations with your peers at work. Intimacy and pleasure in love relations at night will be the perfect ending for a delightful day.

SAGITTARIUS
You are on a high today, professionally and personally. You have a good convincing power and you will be using it to the optimum level. Seek advice of experienced and seniors for better implementation of ideas on professional front, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
Most of us have an idol from whom derive motivation and inspiration. Today, you will find your idol and get inspired to perform better. During the later part of the day, you get into a war of words with somebody. Avoid this, otherwise you may have to face some legal consequences, warns Ganesha.

AQUARIUS
You will play the role of a peace maker, today. You will create a harmonious environment around by solving problems of everyone, including yours, with tact and diplomacy. Embrace any career opportunity coming your way, because it may turn out to be one of the most advantageous decisions you have even made, advises Ganesha.

PISCES
You are very particular about the way you go about completing your tasks, and take yourself very seriously. While you may not always reap the benefits of your labor, today you will finally receive long due appreciation.

Saiee roped in to star in new project



Mumbai: Versatile actress Saiee Manjrekar has been roped in to play the female lead in Neeraj Pandey's next directorial. Over the last couple of months, Neeraj and his team were auditioning several candidates for the role and after several rounds of auditions involving both debutants and known faces in the industry, Saiee has reportedly been selected for the female lead.

The film is touted to be a romantic thriller, which will see Ajay Devgn in the lead while Jimmy Shergill has been cast in a key role. Buzz is strong that the search is on for another young actor who will be seen in a key role. Shooting for the film is expected to start by end of this month in Lucknow. After that, there will be another schedule in Mumbai. According to reports, the entire shoot will be wrapped up in 50 days.

The upcoming romantic thriller marks the first collaboration between Ajay Devgn and Neeraj Pandey. They were earlier supposed to work on a period drama *Chanakya*, but later the project was put on hold for the time being.

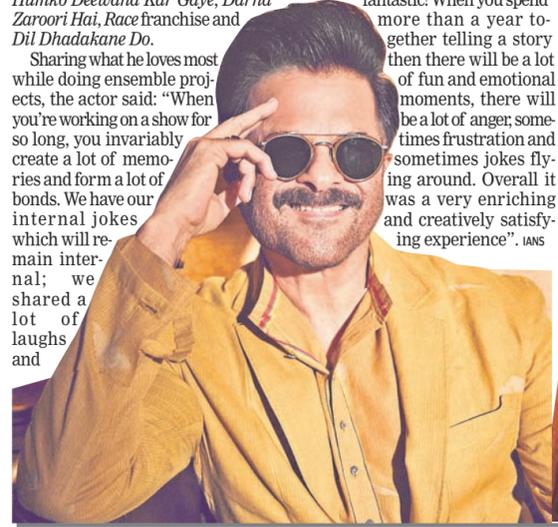
Anil Kapoor loves ensemble projects

Mumbai: Indian actor Anil Kapoor, who is set to play a powerful philanthropist in the upcoming streaming series *The Night Manager*, loves working with an ensemble cast. Over the years, Anil has starred in several ensemble films like *Salaam-e-Ishaq*, *Humko Deevana Kar Gaye*, *Darna Zoroori Hai*, *Race* franchise and *Dil Dhadakane Do*.

Sharing what he loves most while doing ensemble projects, the actor said: "When you're working on a show for so long, you invariably create a lot of memories and form a lot of bonds. We have our internal jokes which will remain internal; we shared a lot of laughs and

some emotional moments as well. I really enjoyed working with the cast and crew, Aditya, Sobhita, Sandeep, Priyanka, Saswata Chatterjee, Tillotama Shome and Ben Jasper".

He said further: "Everyone was fantastic! When you spend more than a year together telling a story then there will be a lot of fun and emotional moments, there will be a lot of anger, sometimes frustration and sometimes jokes flying around. Overall it was a very enriching and creatively satisfying experience".



Star Kiran to add two new shows

Bhubaneswar: There's no halt to celebrations, 2023 brings with it newer possibilities, Star Kiran delighted to add two new shows.

Mo Jibana Sathi, is a captivating tale of the union of two opposites coming from different backgrounds, having completely different aspirations in life. It will focus on breaking the stereotypical image of women in the country. Shikha is a confident, educated young girl who dreams of becoming an IPS officer, while Jyoti is a simple, honest, and responsible man running his family business – a local sweet shop.

With the twist of fate, Shikha gets married with Jyoti and once she enters her new home, she realizes that her dream of becoming an IPS officer may never become a reality, as Jyoti's family, especially his mother, would never agree the same. Eventually Shikha and Jyoti try to under-

stand each other's dreams and aspirations and work towards fulfilling each other's shortcomings. The story showcases how with time, the couple becomes 'life partners' and support each other to achieve their dreams, without disturbing the traditions and values that run in their family.

Mo Jibana Sathi starts from 16th January, every Mon-Sat at 8:00pm on Star Kiran SD & HD.

The other show that is launching on Star Kiran is *Sai Baba*. The show depicts the life of the revered saint who engulfed the nation with his valued teachings of selfless, simple living and miraculously changed the lives of innumerable people.

Sai Baba starts from 16th January, every Mon-Sun at 5:30pm on Star Kiran SD & HD.

Sapthami joins The Vaccine War cast

Mumbai: Actress Sapthami Gowda of *Kantara* has joined the cast of director Vivek Agnihotri's next film *The Vaccine War*, the shooting of which is already in motion.

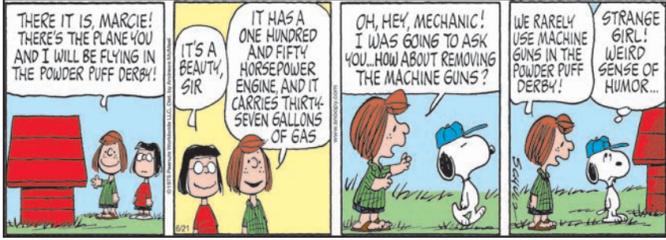
The actress, who plays the character of Shiva's (Rishab Shetty) love interest in *Kantara*, took to social media to express her gratitude to Vivek as she wrote: "I'm glad and excited to be a part of this project. Thank you @vivekagnihotri sir for this opportunity".

The Vaccine War is based on Indian scientists and on the people who have sacrificed their days and nights for over two years to develop a vaccine against covid. It tells the side of the story of Indian scientists who survived the pressure from global manufacturers and worked at odd hours to save the lives of countrymen.

Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri, along with the producer Pallavi Joshi, is all set to bring the movie to theatres on the occasion of the India's Independence Day on August 15, 2023. *The Vaccine War* will be released in 11 languages.

FUN post

PEANUTS



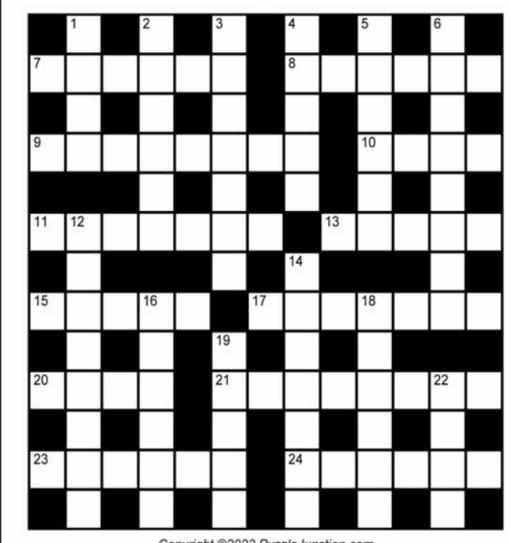
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



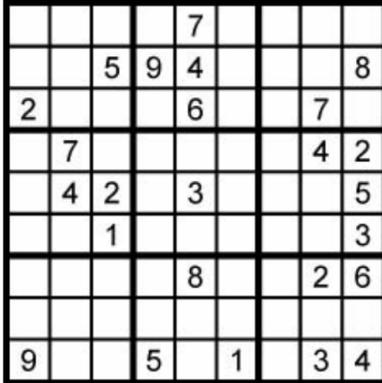
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Movie theatre
 - 8 Mariner
 - 9 City in Mali near the Niger River
 - 10 Dependable
 - 11 Golf course feature
 - 13 Former capital of Japan
 - 15 Work dough
 - 17 1997 Leonardo DiCaprio film
 - 20 Golf club
 - 21 Take to task
 - 23 Hunting expedition
 - 24 Regard highly
 - 3 Hand tool
 - 4 Distribute
 - 5 Swine
 - 6 Parade enclosure
 - 12 Irregular
 - 14 Zoo inhabitant
 - 16 Yearly
 - 18 On the go
 - 19 Bitter
 - 22 Like a bug in a rug
- Down**
- 1 South Pacific island nation
 - 2 Associate

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



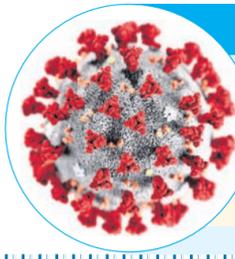
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



BUDDING ARTISTS

A drawing competition among schoolchildren was organised by Odisha Chitra Kala Academy at Gandhi Smaraki Park in Cuttack, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	67,10,28,973	64,21,18,858	67,29,086
India	4,46,80,936	4,41,47,983	5,30,726
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204



HOCKEY FEVER: Women flaunt their tickets before entering Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar to witness a clash between Belgium and Korea during the ongoing FIH Men's Hockey World Cup, 2023, Saturday

Min distributes 500 hockey tickets

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Rourkela, Jan 14: School and Mass Education (S&ME) Minister Samir Ranjan Dash Saturday distributed 500 tickets to school students for free at Sundargarh for hockey matches to be played

at Birsa Munda Stadium, Rourkela. The minister was on a visit to a high school in Rourkela.

He said that watching hockey matches will motivate the young hockey enthusiasts to pursue the game in future while it will simultaneously promote the

sports culture of the state. The newly-constructed Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium at Rourkela witnessed a festive mood during the matches of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup, after the prestigious tournament began at Rourkela Friday.

Storytelling fest kicks off

BhuFeSto, the international storytelling festival, is specifically curated for the children and the elderly to keep alive the great saga of local literature, poetry and stories

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Antonio Rocha of USA, Ariyo of Indonesia, Roger Jenkins of Singapore and Bongiswa of South Africa, and Neelesh Mishra, Nupur Agarwal and Kuna Tripathy from India were among the storytellers who enthralled the audience on the first day of BhuFeSto (Bhubaneswar Festival of Storytelling) being organised on the sidelines of FIH Men's Hockey World Cup and .FEST at Kala Bhoomi, IG Park, Buddha Jayanti Park and APJ Abdul Kalam Park here, Saturday.

BhuFeSto, the international storytelling festival, is specifically curated for the children and the elderly to keep alive the great saga of local literature, poetry and stories. The FIH Men's Hockey World Cup and the second edition of .FEST, which is set to begin January 15 and conclude January 29, will give the people of Bhubaneswar an experience like never before, said an official.

Nupur, also the curator of the festival, narrated stories in Kamishi Bai, a 900-year-old Japanese technique of storytelling. Similarly, Antonio enthralled the audience, especially the



children, with stories in English. Tripathy narrated Odia folklores, especially those narrated by grandparents. Acclaimed Hindi storyteller Neelesh captivated the audience with

Tight vigil for .FEST

Bhubaneswar: The Commissionerate Police has made elaborate security arrangements at Idoe exhibition ground where .FEST would go for a spectacular start Sunday. In a preparatory meet held at Idoe Auditorium here, City DCP Prateek Singh Saturday sensitised the cops who will be in charge of the security arrangements.

Commissionerate Police has earmarked four places for parking of vehicles which include Capital High School, Hindi High School, Kendriya Vidyalay grounds and the Football Arena inside the Capital High School.

As many as 10 platoons of police along with six ACP-rank officers, 19 inspectors, and 52 sub-inspector and ASI-rank officers will

150 Police Mitras deployed

In order to ensure smooth conduct of .FEST, the City police has deployed 150 Police Mitras. Addressing the Police Mitras, who will be deployed at junctions like Rajmahal Square, Master Canteen Square, Ram Mandir Square, Khao Gali, Capital High School and Keshari Talkies, ACP Umashankar Dash said, "You need to ensure close coordination with the police for smooth discharge of your duties." BDA Vice-Chairman Balwant Singh said, "The authorities are working towards the facilitation of the fortnight-long .FEST with the cooperation of the Bhubaneswar police."

be deployed at the place for safety and security of the spectators and artists during the event.

self-written Hindi stories.

According to Sujit Mahapatra, the festival director, BhuFeSto is a diverse event where the top storytellers perform and students get a chance to participate. "A unique storytelling session employing sign language has been developed for the benefit of the

visually and hearing-impaired guests," Mahapatra pointed out.

BhuFeSto will start at 2:30pm and continue till 7:30pm every day at Kala Bhoomi, IG Park, Buddha Jayanti Park and APJ Abdul Kalam Park where people from all walks of life can visit and enjoy the performances.

City Trails kick off to boost tourism

Bhubaneswar: With the commencement of City Trails Saturday, .FEST has opened up a unique platform in Bhubaneswar to boost tourist footfall in Odisha.

City Trails will continue till February 12 which will consist of three segments - Food Trail, Nature Trail and Museum Trail. The activities are aimed at enabling the citizens to get a holistic essence of Bhubaneswar city culture and heritage, which will further propel the tourism industry.

Food Trail will take the visitors on a delicious journey of Odia cuisine, where the visitors are to taste dahibara, Odia thali, prasads from various temples, pitha, chhena jhili and other breakfast items of Odisha.

Similarly, Museum Trail will take the visitors on a cultural rollercoaster as they would visit the Tribal Museum and the State Museum here.

Likewise, the Nature Trail will help the visitors witness the sublime beauty of nature at the tranquil Ekamravana,



jungle safari at Bharatpur; the serene Deras and Medicinal Park among other places with sylvan settings.

Sources said altogether 106 such trails in all three categories will be conducted till February 12. The ticket

price for all the three trails is very nominal and interested people can get details about different trails from Ekamra Box website and get themselves registered for their preferred choice of the trail.

Kanupur irrigation project to be ready by June: Chief Secy

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: The Kanupur irrigation project in Keonjhar district will be completed by June 2023, Chief Secretary SC Mohapatra said Saturday.

After reviewing the progress of various projects, he said the project's dam water would be stored during this rainy season and it would be utilised for irrigation.

The project, on completion, would provide water for irrigation to 2200 hectare of farmland.

The Chief Secretary also directed the officials to complete the construction of the flyover by October end and the construction of Anandapur barrage by the year end.

'Casual' reports on natural drain pollution perturb NGT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Expressing displeasure at Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) and State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) for submitting compliance reports in a 'superficial' manner with respect to National Green Tribunal's (NGT) recommendations on encroachment along a natural drain and Hazza lake at Nayapalli here, the environment watchdog has asked both the agencies to file fresh affidavits.

The SPCB and the civic body have been instructed to file their affidavits within two weeks or by the next date of hearing scheduled to be held February 2, 2023. The NGT in its earlier order had directed the SPCB to file a fresh affidavit showing the compliance of the recommendations made in the earlier inspection report of the board and submitted before the tribunal October 15, 2022. The recommen-

The tribunal came down heavily on BMC for not mentioning the steps taken by it for removal of illegal encroachments and dumping of garbage along the natural drain in Nayapalli in its fresh affidavit.

The SPCB and the civic body have been instructed to file their affidavits within two weeks or by the next date of hearing scheduled to be held February 2

dations include removal of garbage dumped at the mouth of drainage disposal point to lake area, establishment of concrete dustbins all along the drainage system, demolition of illegal constructions or encroachments along the drainage system and raising the height and depth of the drain for smooth flow of rainwater as well as sewage water.

The NGT water into the natural drain. The NGT has directed the SPCB to submit water analysis reports being released by the hotel every day. Subsequently, the SPCB officials made a field visit December 19, 2022 to review the progress when the officials found that no action was taken with respect to the recommendations.

The NGT came down heavily on BMC for not mentioning the steps taken by it for removal of illegal encroachments and dumping of garbage along the natural drain in its fresh affidavit. The NGT criticised the SPCB for failing to mention whether the Sewage Treatment Plant in the hotel was functioning or not. The SPCB has further been asked to take action against officials for submitting waste water testing report without properly mentioning the required standards and regulatory limits of harmful substances like biochemical oxygen demand and total suspended solids in the waste water.

"In this policy, the investment risk in the investment portfolio is borne by the policyholder"

Ek SIIP - Do Fayed
Saving bhi : Suraksha bhi

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HAR PAL AAPKE SAATH

RPRC e-Commerce portal launched at flower show



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: The two-day Annual Flower Show 2023 being held at the Ekamrakanan botanical garden of Regional Plant Resource Centre (RPRC) was inaugurated Saturday by Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Pradip Kumar Amat in the presence of Rajya Sabha member Sulata Deo. The Minister also launched the RPRC e-commerce portal to help the institution serve people at their doorsteps.

The show hosted floral exhibitions by institutions, a 'plant bazaar' for plant nurseries to showcase

and sell plants, competitions in floral arrangement and several plant group displays.

Showcased in the exhibitions were varieties of roses, dahlia, marigold, zinnia, gerbera, aster, calendula, chrysanthemum and many other flowering plants. Besides these, ferns, palm, bonsai, aglaonema, dieffenbachia, philodendron and other plants were also on display. Corporations like NALCO, Odisha Mining Corporation, Tech Mahindra and educational institutes like Xavier University, CV Raman University participated in the exhibitions along with some government bod-

ies like Reserve Bank, Raj Bhawan, and Odisha State Museum.

Minister Amat expressing his joy over partaking in the event said, "Such events help in creating awareness regarding flowers, plants and their diversity and encourage commoners towards conservation of plants." The Minister also launched the RPRC e-commerce portal.

"We found it difficult to meet the needs of City people during Covid. Thus the e-commerce portal has been developed which will enable us to provide plant nurseries and other items straight to the doorstep of the people," said RPRC chief executive Pusazhule Mekro.

The RPRC and Plant Lovers' Association (PLA), Bhubaneswar, have been organising the show on the second Saturday and Sunday of January every year since 2006 with the support of Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC), Odisha Forest Development Corporation Limited (OFDC) and Directorate of Horticulture.



NATURE'S BEAUTY: Variety of flowers being exhibited at flower show organised at Ekamra Kanan park in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

OP PHOTO

Dense fog likely in 11 districts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Almost all parts of the state were covered in a blanket of fog for the second consecutive day Saturday. According to a bulletin released by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Keonjhar, Jajpur, Bhadrak, Khurda, Nayagarh and Kandhamal districts are likely to experience dense fog for the next two days.



In addition, the IMD also predicts shallow to moderate fog in some places of coastal Odisha, in Keonjhar, Angul, Dhenkanal, and Kandhamal, along with one or two places in Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Balangir, Sonepur, Boudh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack and Keonjhar during the next 24 hours.

The bulletin further stated that the night temperature in different places of the state is unlikely to change significantly during the next five days.

In the last 24 hours, G Udayagiri in Kandhamal recorded the lowest minimum temperature at 5.5°C, while the minimum temperature in Semiliguda in Koraput was 8.0°C, while it was 8.5°C at Phulbani in Kandhamal.

The minimum temperature in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack was 16.3°C and 17°C respectively. The weather across Odisha will remain dry, said the bulletin.

BRS invites Gamang to join party

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Former chief minister and senior BJP leader Giridhar Gamang has been invited to join Bharatiya Rashtra Samithi (BRS), the national party formed by Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao.

Giridhar along with his son Sisir met Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao in Hyderabad, Friday. The meeting has created speculations that he may join the BRS.

"Former Odisha Chief Minister, senior Parliamentarian, national



leader Giridhar Gamang paid a courtesy call on Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao at Pragati Bhavan today. His son Shishir Gamang and others were present at the meeting," tweeted Telangana CMO.

Speaking to the mediapersons,

Sisir said the Telangana Chief Minister is an old friend of his father. So, he (K Chandrasekhar Rao) had invited the ex-CM for a meeting. As Rao has formed a national party, he invited Gamang to join his party and take the lead in Odisha.

"It is only the first meeting. We are very much in the BJP. We have only got an offer and have not taken any decision and not communicated our views also," Sisir said.

The Gamang family is a known political name in Odisha especially in the southern region, where many Telugu speaking people are residing. So, it is a move by Rao to rope

Gamang into his party fold to spread BRS's wing in Odisha.

The BRS is also scheduled to hold a mega meeting January 18, which may witness the participation of not only the Left-wing parties, including Kerala Chief Minister P Vijayan, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann but also senior leaders like Giridhar Gamang from Odisha.

Gamang had shot to fame when his vote played a crucial role in the no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee government in 1998.

Governor proposal for foreigners' entry into Srimandir stirs debate

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Governor Ganeshi Lal's statement in favour of entry of foreigners into Jagannath temple, Puri, has sparked a debate in the state.

While addressing inaugural function of Odisha Vision 2036 Conclave in Bhubaneswar Thursday, the Governor had said, "If a foreigner can meet Puri Gajapati, Puri Shankaracharya Swami Nischalananda Saraswati and servitors, he/she should get a chance to pay obeisance to Lord Jagannath."

Stating the governments should work on this issue, Lal said, "This is my personal opinion... someone may appreciate it or not, but, I request the servitors, Puri Shankaracharya and king Gajapati to consider my proposal."

As per tradition, only Hindus are allowed to have darshan of Lord Jagannath and siblings inside the Puri temple. So, this statement of the Governor has created a fresh row in the state.

Puri temple servitors have opposed the proposal of the Governor. Temple servitor and member of the Jagannath Temple managing committee, Madhab Chandra Mohapatra said, "It is laughable. The proposal is beyond our imagination. It is not possible. Nobody other than Hindus should be allowed into the temple."

Another servitor Shyama



As per tradition, only Hindus are allowed to have darshan of Lord Jagannath and siblings inside the Puri temple

Mohapatra also made a similar opinion. Lord Jagannath and his siblings come out of the temple each year during Rath Yatra to give darshan to such (foreign) devotees. So, the age-old tradition should not be changed, Mahapatra said.

Similarly, the BJP and Congress party leaders have expressed their opinions on the proposal of the Governor.

Leader of opposition in Odisha Assembly, Jayanarayan Mishra (BJP) left it to the pandits of Mukti Mandap to take decision on this issue while Congress MLA Suresh Routray said the tradition should not be broken.



HOLY DAY: Devotees stand in queue to have a darshan at Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar on the occasion of Makar Sankranti, Saturday

OP PHOTO

Managing negative emotions key to slowing pathological ageing

CONTINUED FROM P1

DMK death...

The governor's office also provided a clip of the video to the police. Tamil Nadu BJP president K Annamalai, in his complaint to the Director General of Police said Shivaji Krishnamurthy 'a renowned DMK abuser' known for derogatory public speeches has abused Ravi and made unpardonable remarks in his speeches.

"We hope the police do not turn a blind eye again and request that you kindly reprimand Shivaji Krishnamurthy for abusing the Constitutional head of the state. His remarks must not be construed as freedom of expression," Annamalai said.

The latest row between Ravi and the Tamil Nadu government started after the former walked out Monday of the Assembly. He did so after the Assembly adopted a resolution to record only the governor's original speech, which was prepared by the state government and reportedly approved by the Speaker.

Scientists have discovered details about link between impact of negative emotions on the brain of the elderly and pathological ageing, which may help prevent or delay neurodegeneration, according to a study.

Neuroscientists at the University of Geneva (UNIGE), Switzerland, observed the activation of the brains of young and older adults when confronted with the psychological suffering of others.

Negative emotions, anxiety and depression are thought to promote the onset of neurodegenerative diseases and dementia. But what is their impact on the brain and can their deleterious effects be limited?

According to the study, the neuronal connections of the older adults show significant emotional inertia: negative emotions modify them excessively and over a long period of time, particularly in the posterior cingulate cortex and the amygdala, two brain regions strongly involved in the management of emotions and autobio-

graphical memory. These results indicate that a better management of these emotions could help limit neurodegeneration. The findings appear in the journal Nature Aging.

For the past 20 years, neuroscientists have been looking at how the brain reacts to emotions. "We are beginning to understand what happens at the moment of perception of an emotional stimulus," explains Dr Olga Klimecki, last author of this study.

"However, what happens afterwards remains a mystery. How does the brain switch from one emotion to another? How does it return to its initial state? Does emotional variability change with age? What are the consequences for the brain of mismanagement of emotions?," said Klimecki.

Previous studies in psychology have shown that an ability to change emotions quickly is beneficial for mental health.

Conversely, people who are unable to regulate their emotions and



remain in the same emotional state for a long time are at higher risks of depression.

"Our aim was to determine what cerebral trace remains after the viewing of emotional scenes, in order to evaluate the brain's reaction, and, above all, its recovery mechanisms."

"We focused on the older adults, in order to identify possible differences between normal and pathological ageing," says Patrik

Neuroscientists at the University of Geneva (UNIGE), Switzerland, observed the activation of the brains of young and older adults when confronted with the psychological suffering of others

"Older people generally show a different pattern of brain activity and connectivity from younger people," said Sebastian Baez Lugo, a researcher in Patrik Vuilleumier's laboratory

around 25 years. The same experiment was then repeated with 127 older adults, the study said.

"Older people generally show a different pattern of brain activity and connectivity from younger people," said Sebastian Baez Lugo, a researcher in Patrik Vuilleumier's laboratory and the first author of this work.

"This is particularly noticeable in the level of activation of the default mode network, a brain network

that is highly activated in resting state. Its activity is frequently disrupted by depression or anxiety, suggesting that it is involved in the regulation of emotions.

"In the older adults, part of this network, the posterior cingulate cortex, which processes autobiographical memory, shows an increase in its connections with the amygdala, which processes important emotional stimuli.

"These connections are stronger in subjects with high anxiety scores, with rumination, or with negative thoughts," said Lugo.

However, older people tend to regulate their emotions better than younger people, and focus more easily on positive details, even during a negative event, the study said.

But changes in connectivity between the posterior cingulate cortex and the amygdala could indicate a deviation from the normal ageing phenomenon, accentuated in people who show more anxiety, rumination and negative emotions, the study said.

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PAPER BIRDS: Kids along with parents try their hands at kite flying at a kite festival organised by Sambalpur Youth, a local outfit, on the occasion of Makar Sankranti at Hawa Maidan in Sambalpur, Saturday

Croc count logs steady uptick in Bhitarkanika

HEADCOUNT 9 MORE THAN LAST YEAR; WHITE CROCS RE-SIGHTED

AGENCIES

Kendrapara, Jan 14: Bhitarkanika National Park has re-established itself as the country's largest mangrove habitat corridor for albino estuarine crocodiles with wildlife enumerators re-sighting 20 rare white crocodiles in the brackish water bodies and water-inlets along the wetlands of the park.

The population of salt-water crocodiles has marginally increased in 2023 as per the annual reptile census with the head-count at 1,793 including 20 whitish estuarine crocodiles whereas, in 2022, their number was 1,784.

Estuarine crocodiles are also found in West Bengal's Sundarbans, having the country's largest mangrove cover. Besides, the mangrove wetlands in Andaman Islands are home to these species, but the population of crocodiles in wild habitats of Bhitarkanika is much higher in density, said crocodile researcher Dr Sudhakar Kar, who led the 22 census teams to count these reptiles.

"During the census, we sighted 569 hatchlings (2-feet), 388 yearlings (2-3 feet), 325 juveniles (3-6 feet), 166 sub-adults (6-8 feet) and 345 adults reptiles (more than 8 feet long). Bhitarkanika is also home to 20 whitish crocodiles as per the reptile census report, Kar said.

The Union government had collaborated with UNDP for conservation of crocodiles in 1975. Then, the population of salt-water crocodiles in the Bhitarkanika area stood at 95, including 34 adults. Now, the population has swollen to 1,793 as per the latest census report released Saturday.

The crocodile conservation programme had been launched in 1975. Then two white crocodiles had been found inhabiting the Bhitarkanika water bodies. Last year, 16 white crocodiles had been



FIGURES SAY IT ALL

Saltwater crocodile conservation programme in Bhitarkanika is the most successful as in 1975 it was the home of only 96 crocodiles

Year	Croc Population
2001	1,330
2005	1,449
2010	1,610
2015	1,665
2020	1,757
2023	1,793

sighted, he said.

As albino reptiles have been re-sighted, the brackish water bodies of the national park have emerged as favourable habitation corridors for white crocodiles.

The typical complexion of these reptiles is mainly due to the genetic pigment malformation and mutant variation.

Apart from the 20 white crocs sighted in the wild, Bhitarkanika is also home to two other adult

white crocodiles living in captivity in the park's enclosure.

The 48-year-old female albino crocodile 'Gori' living in a pen inside the national park is a major tourist attraction. The 12-foot-long Gori, hatched and bred by the Forest department as part of crocodile conservation programme, used to hog the spotlight over the years for its typical behavioural instinct.

Living in captivity since its birth in the national park, the animal continues to shun mating habits. It had rejected companionship on several occasions in the past, Kar said.

The national park is crisscrossed by innumerable water inlets, creeks and nullahs all forming the part of Bhitarkanika river system.

The enumerators extensively covered vulnerable riverside villages where reports of man-croc conflict had reached a flashpoint in the recent past. However, the sighting of these reptiles was few and far between. More than 70 per cent of crocs were sighted in the water-bodies in the core area of the National Park.

'Centre roadblock in construction of coastal highway'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Jan 14: Former deputy speaker of state Assembly Rama Chandra Panda has held the Union Environment Ministry responsible for the delay in construction of proposed coastal highway from Gopalpur in Ganjam district to Brahmagiri in Puri district.

The Centre has delayed the construction of a 5-km long bridge between Jahnikuda and Satapada, Panda alleged. This is another example of negligence of the Centre towards Odisha, he added demanding immediate environmental clearance to the project. He also said to have drawn the attention of the Chief Minister towards the delay in implementation of the project.

Panda made these charges against the Centre at a press conference held in the Silk City. He said that in the past, plans were made for construction of a coastal highway from Gopalpur in Ganjam district to Digha in West Bengal via Chilika lake in Odisha.

He said that the project, when implemented, will reduce the distance to Puri by 70 km for the pilgrims from southern Odisha districts and the districts in north Andhra Pradesh visiting the holy city. The project will also usher in tourism boost for beaches of South Odisha apart from Chilika lake.

Lakhs of fishermen and farmers residing in over 200 villages from

Environment Ministry has raised objections to construction of a bridge in the middle of Chilika

35 panchayats of Khallikote, Ganjam, Krushnaprasad and Brahmagiri blocks will be immensely benefitted with the implementation of the project.

The plan included construction of a 5-km bridge from Jahnikuda to Satapada. Later, the coastal area of Ganjam district was excluded in design of the bridge.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Environment has raised objections to construction of a bridge in the middle of Chilika lake. This has put on hold the construction of a bridge in between Jahnikuda and Satapada, said Panda as he demanded before the Centre to reconsider its plan.

Panda further said that he met the Union Roads and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari in 2015 and submitted a memorandum to him demanding immediate grant of environmental clearance to Gopalpur-Brahmagiri coastal highway project. He was accompanied by some eminent personalities of the area during his meeting with the Union minister. Since then, seven years have passed but no step has been taken so far to implement the project pushing it to cold storage.

2 held for clash over land dispute

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Jan 14: Police arrested two persons on charge of assaulting each other over land dispute at Shakti Nagar under Nimakhandi police limits in the Silk City.

The accused identified as Trilochan Mohanty, 56, and his neighbour Umakanta Adhikari, 50, were arrested over separate complaints lodged by them against each other in the police station. A case was registered in this connection and the accused produced in the court, Saturday. Police said Umakanta, a postal agent by profession, had pur-

chased a piece of land from Trilochan, a mason and land agent by profession and started construction of a house after that. Trilochan also had another plot of land close to Umakanta's land. However, a dispute arose between the two regarding some portions of the land.

The incident occurred when Umakanta was returning from a post office at Brajanagar. He came face to face with Trilochan and had a spat with him on the issue. Enraged, Trilochan bludgeoned the head of Umakanta with a brick. On the other hand, Umakanta alleged that Trilochan tried to strangle him.

Fog turns deadly as 2 killed in accident

Jajpur: Two persons were killed on the spot and five others suffered serious injuries when the car they were travelling in crashed into the rear of a stationary truck on NH-16 in this district, early Saturday morning. The passengers in the car were travelling to offer prayers at the Maa Tarini temple in Keonjhar. The accident occurred at Mulapala Chhak under Kuakhia police limits. The deceased Biswajit Maiti and Diptaprabha Panda and all the injured were from Erasama in Jagatsinghpur district. Police later said that the accident could have occurred due to fog and poor visibility. Locals informed the police about the accident. They reached the spot and took the injured to a hospital at Dharmasala while the bodies of the deceased were sent for post-mortem.

Ganja worth ₹13L seized; 6 held

Sambalpur: The Excise department Saturday seized around 1.3 kilograms of cannabis valued at roughly ₹13 lakh during a routine patrol at Sasan toll gate and Rampela in Sambalpur district. Six persons have been arrested and their vehicles have been seized in connection with the incident. The ganja was being transported from Bargarh to Bilaspur and Angul to Noida when the vehicles were intercepted. The accused had created a hidden compartment in the CNG tank of the vehicle to smuggle the ganja. They have been forwarded to court.

Sambalpur boy who fell off flyover dies

Sambalpur: Clifad Kujur, the minor boy who fell from the Laxmi Talkies flyover here and suffered serious injuries, died Saturday while undergoing treatment at VIMSAR in Burla. Kujur was a student of Class-X at the St John's school here. Sources said that, Clifad had gone to the flyover after school at around 1.00pm in the afternoon Friday. It is still a mystery as to how he fell off the flyover.

HOCKEY WORLD CUP

Local lads elated over first win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rourkela, Jan 14: The country's victory over Spain in the opening match of the ongoing FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2023 has predictably brought extreme happiness to the Indian side, especially to the two members who are local lads.

The duo - team vice-captain Amit Rohidas and Sanjeev Neelum Xess - are elated that they got the chance to play before the home crowd. Rohidas even scored the first goal against Spain.

"There is no greater honour and finer moment than scoring before the home crowd. It is worth even more when it is in your own backyard," Rohidas said.

Xess said, "We are extremely thankful for the support we received here. For me it is like a dream coming true. There is no word I can use to explain how one feels to win before the home crowd and getting accolades."

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Pattnaik declared cash award of ₹10 lakh for both players. "Our chief minister is doing the best possible thing for the promotion of the game (hockey) and this will definitely create more players from the state for the country," they said.

Pattnaik himself sat through the India-Spain match



I started from the Panposh sports hostel (in Rourkela) and playing at home is a wonderful feeling. The support from such a large crowd motivated us but once we are on the pitch we try to focus on the game. It is a team effort and because of the team I got the chance to score in front of the home crowd which included my family members. We are not under pressure and the key to our success will be to execute the plans of the team

AMIT ROHIDAS | VICE-CAPTAIN, INDIAN HOCKEY TEAM

in the special enclosure and later met the players and interacted with them.

Coach Graham Reid in the post match press briefing said, "The first win in a tournament is certainly a great thing. We have found out where we are lacking and we are certainly going to improve upon those. It was a very learning experience as we played the opening match with a good team like Spain."

Reid and team captain Harmanpreet Singh said the victory was due to the superb team coordination.

Singh said the defence and the forward all moved in tandem and coordinated properly in this victory.

The hockey fever has completely affected the Steel City, where 25 LED screens have been installed so that the people can watch the matches outside the Birsas Munda International Hockey stadium. In fact, a crowd gathered near the screens much before the matches started.

"I failed to get a ticket for the match but the screen certainly fulfilled the desire to have a ring side view. I am

going to watch the matches on the LED screens every day," said a lady at Chhend.

National flags, team T-shirts, caps and facial stickers were found to be much in demand by the people. The stadium had capacity crowd. The sellers stood outside gates 5 and 6 and did brisk business.

"I have made a handsome profit of one thousand rupees within one hour, all my goods are sold out," said Rakesh, a seller. The national flags of different sizes are selling briskly for ₹30, ₹50 and ₹100. Caps sold for ₹100 and the t-shirts for ₹200. A facial sticker or paint costs ₹20.

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ସମଗ୍ର ଶିକ୍ଷା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମର ସଫଳତା - ୨୦୨୨

- ୧) ଜାତୀୟ ଶିକ୍ଷା ନୀତି - ୨୦୨୦ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଶିକ୍ଷାଥୀଙ୍କ ମୌଳିକ ସାକ୍ଷରତା (Foundational Literacy) ସଂଖ୍ୟାଞ୍ଚନ (Numeracy) ହାସଲ ଉପରେ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ଦିଆଯାଇଛି। ସେଥିପାଇଁ ପ୍ରଥମରୁ ତୃତୀୟ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ପଢୁଥିବା ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ଭାଷା ଓ ଗାଣିତିକ ଦକ୍ଷତା ବୃଦ୍ଧି ନିମନ୍ତେ ଅନେକକ୍ରମେ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରାଯାଇଛି।
- ୨) କରୋଡ଼ା ମହାମାରୀ ସମୟରେ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଥିବା ବିଦ୍ୟାର୍ଥୀମାନଙ୍କର ଶିକ୍ଷଣ କ୍ଷତିରୁ ପୁରଣ କରିବା, ବିରତ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ବର୍ଷର ଶିକ୍ଷଣ ଫଳାଫଳକୁ ବର୍ଦ୍ଧନ କରିବା ଶିକ୍ଷଣ ଫଳାଫଳ ସହିତ ସଂଶ୍ଳିଷ୍ଟ କରିବା, ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ବିଦ୍ୟାର୍ଥୀମାନଙ୍କର ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ଶିକ୍ଷଣ ଦକ୍ଷତା ହାସଲକୁ ସୁନିଶ୍ଚିତ କରିବା ଏବଂ ପ୍ରଶିକ୍ଷଣ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଶିକ୍ଷକ/ଶିକ୍ଷୟିତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କର ଦକ୍ଷତା ବିକାଶ କରିବା ସହ ଶ୍ରେଣୀ ଉପଯୋଗୀ ପାଠ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମା ବିଦ୍ୟାର୍ଥୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶିକ୍ଷଣ ପଠନ ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟାର ମୁଖ୍ୟଧାରାରେ ସାମିଲ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଶିକ୍ଷଣ ପରିପୁରଣ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ (Learning Recovery Programme) ତୃତୀୟରୁ ନବମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀର ବିଦ୍ୟାର୍ଥୀମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଯୋଜନା ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରାଯାଇଛି।
- ୩) ସରକାରୀ ଓ ସରକାରୀ ଅନୁଦାନପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ପ୍ରଥମରୁ ଅଷ୍ଟମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ପଢୁଥିବା ସମଗ୍ର ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ମାଗଣା ପାଠ୍ୟ ପୁସ୍ତକ ଯୋଗାଇ ଦେବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରାଯାଇଅଛି। ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ପଢୁଥିବା ବଙ୍ଗଳା ଭାଷାଭାଷୀ ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ବିଭାଗ ତରଫରୁ ମାଗଣାରେ ବଙ୍ଗଳା ଭାଷା ପୁସ୍ତକ ଯୋଗାଇ ଦିଆଯାଇଛି।
- ୪) ମାଳକାନଗିରି ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ କେବଳ ବାକନମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ୩୦ଟି ନେତାଜୀ ସ୍ମାରକ ଚକ୍ର ସେବା ଆବାସିକ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଗଠନ କରାଯାଇଛି।
- ୫) ଅଧାରୁ ପାଠ ଛାଡ଼ିଥିବା ଓ ଆର୍ଥିକ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ି ନ ଥିବା ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ସଚେତନ କରାଇ ନିକଟସ୍ଥ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ନାମ ରେଖାଇବା ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ପ୍ରଶିକ୍ଷଣର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରାଯାଇଛି।
- ୬) ଦୂରଦୂରାନ୍ତ ଗ୍ରାମରୁ ଆସୁଥିବା ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ପରିବହନ ସୁବିଧା କରାଯାଇଛି। ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରୁ ୧ କି.ମି. ଓ ଉଚ୍ଚ ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରୁ ୩ କି.ମି.ରୁ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱ ଗ୍ରାମରୁ ଆସୁଥିବା ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପିଛା ମାସକୁ ୬୦୦ ଟଙ୍କା ହିସାବରେ ଦିଆଯିବା ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ରହିଛି। ୨୦୨୨-୨୩ ଶିକ୍ଷା ବର୍ଷରେ ୪୬୭ ଜଣ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ପରିବହନ ସୁବିଧା ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯାଇଛି।
- ୭) ୨୦୨୨-୨୩ ଶିକ୍ଷା ବର୍ଷରେ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଜାତୀୟ ଶିକ୍ଷା ନୀତି ଅନ୍ତର୍ଗତ STARS SCHEMEରେ ଅଧାରୁ ପାଠ ଛାଡ଼ିଥିବା ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ମାଳକାନଗିରି ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ ୨ଟି ଆବାସିକ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଖୋଲାଯାଇଛି। ୧୦ଟି ଉଚ୍ଚ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ଧର୍ଯ୍ୟାତ୍ମକ ଶିକ୍ଷଣର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରାଯାଇଛି।
- ୮) ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ ସାତଗୋଟି ବ୍ଲକ୍ରେ ଥିବା ଆଦିବାସୀ ଝିଅମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ (ଅଧାରୁ ପାଠ ଛାଡ଼ିଥିବା/ଆର୍ଥିକ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଯାଇ ନ ଥିବା/ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ଥିବା ବାଳିକା/ପିତୃ-ମାତୃହୀନ ବାଳିକା/ବାରିଷ୍ଠିକ ସାମାଜିକତା ଚଳେ ଥିବା ବାଳିକା/ବିଭ୍ରାପିତ ବାଳିକା) ପ୍ରତି ବ୍ଲକ୍ରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ରେଖାବର୍ଦ୍ଧି କରୁଥିବା ଗାନ୍ଧୀ ବାଳିକା ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଖଣ୍ଡ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରୁ ଦ୍ୱାବଣ ଶ୍ରେଣୀ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଗଠନ କରାଯାଇଛି। ଏହି ଆବାସିକ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଗୁଡ଼ିକରେ ପାଠପଢ଼ା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ବୃତ୍ତିଗତ ଚାଲିନ ଯଥା ବିଲେଇ, କଣ୍ଠେଇ, ମହମବଟି ଆଦି ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି କୌଶଳ, ବେତ ଓ ବାଉଁଶ କାମ ଶିକ୍ଷା, ରାଗୀ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀବାଇ ଆଦି ରଖା କୌଶଳ ଆଦି ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦିଆଯାଇ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତରେ ସ୍ୱାବଲମ୍ବୀ ହେବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରାଯାଇଅଛି।
- ୯) ସମଗ୍ର ସରକାରୀ ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ଓ ଉଚ୍ଚ ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଗୁଡ଼ରେ ୫୨୩୮୯ ଜଣ ବାଳିକା, ୧୦୧୬୯ ଜଣ ଅନୁସୂଚିତ ଜାତି, ୩୭୭୧୫ ଜଣ ଅନୁସୂଚିତ ଜନଜାତି ଓ ୬୦୦୦ ଜଣ ବିପିଏସ୍ ବାକନମାନଙ୍କୁ ୨ ହକ ପୋଷାକ ଓ ଯୋଡ଼ା ପ୍ରଦାନ ନିମନ୍ତେ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ପରିଚାଳନା କମିଟିକୁ ଜଣ ପିଛା ୬୦୦ଟଙ୍କା ହିସାବରେ ଅର୍ଥ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯାଇଅଛି।
- ୧୦) ଆଦିବାସୀ ସମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟର ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କ ଶିକ୍ଷଣ ବିକାଶ ପାଇଁ ାଗୋଟି କୋୟା, ୨୦ଗୋଟି ବଣ୍ଡା ଓ ୧୩ଗୋଟି ବିବାୟା ବହୁଭାଷୀ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଖୋଲାଯାଇ ମାଳକାନଗିରି ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ ୧୩୭୨୩୩ ଜଣ ବହୁଭାଷୀ ଚନ୍ଦନ ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ୧୮୨୭୭ କୋୟା, ୩୭୭୭୭ ବଣ୍ଡା ଓ ୧୨୭୭୭ ବିବାୟା ଏହିପରି ମୋଟ ୨୩୫୭୭୭ ଶିକ୍ଷା ସହାୟକ ରୂପେ ନିୟୁତ୍ତି କରିବା ସହ ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ବହୁଭାଷୀ ମାଗଣା ପାଠ୍ୟ ପୁସ୍ତକ ଯୋଗାଇ ଦିଆଯାଇ ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ନିକ ନିକ ମାତୃଭାଷାରେ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦିଆଯିବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରାଯାଇଅଛି।
- ୧୧) ୨୦୨୨-୨୦୨୩ ଶିକ୍ଷାବର୍ଷରେ ମାଳକାନଗିରି ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ ୪୨୧୭୭ ଜଣ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ବିଭିନ୍ନ କରାଯାଇ, ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ନିକ ଘର ପାଖରେ ଥିବା ସରକାରୀ ଓ ସରକାରୀ ଅନୁଦାନ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟଗୁଡ଼ିକର ନାମ ରେଖାଯାଇ ସାଧାରଣ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଯୋଗାଇ ଦେବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରାଯାଇଅଛି।
- ୧୨) ୦୭ଗୋଟି ବିନିକିଆ ସାଲକେଇ, ୦୫ଗୋଟି ବୁରୁଲ୍ ଚେରା, ୧୮ଗୋଟି ଶ୍ରବଣ ଯନ୍ତ୍ର ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଯୋଗାଇ ଦିଆଯାଇ ନିୟମିତ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ସିବାପାଇଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ କରାଯାଇଅଛି।
- ୧୩) ସାତଗୋଟି ବ୍ଲକ୍ରେ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପିତା ମାତା, ପ୍ରଧାନଶିକ୍ଷକ ଓ ଶିକ୍ଷୟିତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏକଦିବସୀୟ ଚାଲିନ, ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବିଷୟ ଉପରେ ଧାରଣା, ଖେଳକ୍ରମ, ପରିଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ ଆଦି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମଗୁଡ଼ିକ କରାଯାଇ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ଅନ୍ତର୍ନିହିତ ଗୁଣାବଳୀ ବିକାଶ କରିବା ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ କରାଯାଇଅଛି।
- ୧୪) ସାମାଜିକ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଗତ ଶିକ୍ଷଣର ଉନ୍ନତି ପାଇଁ "ସେଭୁ" ସିଏ କମିଟିଆରେ ୮ଟି ପଞ୍ଚାୟତରେ ଶିକ୍ଷକମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ବାବରୁହ, ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ପାଇଁ ୬୧ଟି ଅତିରିକ୍ତ ଶ୍ରେଣୀ ଗୁଡ଼, ୩୩ଟି ପାଠାୟତକ, ୩୩ଟି ବିଦ୍ୟୁତ୍ କରଣ ଓ ୬ଟି ଖେଳପଡ଼ିଆ ପାଇଁ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ତରଫରୁ ଅର୍ଥର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରାଯାଇଅଛି। ତାମାଠା୧୨୨୦୨୨ରୁ ୩୩୩ ଏଥ ମଧ୍ୟରୁ ୬ଗୋଟି ଶିକ୍ଷକମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ବାବରୁହ, ୪୯ଟି ଅତିରିକ୍ତ ଶ୍ରେଣୀ ଗୁଡ଼, ୩୩ଟି ପାଠାୟତକ, ୩୩ଟି ବିଦ୍ୟୁତ୍ କରଣ ଓ ୬ଟି ଖେଳ ପଡ଼ିଆ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇଛି। ଅବଶିଷ୍ଟ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ତାକୁ ରହିଛି।
- ୧୫) ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ ସମଗ୍ର ଶିକ୍ଷା ଯୋଜନାରେ ୭ଗୋଟି ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀ ସାଧନ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଏବଂ ୧୧୦ଗୋଟି ଆକ୍ଷୟ ଯାତ୍ରା କେନ୍ଦ୍ରକୁ କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟର ଓ ପ୍ରିଣ୍ଟର ଯୋଗାଇବା ସହିତ ପ୍ରତି କେନ୍ଦ୍ରକୁ ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରି ସମଗ୍ର ତଥ୍ୟ ଆଦାନ ପ୍ରଦାନର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରାଯାଇଛି।
- ୧୬) ମାଳକାନଗିରି ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟରେ ୬ଗୋଟି ଏବଂ ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟରେ ୪୭ଗୋଟି ଏହି ଭଳି ମୋଟ ୫୩ଗୋଟି ଉଚ୍ଚ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟକୁ 5T ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ରୂପାନ୍ତରିତ କରାଯାଇଅଛି। ଉଚ୍ଚ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟଗୁଡ଼ିକର ସମଗ୍ର ଶିକ୍ଷକ/ଶିକ୍ଷୟିତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କୁ DIGITAL SKILL & LEADERSHIPର ପ୍ରଶିକ୍ଷଣ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦିଆଯାଇଛି। ସମଗ୍ର ୫୩ଗୋଟି 5T ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟକୁ e-content materials ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯାଇଛି। ତୃତୀୟ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟରେ ୪୯ଗୋଟି ଉଚ୍ଚ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟକୁ ରୂପାନ୍ତରିତ କରିବା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ଚାଲୁରହିଛି।



The cup has to be left clean and empty for the divine liquor to be poured into it.

SRI AUROBINDO



Order Over Diversity

My good friend Ram Madhav has written a piece saying that “most leaders reacted to RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat’s interview without reading it.” Now I have not read Madhav’s piece, but that is not the point. The issue is whether the RSS is misunderstood and, particularly, whether the RSS’ ideology is misunderstood. To get there we do not need to read the apologists but go straight to their texts. And this I have done, for one of my books. Here is a condensation for those who do not have the time or inclination to read their speeches. I say speeches because they have not written any books. Neither Golwalkar nor Deen Dayal Upadhyaya wrote any book. This is surprising because Upadhyaya is referred to as an ‘ideologue’ and his ‘Integral Humanism’ is referred to by the BJP as its ‘basic philosophy’. Integral Humanism is a collection of speeches. So is Bunch of Thoughts (that is why it was given this name because it is a rambling, incoherent collection). So what do they say? Here are the main parts.

In Bunch of Thoughts, Golwalkar says that the Hindu people are his god and this god manifests itself through caste. Meaning the organisation of Hindu society in the way Manu described it (Brahmin head, Kshatriya arms, Vaishya thighs and Shudra feet) is the entity that is worthy of worship. In 1960, Golwalkar said that caste could be used for cross-breeding superior humans, like it was done in animals. This was done by Hindus earlier; through Nambodiri Brahmin men marrying outside the caste. It was also done, he said, through Nambodiri men fathering the first child of a woman married to someone else. It may interest readers to know that Europe in the feudal period may have had something similar called droit du seigneur (‘right of the lord’), allowing feudal lords to have sexual relations with subordinate women on the wedding nights of the women. That this is straight exploitation of the weak and the marginalised and not some noble thing does not appear to have occurred to Golwalkar.

If such things are not pushed forth by the RSS cadre or the BJP it is not because these statements have been withdrawn but because they are likely confident that few people will do what the author has done and actually read the primary texts. It would be interesting to see a television debate today around whether or not the caste system should be worshipped and ossified as the RSS wants it to be.

Upadhyaya’s talks are comical if read seriously (see my book ‘Our Hindu Rashtra’ for details) but in part also nasty. Consider this paragraph.

“Let me give you an illustration. Once during a conversation between Shri Vinobaji and the Sar Sanghachalak of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Shri Guruji, a question arose as to where the modes of thinking of Hindus and Muslims differ. Guruji said to Vinobaji that there are good and bad people in every society. There can be found honest and good people in Hindus as well as in Muslims. Similarly, rascals can be seen in both the societies. No particular society has a monopoly of goodness. However, it is observed that Hindus even if they are rascals in individual life, when they come together in a group, they always think of good things. On the other hand when two Muslims come together, they propose and approve of things which they themselves in their individual capacity would not even think of. They start thinking in an altogether different way. This is an everyday experience. Vinobaji admitted that there was truth in this observation but had no reasons to explain it.”

The writer Devanura Mahadeva in his recent book on RSS says that the RSS promotes discipline and unanimity over thinking and analysis. Of the title Bunch of Thoughts itself he says that there is not much thinking in the work, only a series of “random, dangerous beliefs and that too from a bygone age.” Thinking is discouraged in the RSS through the insistence on order over diversity. The RSS ‘tames’ its volunteers, Mahadeva writes and quotes Golwalkar as saying that they must “do what is told... if told to play kabaddi play kabaddi, told to hold meeting then meeting... their discretion is not required.”

Among the things that this cadre is taught is that the Constitution is flawed. For instance the RSS has always attacked federalism. The very idea of states is offensive to Upadhyaya, because there can be only one Bharat Mata and the existence of a Tamil Nadu or Gujarat or Bengal is wrong. We can see echoes of this in the current problem with a BJP Governor in the South. Mahadeva links this hatred of federalism to the Goods and Services Tax, which has taken away or severely limited the rights of states to raise their own revenues.

Mahadeva calls Hindutva a ‘cow-faced tiger’, an entity that is eating at Indian society from within. Mahadeva makes a number of original observations, such as “the RSS tries to pull out the teeth and nails of Jaina, Bouddha, Sikh, Lingayat and other dharmas that were born in India and rejected the Chaturvarna order.” By merely saying that these are Hindu faiths, it is sought to subsume their message.

These are the things that the ideology promotes, according to its own people. We should not be surprised then that there are frequent reactions of the negative sort that Madhav is referring to. These reactions only reflect the truth.



Aakar Patel

The very idea of states is offensive to Upadhyaya, because there can be only one Bharat Mata and the existence of a Tamil Nadu or Gujarat or Bengal is wrong



Brahma Chellaney

CHINA’S INCREMENTAL BUT UNRELENTING EXPANSIONISM UNDER XI HAS RENDERED JAPAN’S PACIFIST STANCE UNTENABLE

For decades, Japan has based its international clout on economic competitiveness, not military might. But, with China’s lengthening shadow darkening its doorstep, Japan now seems to be abandoning its pacifist postwar security policy – which capped defence spending at about 1 per cent of GDP and shunned offensive capabilities – in favour of assuming a central role in maintaining security in the Indo-Pacific region.

Last month, Japan unveiled a bold new national-security strategy, which includes a plan to double defence expenditure within five years. That spending – amounting to some \$320 billion – will fund Japan’s largest military build-up since World War II, and implies the world’s third-largest defence budget, after the US and China. Importantly, the new strategy includes acquisition of preemptive counterstrike capabilities, such as Tomahawk cruise missiles from the United States, and the development of its own hypersonic weapons.

Japan began laying the groundwork for this shift under former Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, who was assassinated last July. On Abe’s watch, Japan increased defence spending by about 10 per cent, and, more significantly, reinterpreted (with parliament’s approval) the country’s US-imposed “peace constitution” to allow the military to mobilise overseas for the first time since WWII. Abe also sought to amend Article 9 of the constitution, which renounces “the threat or use of force” by Japan, but his efforts were stymied by popular protests.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has not run into the same resistance. On the contrary, opinion polls show that a majority of Japanese support the military build-up. A similar shift has taken place in Kishida himself, who was widely considered a dove when he was foreign minister – a label that he publicly embraced.

The impetus for this shift is clear. In 2013, the year Xi Jinping became China’s president, Japan’s national-security strategy called China a strategic partner.

FOCUS JAPAN

MILITARY AWAKENING



While Japan’s move toward rearmament is welcome, the embrace of Tomahawk missiles and hypersonic weapons alone will not force China to stop waging hybrid warfare. Japan must also find ways to frustrate China’s furtive efforts to alter the regional status quo while avoiding the risk of open combat

According to the updated strategy, by contrast, China represents “an unprecedented and the greatest strategic challenge in ensuring the peace and security of Japan.” China’s incremental but unremitting expansionism under Xi has rendered Japan’s pacifist stance untenable.

This is more apparent than ever in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, which has intensified fears that China could pursue a military option against Taiwan, which is effectively an extension of the Japanese archipelago. Last August, five of the nine missiles China fired during military exercises in the waters around Taiwan landed in Japan’s exclusive economic zone. Japan understandably views Taiwan’s security as vital for its own.

Japan is not the only once-conciliatory power to respond to Xi’s muscular revisionism with a newfound determination to bolster its defenses and forestall the emergence of a Sino-centric Indo-Pacific. Australia and India have embarked on the same path.

Moreover, a similar trend toward militarisation has emerged among Japan’s Western allies. Germany, another pacifist country,

has pledged to boost its defence spending to 2 per cent of GDP (the same level Kishida is targeting) and accept a military leadership role in Europe. The United Kingdom has already surpassed the 2 per cent-of-GDP level, yet aims to double its defence spending by 2030. The US has just hiked its already-mammoth military spending by 8 per cent. And Sweden and Finland are joining a reinvigorated NATO.

While Japan’s rearmament is more widely accepted than ever – and for good reason – it is unlikely to be enough to deter China’s expansionist creep. After all, despite having the world’s third-largest defence budget, India has been locked in a military standoff with China on the disputed Himalayan border since 2020, when stealth encroachments by the People’s Liberation Army caught it by surprise. Clashes continue to erupt intermittently, including just last month.

Unlike Russia, which launched a full frontal assault on Ukraine, China prefers salami tactics, slicing away other countries’ territories with a combination of stealth, deception, and surprise. The PLA’s so-called “Three

Warfares,” which focus on the psychological, public-opinion, and legal aspects of conflict, has enabled China to secure strategic victories in the South China Sea – from seizing the Johnson South Reef in 1988 to occupying the Scarborough Shoal in 2012 – while barely firing a shot.

Because China generally avoids armed conflict, it incurs minimal international costs for its actions, even as it unilaterally redraws the geopolitical map of the South China Sea and nibbles away at Bhutan’s borderlands, one pasture at a time. The government in Beijing managed to decimate Hong Kong’s autonomy without facing significant Western sanctions.

All this impunity has only emboldened Xi, who is now seeking to replicate the South China Sea strategy in the East China Sea by escalating maritime and aerial incursions to strengthen its claims to the Japanese-administered Senkaku Islands. It has even tried to police the waters off the Senkaku.

Japan’s response to China’s provocations has so far remained restrained, to say the least: no Japanese defence minister has so much as conducted an aerial inspection of the Senkaku, lest it anger China. Yet Japan’s embrace of Tomahawk missiles and hypersonic weapons does not necessarily represent an effective means of resisting China’s hybrid warfare, either. For that, Japan must find ways to frustrate China’s furtive efforts to alter the status quo while avoiding the risk of open combat.

Japan’s push to become more self-reliant on defence should be welcomed. Improved defence capabilities will translate into a more confident and secure Japan – and a more stable Indo-Pacific. But if Japan is to “disrupt and defeat” threats, as the national-security strategy puts it, Japanese leaders must move proactively to beat China at its own game.

The writer is an investment banker. Views are personal.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM INVESTING

The irony of the tech bubble burst

In 2021, tech companies witnessed a rollercoaster ride. The phenomenon was visible both globally as well as in India. The IPOs (Initial Public Offerings) drew a lot of attention in terms of interest as well as expectations. “Technology will run the world”, the statement created a FOMO (fear of missing out) and everybody wanted to be a part of the global growth story.

There was mushrooming of tech companies - fintech, edtech, and others - during the COVID pandemic phase. The pandemic was a blessing in disguise for tech companies and their valuations touched the sky. Software developers in their early twenties were recruited by startups at ₹40 lakh per annum CTC. This had a spillover effect on educational institutions, wherein every teenager wanted to pursue computer science and similar certifications.

Recently, what we are experiencing is the catastrophic fall in the valuations of tech firms, akin to their exponential rise. There can be multiple reasons for this. Firstly, the ‘valuations’ didn’t justify the ground reality. Secondly, the Indian market was not familiar with the business model of such companies. Finally, there were other technical reasons as well.

There has been a lot of discussion regarding the bursting of the so-called “tech bubble.” When it comes to tech companies, growth and scalability prevail over profits. Hence businesses focus on scale without being bothered about profitability. Although, we witnessed a global selloff of tech stocks, all the top 10 global companies today are tech companies.

In India, tech companies are going through a bumpy ride, but they are expected to bounce back much stronger. With the brand equity that companies like Infosys and TCS hold, it’s a matter of “when” and not “whether.” Every correction brings a new opportunity for actual investors. This tech correction provides a contrarian investment strategy from a long term perspective.

The issue with tech companies is that they involve innovative models, which are unproven. That’s their biggest strength as well as weakness. Nobody wants to invest in unproven ideas. Everyone would prefer to have exposure in proven business models.

For new-age entrepreneurs, they have a different mindset. When the product of a particular company is accepted by the market, the major focus is on scaling up. The com-

pany once enters into the maturity phase with a sizable market and robust distribution channel, they aspire for hyper growth, not just growth. The new-age founders believe that the risk of scaling up is not the risk of inefficiency but playing it too safe. Such an approach may not be sensible for traditional investors.

The best example that can be quoted here is that of Amazon. They focused on increasing its market share rather than prioritising on improving efficiency. Their expansion in the e-commerce space has created an enviable pedestal for their competitors. Hence all venture capitalists and angel investors want businesses to grow at a rapid pace irrespective of the cost involved. This prevents competitors from gaining market leadership.

Growth and scale cannot be the only parameters in making the business successful. Growth can be achieved in different forms. It is not only imperative but inevitable to add value to the business through innovation. The innovation can be in the form of technology, distribution or positioning of product. A combination of the above-mentioned parameters will create winners in the market.

To identify whether a company

will produce exponential growth or not is not an easy task. The first is the ability to predict the targeted market and how it would grow. Next, the new-age firm must evaluate if it could leverage existing networks to create a viral distribution pattern—where users bring in more users. The third factor is the ability to generate large gross margins. Finally, the firm must be able to create network advantage.

Then there are a few patterns to look for. Models based on digital and artificial intelligence are more scalable than brick and mortar model as with digital goods. Then, a platform with scale and network effect is a great combination to have. Three, free services have great power. Google and Facebook being great examples. Four, marketplaces have created many global winners, made more powerful when paired with two-sided network effect. Five, subscription model has a substantial delivery advantage. Finally, businesses based on feeds, like Twitter or Instagram can have considerable advantage.

Long-term investors could leverage these tools, principles and patterns to identify possible winners of tomorrow.

The writer is an investment banker. Views are personal.

WISDOM CORNER

- Let come what comes, let go what goes. See what remains. RAMANA MAHARSHI
- Today is your own. Tomorrow perchance may never come. SWAMI SIVANANDA
- Let your life lightly dance on the edges of Time like dew on the tip of a leaf. RABINDRANATH TAGORE

WORDSWORTH

Farb

This is a jargon word of those groups of enthusiasts who go from place to place re-enacting historic battles. It’s American in origin, but has also become known in other countries. Re-enactors are deadly serious about getting the details of uniform and equipment correct. They are dismissive of the people they call farbs who come for the fun but who don’t make the effort to get things right, the sort of people who will mix up items of uniform or carry a mobile phone or wear sunglasses. The term dates from the 1960s; an explanation for its origin was given in July 1986 in a re-enactors’ magazine, the Camp Chase Gazette, in which an early group leader, George Gorman, was said to have formed it from the beginning of “Far be it from me to criticise inauthentic uniforms ...”

LOL

Accident scene

Two men got out of their cars after they collided at an intersection. One took a flask from his pocket and said to the other, “Here, maybe you’d like a nip to calm your nerves.”



“Thanks,” he said, and took a long pull from the container. “Here, you have one, too,” he added, handing back the whiskey. “Well, I’d rather not,” said the first. “At least not until after the police have been here.”



Sourajeet Pradhan

WHEN IT COMES TO TECH COMPANIES, GROWTH AND SCALABILITY PREVAIL OVER PROFITS

Catching up with China

Sir, This refers to the article “Catching up with China economically,” Orissa POST, Jan 14. For India, the problems were achieving unity in diversity and accommodating various languages and religions in a democratic set up. On the contrary, China’s hard state enabled it to pursue a single goal of emerging as an economic power house with determination and mobilise maximum resources. Also, the primary difference between the performance of the Indian and Chinese economies has been the faster growth of capital stock and total factor productivity in China. This appears to have enabled a greater ease for labour to move out of agriculture into higher productivity sectors in China than in India. Thus, China has outdistanced India in every area of economic endeavour in the last 35 years, except in the computer software industry and agricultural research. Also, in India’s noisy political democracy the problems are compounded by the existence of multiple political parties with no coherent approach to development. However, India with better English language background has an excellent chance of catching up with China if it can increase its labour force participation rate, increase average level of education, improve quality of labour force, reduce impediments to let foreign capital participate in its development process and reduce corruption at all levels.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

A significant milestone

Sir, The University Grants Commission Chairperson, M. Jagadeesh Kumar, January 5, unveiled the draft regulations under which foreign universities will be able to set up their campuses in India for the first time. A regulatory framework allowing the entry of higher-ranked foreign universities, as envisaged in the NEP 2020, will provide an international dimension to higher education, enable Indian students to obtain foreign qualifications at affordable cost and make India an attractive global study destination. The UGC said that those universities among the top 500 in international rankings or having an excellent reputation in the field of research and academics will be eligible to open campus. They can only offer full-time programmes in physical mode and not online classes or distance learning. Last year, nearly 4.5 lakh Indian students went abroad for studies, this means a huge outflow of capital from India and this indicates that students have predilection for studying in foreign universities. There is a dire need of improving the standard of education and infrastructure of Indian universities to compete at a global level.

Bhagaban Nayak, BERTHAMPUR

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

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national

of the day quote

Modi government's sole motive is to earn money by converting religious places into tourist spots

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

India is committed to tackling the impact of climate change and supporting the efforts of developing countries in achieving their development goals through necessary technical assistance

BHUPENDER YADAV | UNION ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

The Leftists have caused irreparable damage to the Assamese community. The separatist concept was initiated by them and we are facing the brunt in every step today

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

SHORT TAKES

Former bank official arrested

New Delhi: A former assistant vice-president of a bank was arrested for allegedly transferring more than Rs 19 crore from the clients' accounts into his own fraudulently, police said Saturday. The accused has been identified as Nagendra Kumar, they said. The vigilance department of the bank filed a complaint stating that Kumar was their employee and posted at the Barakhamba Road branch, a senior police officer said.

Srinagar-Jammu highway reopens

Srinagar: The Kashmir Valley's connectivity with the rest of the country was restored Saturday with the Srinagar-Jammu national highway reopening for traffic and flight operations also resuming here a day after a snowfall, officials said. Air traffic to and from the Kashmir Valley was restored after the airport was cleared of snow and visibility improved. However, several morning flights were delayed and some were cancelled.

Man falls sick mid-air, dies

New Delhi: A Madurai-Delhi IndiGo flight was diverted to the Indore airport following a mid-air medical emergency Saturday evening. Officials said that the passenger was brought to a hospital after the flight landed at Indore airport. The doctors at the hospital declared him dead. As per the information, the passenger -- Atul Gupta, was around 60-year-old. He was on board IndiGo Airlines flight 6E-2088, and was found bleeding from the mouth as his condition deteriorated mid-way through the journey.

Southern states may lose half of their mangroves by 2070

Mangroves in the southwest and southeast of the country that cover four states -- Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh -- will be in the most vulnerable condition

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 14: By 2070, Indian mangroves will reduce and shift by around 50 per cent, especially in southern India, due to the decline in suitable habitats along the east and west coasts of India.

Mangroves are salt-tolerant trees, also called halophytes, and are adapted to live in harsh coastal conditions. They contain a complex salt filtration system and a complex root system to cope with salt



water immersion and wave action. Many mangrove forests can be recognized by their dense tangle of prop roots that make the trees appear to be standing on stilts above the water. A research conducted by Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP) in Lucknow

has revealed that mangroves on Indian coasts that act as coastal guards, have considerably shrunk due to climate change. Mangroves in the southwest and southeast of the country that cover four states -- Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh

-- will be in the most vulnerable condition. These coastlines will submerge and the mangroves in the area will degrade more, as compared to other areas.

The study says that certain regions like Chilika and Sundarbans along the east coast and Dwarka and Porbandar along the west coast of India are likely to see less reduction and landward shift by 2070 due to the differential response to precipitation and sea level change in different parts of the Indian coastline.

A team of five researchers led by BSIP senior scientist Jyoti Srivastava carried out the research on two mangrove species, namely Rhizophora mucronata and Avicennia officinalis which dominate India's coastline.

The research has been published in science journal, Elsevier: Ecological Informatics. "In our study, we took two mangrove species that are dominating the Indian

coastline and then we projected and mapped the distribution of these plant species in our country's coastline in past, present and future climate change scenarios," said senior scientist Jyoti Srivastava who led the research.

The BSIP team first collected all the available mangrove fossils records that included a collection of pollen records of the two species from around 6,000 years ago, to know how these species survived and what its distribution was.

The scientists modelled the distribution of these plants in the past with the help of past climate data and validated it through several techniques. Going through the model projection and past records, they found the two mangrove species had comparatively widespread distribution in the Indian coastline and were flourishing well. Thereafter, the team compared

it with present mangrove data that was collected through field surveys in mangrove areas along the Godavari, Kaveri and Mahanadi deltas. After analysing both, present and past, data in the wake of the climate change situation, the scientific institute found that at present there is too much mangrove degradation.

Based on it, the team projected the future mangrove distribution using several future climate change scenario data that indicated that under the highest global warming scenario by 2070, around 50 per cent of the mangroves will either vanish or shift from the coastline. "Decline in mangroves at present in comparison to the past is due to the rise in temperature with a decline in precipitation. A decline in temperature leads to high saline conditions along the coastlines making mangroves vulnerable," said Srivastava.

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A former RBI governor walks in Bharat Jodo Yatra, BJP attacks him. A retired Army general does - he's maligned. Now a former finance secretary who joined is booked by the CBI. Modi's FDI policy - Fear, Defamation and Intimidation - is at work here. This is the mindset of a coward. But BJI will roll on

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS LEADER

BAN CONTINUES

For the 16th straight year, residents of Fatehpura village in Banaskantha are celebrating the harvest festival of Makar Sankranti without kite flying, an important aspect of the tradition



Armed Forces personnel during rehearsals for the Republic Day Parade 2023 at Kartavya Path in New Delhi

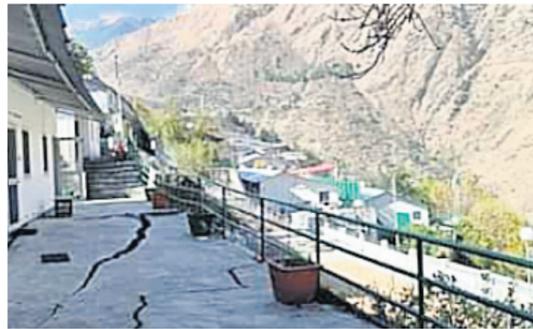
PTI PHOTO

Govt bodies get gag order on Joshimath crisis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Joshimath/Dehradun, Jan 14: Several state-run institutions including ISRO have been directed by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the Uttarakhand government not to interact with media or share information on social media on the Joshimath situation without prior approval.

The direction came after satellite images released by the Indian Space Research Organisation showed the rapid rate of subsidence in Joshimath between Dec 27 and January 8, fuelling concerns over the situation, even as Uttarakhand Minister Dhan Singh Rawat said Saturday that the ISRO images have been withdrawn. Rawat said ISRO has not issued an official statement on the basis of the images. "I had seen the satellite images of Joshimath on ISRO's website. I spoke to ISRO's Director and asked him why he is not issuing an official statement in this regard. Now I am told the images have been withdrawn," he said.



"Things are returning to normal in Joshimath. No one needs to panic," the minister, who visited Joshimath to take stock of the situation there, said. In its communication to the heads of organisations and institutes on Friday, the NDMA said it has observed that various government institutions are releasing data related to the subject on social media platforms and also they are interacting with the media with their own interpretation of the situation. The statements on Joshimath

are creating confusion not only among affected residents but also among citizens of the country, the NDMA said. It said people associated with them should not interact with the media and share data on social media regarding the ground subsidence in Joshimath.

The NDMA asked the organisations to sensitise its experts about the matter and added they should refrain from posting anything on media platforms until the final report of the expert group is released by the NDMA.

The statements on Joshimath are creating confusion not only among affected residents but also among citizens of the country, the NDMA said

In a similar communication, the Uttarakhand government conveyed to the organisations that some of the institutions and agencies are publishing and uploading information or reports about Joshimath without taking due permission from competent authorities which is adversely impacting the ground situation as well as triggering panic among the community. The media is also propagating this blatantly, it said. The communication said the organisations, before publishing or uploading any such reports or information, should obtain prior approval either from the respective central ministries or the Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority.

Gadkari threatened Car carries man on bonnet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagpur, Jan 14: Security was beefed up at Union minister Nitin Gadkari's residence and office here in Maharashtra Saturday after a man claiming to be a member of the Dawood Ibrahim gang made threatening calls and demanded Rs 100 crore, police said.

The caller has been identified and a crime branch team has been sent to track him down in Karnataka, a police official said Saturday night.

Three threat calls were received on the landline number of Gadkari's Public Relations office in Khamla area between 11.25 am to 12.30 pm, following which security was strengthened at the



home and office of the Nagpur MP who belongs to BJP.

"The caller told the phone operator that he is a member of the D gang and demanded Rs 100 crore from Gadkari. He threatened to harm the minister with a bomb if his demand is not met," he said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: The police have registered a case against the driver of a vehicle after a video of a man clinging to the bonnet of the moving car was widely circulated on social media, officials said Saturday.

The accused, identified as Ishant Sapolia, has been arrested, they said. In the video, a person is seen on the bonnet of the white coloured car, they said.

Police found that a car had brushed passed another four-wheeler at Ring Road in Rajouri Garden following which there were a quarrel between two people -- Jaiprakash and Ishant Sapolia, a



senior police officer said.

Sapolia along with another person named Harvinder Kohli who was with Jaiprakash and was seen clinging onto the bonnet of the car, received minor injuries during the scuffle.

Both were sent to GGS hospital

for medical examination, Deputy Commissioner of Police (west) Ghanshyam Bansal said.

During the analysis of CCTV footage, police found that Kohli is a property dealer and was clinging onto the bonnet of the car after the scuffle, the DCP said.

Engineer suspended for trying to touch Murmu's feet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jodhpur (Rajasthan), Jan 14: A Rajasthan government engineer has been suspended for breaching the security protocol of President Droupadi Murmu and attempting to touch her feet during an event on January 4.

The Public Health Engineering Department suspended the engineer on Friday following the intervention of the Home Ministry.

"Amba Siyol, a Junior Engineer with the PHED, had violated the protocol during inaugural programme of the Scout Guide Jamboree in Rohet on January 4 by making an attempt to touch the feet of the president, so invoking the powers under Rajasthan Civil Service Rule, she is suspended with immediate effect," read the order by the chief engineer (administration), PHED. Siyol was at the venue to take care of the water arrangements. But breaching the security grid of the president, she managed to reach the frontline of officials who were there to welcome the president.

In an abrupt move, she stepped forward and tried to touch her feet, but was stopped by the president's security. The local police had let her off following by a formal inquiry.

The Union Home Ministry took a serious note of the incident considering it to be a serious lapse in her security and sought a report from the Rajasthan Police.

2 quakes, 1 warning: Himachal sits on shaky ground

CLIMATE CHANGE IS ALREADY HAVING A DRASTIC AND DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE FRAGILE ECOSYSTEM OF THE HIMALAYAN STATE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shimla, Jan 14: Two back-to-back earthquakes, one of a medium intensity measuring 3.2 magnitude on the Richter scale, early Saturday rocked Himachal Pradesh where climate change is already having a drastic and detrimental effect.

Also indiscriminate drilling of hills for constructing tunnels is forcing rural communities, mainly in fragile and eco-sensitive zones of Chamba, Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti districts, to raise clamour against upcoming hydropower stations with their houses developing cracks and natural water resources disappearing.

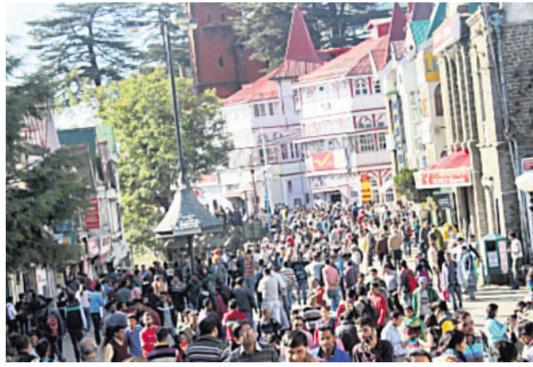
In recent years, seepage in the Chamera III project that washed off Mokhar village in Chamba district, the bursting of reservoir of Aleo-II project in Kullu district at its first testing, and the seepages in the Karchham Wangtoo tunnel are indicators of a disaster waiting to happen. Currently, the 180 megawatts (MW) Bajoli Holi hydropower project in Chamba has been facing anger from the tribal Gaddi community as they fear the

project is posing threat to their houses and fields owing to cracks and seepage in private and public land. The question is: Has the state made scientific assessment of disaster-prone areas, studied geological and hydrological impacts for strict compliance with environmental and safety norms and prepared exigency plans?

These frightening realities have been mentioned several times in performance audits by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) that is to ascertain the state's preparedness.

According to Himdhara, a state-based environment action group, the sheer negligence is evident at two levels – firstly, the failure in ensuring compliance with environmental and safety norms by hydropower project authorities and the government, and secondly, the negligence towards the very impacts of unregulated hydropower development.

Local NGOs and green activists are also demanding that international financial institutions must be held accountable for their financing of disastrous hydropower



projects in the Himalayas.

Several shortcomings surfaced during the crisis, man-made or natural, admit government officials. An official, requesting anonymity as he is not authorised to speak to the media, told IANS in case of disaster or natural calamity coordination among state and Central agencies involved in relief and rescue operations is almost a miss.

"No nodal officer is appointed at the state level to coordinate and monitor the operations," he remarked.

Also there is no mechanism for reaching out to the affected people in the shortest possible time and no

round-the-clock dedicated helpline service to provide information regarding post-disaster actions.

The hills of Himachal Pradesh, especially in Kullu, Shimla and Kinnaur districts, are prone to natural disasters like flash floods, cloudbursts and landslides.

Official data show more than 1,500 people have been killed in flash floods in the state in the past 20 years. Besides the construction of mega hydropower projects, roads and large-scale unregulated mining are generating mountains of debris, responsible for increasing the magnitude of the natural calamity.

Often the debris is haphazardly dumped on hill slopes, and eventually finds its way into rivers and streams, raising the bed level.

The carrying capacity of rivers and streams is reduced and during heavy rain they often change their course, causing widespread destruction downstream.

State Disaster Management Department Director Sudesh Kumar Mokhta told IANS the state is prepared to handle any exigency relating to landslides.

When asked about the state's preparedness and the need for an updated disaster plan in the wake of the sinking town of Joshimath in neighbouring Himalayan state Uttarakhand, he replied: "We don't foresee any exigency like Joshimath in this (Himachal Pradesh) state."

But the question is: Like Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh has also been undergoing unplanned construction of road networks and hydropower projects.

The ground is sinking in several villages and towns of Himachal Pradesh's Chamba and Kinnaur, a wake-up call for authorities as the robust forecasting system is a miss in the state.

A devastating earthquake in 1905 severely damaged property in the Kangra region, including St. John's Church where many British officials were buried, and claimed over 20,000 lives.

In a first, Rajasthan brings policy for blindness control

The policy has been introduced with an aim to bring light in the lives of more than three lakh people suffering from visual impairment in the state

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Jan 14: In a first in the country the Rajasthan government has implemented a policy for blindness control with the objective of 'Right to Sight'.

The Department of Medical and Health, on the direction of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, released the policy document for prevention of blindness Friday.

The policy has been introduced with an aim to bring light in the lives of more than three lakh people suffering from visual impairment in the state. The prevalence rate of blindness in the country was 1.1 per cent in 2020 and work would be done to bring it down to 0.3 per cent through the blindness control policy.

Under the policy, the Rajasthan government will mandatorily run Keratoplasty Centres and Eye Banks at all the government medical colleges. Also, cornea collected by private organisations and NGOs getting financial help from the government will have to be provided to the government institutions on



priority. Efforts to eliminate visual impairment would be made in the districts in collaboration with voluntary organisations, trusts, hospitals and other charitable institutions working in this field.

In this regard, the state government will carry out a campaign for eye donation on an extensive level along with the private institutions. Special training will be imparted to eye experts, eye surgeons, post-graduate students, counsellors working for eye donation and eye assistants.

Medical and Health Department Secretary Prithvi said that public awareness and various technical improvement activities related to curing blindness will be organised under this policy.

Guv's attack on Gehlot govt sparks fresh row

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Jan 14: Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra's veiled attack on Gehlot government for continuing Assembly session without proroguing it ever since the Pilot rebellion, has triggered a fresh tussle.

During the Sachin Pilot camp's rebellion, there was a dispute between the government and the Raj Bhavan over the convening of the Assembly session in July 2020.

Chief Minister Gehlot had staged a sit-in at the Raj Bhavan along with supporting MLAs. Following a few discussions, the approval to call the Assembly session was given.

After the incident, instead of proroguing the Assembly session, it is continuing.

As per convention, the Assembly is prorogued after its session. However, as the session continues without proroguing, the Governor Thursday said that a practice of calling the Assembly Session directly without proroguing the House is dangerous for a democratic system.

The power to summon the Assembly session on the recommendation of the state government is vested with the Governor, Mishra said while addressing valedictory session of the 83rd All India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC) here. "Due to this, legislators do not get additional opportunities for the prescribed number of questions and



Governor Kalraj Mishra has said that a practice of calling Assembly Session directly without proroguing the House is dangerous for a democratic system

constitutional procedure.

"There is a need to pay serious attention to the formal prorogation of the Legislative Assemblies and the convening of a new session," Mishra said.

"The Governor is not a person. He is a constitutional body. When he is satisfied on the constitutional grounds that the ordinance is justified, then only he gives approval to it." This attack on the Gehlot government in an election year has raised many eyebrows. "Let's

wait and watch...there might be some fresh confrontations coming in election year," he added.

Meanwhile, the next Assembly session is starting from January 23 wherein a budget will be passed in this session.

Pilot has announced his back to back tours from January 16-20 and there is a party's chintan camp also scheduled for January 16 and 17. So the political temperature is expected to soar, party sources said.

Tourist footfall up in snow-clad Shimla

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, Jan 14: Tourists made a beeline to resorts in Shimla, Manali and Kufri after a fresh snowfall, increasing the occupancy in hotels to almost 70 per cent.

As many as 7,164 vehicles had entered Shimla through Shoghi border in 12 hours till 8 pm Friday.

The occupancy in hotels is expected to further rise by 10 per cent by the evening, vice president of Shimla Hotel and Restaurant Association Prince Kukreja said.

The police have advised the tourists to keep in mind the heavy inflow of traffic to Shimla before planning their trip, drive safely at slippery points and call 0177-2812344 or 112 in case of emergency.

Slippery road conditions after rain and sleet caused great inconvenience for pedestrians and people came out only after the snow was cleared.

Manali received 23 cm of snow followed by 16 cm in Khadralla, 16 cm in Shillaro, 12 cm in Kufri, 10 cm in Bharmour, 6 cm each in Shimla and Gondla, 4 cm each in Dalhousie and Kalpa and 3 cm each in Hansa and Keylong.

The meteorological station here has predicted dry weather in the region for the next four days and cautioned of dense fog and cold waves in low hills from January 14 to 17.

"We were delighted to see snow in the morning and are heading to Kufri to enjoy it," a tourist from Delhi Shekhar said

About 250 roads including 177 in Lahaul and Spiti, 21 in Shimla, 14 in Chamba, 11 in Kinnaur, 10 each in Mandi and Kullu, two in Kangra districts and four national high-



An earthmover is used to clear snow from the road near IGMC hospital following heavy snowfall, in Shimla, Saturday

ways are closed for vehicular traffic while 623 transformers are disrupted in the state.

Keylong in tribal Lahaul and Spiti was coldest at night with a low of minus 7.9 degrees Celsius followed by minus 2.6 degrees in Kalpa

Meanwhile, tourist destinations of Narkanda recorded a low of minus 2.5 degrees, while it was minus 0.8 degrees in Kufri, minus

0.2 degrees in Manali, 0.5 degrees in Dalhousie, 0.6 degrees in Shimla, 5.7 degrees in Kasauli and 6.4 degrees in Dharamshala.

The agriculture department official said snowfall and rains have ended the dry spell. With this, the rain deficit in January has reduced to 68 per cent, continuous rains could reduce the loss of wheat and vegetables in the rainfed area from 20-25 per cent to 10-15 per cent.

Himachal received almost 100 per cent deficit rains in December 2022. Arrangements have been made to provide uninterrupted civic services in view of snowfall and the capital town has been divided into five sectors headed by nodal officers who have been directed to hold meetings with the concerned officers of various departments to chalk out a plan to handle the post-snowfall situation.

HP to give ₹10,000 apparel allowance to orphans, elderly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, Jan 14: An apparel allowance worth ₹10,000 per person will be provided to the inmates of orphanages and homes for the elderly, destitute women and deaf and dumb children annually, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said Saturday.

The chief minister made the announcement during a visit to an old age home in Basantpur in Shimla.

A sum of ₹5,000 would be provided for summer wear and ₹5,000 for winter clothing, he said and interacted with the inmates and enquired about the facilities being provided to them.

He also directed the authorities concerned to celebrate major festivals with the inmates of old age homes, destitute children and women so that they feel a sense of belonging.

He said the state government has also decided to provide ₹500 as festive allowance to all inmates of orphanages, homes for destitute women and those living in old age homes so that they could also celebrate the festivals as like other people.

Illegal mining may lead to many Joshimaths in Raj

ILLEGAL MINING IN RAJASTHAN, WHICH HAS A RICH RESERVE OF COPPER, LEAD, ZINC, SILICA SAND, LIMESTONE, MARBLE AND GYPSUM IN THE ARAVALLI MOUNTAIN RANGE, HAS DESTROYED SEVERAL HILLS OVER THE YEARS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Jan 14: What Joshimath is seeing today will be seen in Rajasthan somewhere after 25 years if the present menace of illegal mining remains unchecked in the desert state, veteran environmentalists say while warning of a "disaster which is out of expectation."

"There are many hills which have gone missing in the state. In fact, on the other hand, hills have been created on plains by the locals by dumping garbage," Congress MLA Bharat Singh quipped while mentioning the insensitivity of people engaged in illegal mining in the state. Singh has been vocal on the issue of illegal sand mining and has been attacking his own government. He recently wrote a letter to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and demanded the dismissal of Mining Minister Pramod Jain Bhaya, terming him 'land mafia'.

Speaking to IANS, Singh said, "Joshimath story will be repeated in Rajasthan too. It is sad that governments realise the gravity of the issue when the situation goes out of control... The illegal mining in the state has thrown many challenges out. However, everyone seems to be sitting with folded hands. They will wake up from slumber when disaster happens."

The Congress MLA further said, "The entire ecology has changed in the region. The sad part of the story is that such facts are being reviewed under its economic ambit, keeping monetary prospects in mind and hence everyone has joined hands in this illegal act... Unitedly, they are engulfing hills."

Singh said that he will protest in the Mining Minister's constituency January 23, the day when the Assembly session starts in Jaipur.

Meanwhile, environmental activist Mahendra Kachhwa, said,



"Illegal mining and Rajasthan have become synonymous. In fact, the mafia has not even spared forests and entered the core areas of forests, threatening the tiger breed. There has been massive destruction in Ranthambore in core tiger conservation areas... Many illegal mines are running in areas spread

over 1,100 hectares of land."

Like Singh, he also believes that Rajasthan will see Joshimath-like situation in the future. "What we are facing in Joshimath, after 25 years you will see the same situation here as encroachment and mining are increasing and the area is turning into concrete jungle."

Babulal Jaju, another environmentalist said, "Illegal mining has brought the state to a pathetic situation. It (illegal mining) is going on in almost all districts like Bharatpur, Alwar, Rajsamand and many more. Rivers have dried up because of this malpractice. Sand has been dug out from rivers openly

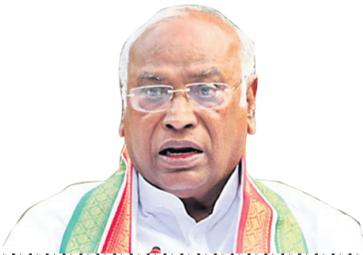
under the nose of officials which has affected the aquatic life."

He warned: "Joshimath story will surely be repeated in Rajasthan if there is no full stop to illegal mining. The reason behind Joshimath story is greed and lust for unwanted development. They want to turn nature into business. Same story is being repeated here. There is greed for uncontrolled development, which will become cancer and will leave people crying."

In 2018, the Supreme Court referred to a central empowered committee report that 31 hills or hillocks have vanished in the state's Aravalli area. The disappearance of hills in Rajasthan could be one of the reasons for the rise in pollution levels in Delhi, the apex court had said.

Earlier, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report also said Rajasthan's mines department granted, renewed and extended mining leases violating Supreme Court's orders against mining in the Aravalli mountain range.

Illegal mining in Rajasthan, which has a rich reserve of copper, lead, zinc, rock phosphate, soapstone, silica sand, limestone, marble and gypsum in the Aravalli mountain range, has destroyed several hills over the years.



Instead of solving the Joshimath crisis and finding solutions to the problems of people, government agencies are putting a ban on ISRO report and stopping its officials from interacting with the media. Narendra Modi ji, 'Do Not Shoot the Messenger'
MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

DELHI GETS RESPITE

Delhiites got respite from bone chilling cold on Saturday with the minimum temperature recorded at 10.2 degree Celsius, three notches above the season's average



of the day quote

We are a seven-party coalition and each constituent has a fixed share. Those whose ministers vacated posts may be accommodated accordingly. We may have some more from the Congress as well

NITISH KUMAR | BIHAR CM

Haryana's debt stood at ₹3.25 lakh crore plus other liabilities of ₹1.22 lakh crore at present. If the government feels that this figure is not correct, then it should immediately issue a white paper

BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA | CONGRESS LEADER

The Congress is politically bankrupt. Congress is a gateway to dirty politics. Let them keep their house in order first

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI | KARNATAKA CM

SHORT TAKES

Delhi cop killed

New Delhi: A car mowed down an on-duty Delhi Police Sub-Inspector (SI) who was scheduled to retire on January 31, an official said Saturday. The accident occurred at around 8.30 p.m. on Friday night on the ring road between Raj Ghat and Shanti Van. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Shweta Chauhan said that SI Lator Singh, 59, had been posted at Chandni Mahal police station and he was on duty at the time of incident.

Elephant dies

Chamarajanagar (Karnataka): A farmer has been booked in connection with the death of a wild elephant due to electrocution in Chamarajanagar district of the state Saturday. The incident had taken place in Doddabara village in the Hedyiyala Forest range near Bandipur. The accused farmer is identified as Gopal.

Ten injured

Satara: A tempo carrying around three dozen labourers and some children plunged into a valley near Mugdev village in the Mahabaleshwar hills, officials said here Saturday. As per preliminary information, eight workers and two children are said have suffered injuries in the accident. The tempo was ferrying workers from Akola and Buldhana districts for work in Satara. The two minors who have sustained grievous injuries were being rushed to a Satara hospital for treatment.

Body found

Kochi: The body of a 42-year-old woman lawyer was found in a decomposed state at her flat in Thrissur Saturday. As Namitha Shobana, who worked at a law firm in Thrissur, was not reporting for her work since Monday and not receiving calls, police was informed. When the police reached her flat, her neighbours complained of foul smell emanating from her house. The police broke open the front door and found her decomposed body lying in the bathroom.

TMC leader held

Kolkata: A Trinamool Congress leader in West Bengal's Alipurduar district has been arrested by sleuths of the state's forest department while attempting to smuggle a pangolin. The arrested person was identified as James Borogao (53), who is the deputy chief of the Khoyardanga-2 village panchayat. A pangolin was also recovered from his possession.

5 held for gangrape of student in TN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Jan 14: Five persons accused of gangrape of a college student on the outskirts of Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu, have been arrested and jailed on Friday.

The horrendous incident occurred on Thursday night when the five accused chanced upon the 19-year old girl and her boyfriend at a secluded spot near the Bengaluru-Puducherry outer ring road. The spot is frequented by local anti-social elements who consume liquor and indulge in other such activities. The temple town of Kanchipuram is located 85 km away from the state capital, Chennai.



The couple who had reportedly reached the spot at around 7 p.m. on Thursday, were noticed by two of the accused men who were consuming liquor nearby. The duo were then joined by three more persons. Holding the boyfriend at knife point, the accused dragged the girl a little distance away and all five of them raped her by turns before escaping. "The accused threatened to murder the couple if the girl resisted them," Kanchipuram Deputy Superintendent of Police P. Julius Caesar stated.

The couple managed to escape the spot and informed their families.

CPI(M)-Cong alliance in Tripura unholy: CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, Jan 14: A day after the CPI(M) and the Congress announced that they would fight the upcoming Tripura assembly elections together, BJP leader and Chief Minister Manik Saha Saturday termed the alliance as "unholy" and said people will give a befitting reply to the two-party coalition.

He also alleged that they allied with each other "for survival" in the northeastern state, where the two parties were considered arch-rivals. "It was strange to see the last night's development between the CPI(M) and the Congress, and leaders of the two parties were seen embracing each other. CPI(M) had tortured hundreds of Congress workers, and now leaders of the two parties are holding each other's hands for survival," Saha told reporters on the sidelines of a government programme.

In a major shake-up in the political arena of the northeastern state, the alliance between the two parties was announced after AICC general secretary Ajoy Kumar held a meeting with CPI(M) state secretary Jitendra Choudhury on Friday evening. Left Front convener Narayan Kar was also present at the meeting.



■ THE ANNOUNCEMENT MARKS A TECTONIC SHIFT IN THE STATE'S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE, AS THE CONGRESS WAS THE MAIN OPPOSITION TO THE CPI(M)-LED LEFT FRONT, WHICH RULED TRIPURA FOR 25 YEARS BEFORE BEING ROUTED BY THE BJP IN 2018

■ THE POLLS TO THE 60-MEMBER ASSEMBLY IN TRIPURA ARE DUE THIS YEAR

The announcement marks a tectonic shift in the state's political landscape, as the Congress was the main opposition to the CPI(M)-led Left Front, which ruled Tripura for 25 years before being routed by the BJP in 2018. Saha also said, "This is an unholy alliance...the people knew the tacit understanding between the CPI (M) and the Congress. They will give them a befitting reply in the election." The polls to the 60-member assembly in Tripura are due this year. He also rejected the allegations of shortage of food, shelter and livelihood in Tripura and said the opposition parties don't see the all-around development, which

is taking place in the northeastern state.

"They need to undergo cataract surgery immediately to see the peace, prosperity and development in Tripura," he said. Former chief minister Biplab Kumar Deb also criticised the CPI(M) and the Congress for joining hands to fight against the BJP ahead of the assembly elections.

"What we saw last night confirms that the CPI(M) maintains good relations with the Congress. The Left party had ruled the state for 25 years because of the tacit understanding between the Congress and the CPI(M)," Deb, now a Rajya Sabha MP, said.

PM'S SECURITY BREACH

Garland sent for FSL test

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hubballi (Karnataka) Jan 14: The garland gifted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi by a minor boy during his recent road show here has been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) for testing, police said on Saturday.

According to sources, the garland was subjected to detailed analysis at the FSL, to ensure that it did not contain any harmful chemical and poisonous substances.

However, the tests have confirmed the absence of harmful or suspicious substances in it. A report in this regard has been submitted to the state police department and the Special Protection Group (SPG).

The boy, Kunal Dhongadi, had breached security to garland the Prime Minister. Later, he had described PM Modi as god.

"He is not an ordinary human being. I am his fan and want to meet him" he said.

He further stated that he is in love with PM Modi and wanted to take a closer look at him.

"I want to invite him home. I am inspired by his speeches. I had come to see PM Modi with my grandfather, uncle and a two-and-half-year old child. We had got the RSS dress for the kid," he said.

"We wanted the child to garland the PM Modi but it could not



According to sources, the garland was subjected to detailed analysis at the FSL to ensure that it did not contain any harmful chemical and poisonous substances

happen. So, I initiated to garland PM Modi and I also wanted to shake hands with him. But, the police prevented me," he said.

Former legislator Ashok Katawe stated that the boy was an energetic person.

There is no violation with PM Modi's security due to his act. He is a diehard fan of PM Modi. However, he made a mistake by breaching the security of PM Modi.

He should be pardoned. The boy doesn't have an idea about police security, sensitivity of the issue and consequences, he added.

Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi stated that there will be huge security cover for the PM. The boy had breached the security to garland PM Modi. According to our information, he did it out of love for the PM.

SHRADDHA WALKAR CASE

Bones cut with saw, reveals autopsy

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 14: A saw was used to cut up the bones of Shraddha Walkar, killed by her live-in partner in May last year; the autopsy report has revealed.

The Delhi Police have got the forensic analysis report of her 23 bones which were recovered during the course of investigation. According to sources, it is called Osteological study or biophysical study of the bone pieces which help the police in such cases.

It has been learnt in the report that her bones were cut with the help of a saw and similar sharp edged weapon. The post-mortem analysis was conducted in AIIMS on Tuesday. "The post-mortem analysis has suggested that her



bones were cut with the help of a saw. Now we will submit this report before Saket Court," the source said. Walkar and Aftab Amin Poonawalla had met through the dating app 'Bumble' in 2018. They had come to Delhi on May 8, and shifted to Chattarpur area on May 15.

Illegal construction pushing Darjeeling hills into crisis

Recently, in Darjeeling town alone, as many as 132 illegal constructions have been identified by the Darjeeling Municipality, where the height restriction of 11.5 metres has been violated

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Jan 14: The recent crisis at Joshimath in Uttarakhand due to land subsidence seems to have been coming as a caution bell for the hills of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong in North Bengal.

The main reason behind a probable Joshimath-like crisis in North Bengal hills will be the same, which is unbridled real estate developments that are often violating the permitted limit of the height of any construction in the hills.

As per the West Bengal Municipal Act, in the hills of North Bengal, non-real estate construction should

not exceed 11.5 metres, while relaxation has been given in case of certain government buildings where the height can be extended up to 13 metres.

However, that restriction seems to have remained in pen and paper, which is evident from recent statistics. Recently, in Darjeeling town alone, as many as 132 illegal constructions have been identified by the Darjeeling Municipality where the height restriction of 11.5 metres has been violated.

In fact, the earlier Aja Edwards founded Hamro Party controlled board in Darjeeling Municipality started the process of demolition



of some of these illegal constructions. That stopped, however, after political turmoil started in the hills, following six elected councillors of the Hamro Party shifting to the opposition Anit Thapa-led Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha (BGPM) and Trinamool

Congress alliance, with the latter forming the board.

According to Ajay Edwards, his party had to pay the price of taking action against such illegal constructions. He said, "Some of our councillors were allured by the opposition funded by the illegal builders

and the entire process of action against the illegal constructions stopped. The pressure of buildings of height beyond the prescribed limit is increasing on the hills.

"The state government will have to look into the matter. Otherwise, the entire region might face a Joshimath-like crisis," Edwards said. Anit Thapa, who is also the chairman of the Gorkhaland Territorial Council (GTA), however, rubbished the allegations and claimed that with the opposition alliance taking control of the Darjeeling Municipality, the new board will strictly enforce the building rules in the hills.

"We are determined to take action against the erring builders and protect the hills," Thapa said. Explaining the danger behind construction of buildings beyond the authorised height limit for the hills, Kolkata-based civil engineer

Pradipta Mitra said that the higher the building, the more is the pressure on the soil on which it is constructed. "The soil construction in the hills is extremely loose and is also vulnerable to natural vagaries like earthquakes or rains, which loosen the soil structure further," Mitra said.

"So, in the hills, real estate development will have to ensure minimum load or pressure on the soil on which it is constructed. And to ensure that, the height of the buildings should be maintained at the minimum possible level. It is unfortunate that often these height restrictions are violated because of the builder-administration-politician nexus, and hence tragedies happen," he added.

Mitra also pointed out another factor, which is shifting from the practice of wooden constructions to concrete constructions.

EXCISE POLICY CASE

CBI TEAM 'VISITS' SISODIA'S OFFICE

While city government sources said that the CBI team was conducting 'searches' at Sisodia's office at Delhi Secretariat, agency officials maintained that the CBI 'visited' the premises to collect documents and no 'raid or search' was being carried out

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: A CBI team descended on the office of Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Saturday to seek some records related to the Delhi Excise policy case, according to agency officials.

While city government sources said that the CBI team was conducting 'searches' at Sisodia's office at Delhi Secretariat, agency officials maintained that the CBI "visited" the premises to collect documents and no "raid or search" was being carried out.

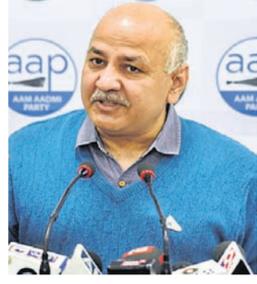
Taking to Twitter, Sisodia claimed the agency did not find anything against him during previous raids and this time too it will be the same as he has done nothing wrong. "The CBI has again reached my office today. They are welcome. They conducted raids at my house, searched the locker, made enquiries in my village. Nothing was found then and nothing will be found now because I have done no wrong. Have worked honestly for the education of Delhi's children," the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader said.

Agency officials said that "no search or raid is taking place at the office of the Deputy Chief Minister by the CBI".

They said the team may have gone to collect some records in the excise policy case or seek clarifications.

The CBI probe into the alleged excise scam was recommended last year by Delhi LG VK Saxena. The agency had registered a case against several persons including Sisodia.

The CBI had also questioned the AAP leader in connection



with the case for several hours besides conducting raids at his official residence.

The agency filed its first charge sheet against seven accused on November 25 last year.

Sisodia did not figure in the document. Officials said investigators have kept the probe open into the alleged role of Sisodia, a senior AAP leader, and others named in the First Information Report (FIR).

Arrested businessmen Vijay Nair and Abhishek Boinpally were among the seven accused named in the charge sheet.

"Further investigation is continuing to investigate the role of accused named in the FIR and other persons on various allegations including conspiracies with other licensees, money trails, cartelisation and larger conspiracies in the formulation and implementation of the Excise Policy," the CBI spokesperson had said in a statement.

It is alleged the Delhi government's policy to grant licences to liquor traders was influenced in favour of certain dealers who had allegedly paid bribes for it, a charge strongly refuted by the AAP.

international

of the day quote

The United States and Pakistan have a long-standing defence partnership and I look forward to working with General Munir

LLOYD AUSTIN | US DEFENCE SECRETARY

We're modernising our military alliance, building on Japan's historic increase in defence spending and new National Security Strategy. Let me be crystal clear: The United States is fully, thoroughly, completely committed to the alliance and, more importantly, to the defence of Japan

JOE BIDEN | US PRESIDENT

To be brutally frank about it, we have a system, but they are not working. The smuggling here in this country is absolutely rampant. So it does not matter to me how many systems we have in place; they do not work

FERDINAND MARCOS | PHILIPPINE PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

42 killed in Peru's political protests

Lima: A total of 41 civilians and one police officer have died during the ongoing nationwide protests in Peru between supporters of former President Pedro Castillo and security forces that have lasted more than a month, the Attorney General's Office said in a statement. In the wave of protests, especially in the southern region, 531 people were injured, including 355 civilians and 176 National Police agents, while 329 people have been arrested, Xinhua news agency quoted the statement issued late Friday as saying.

3 Pak cops dead in cross-firing

Peshawar: A group of heavily-armed terrorists from the Pakistani Taliban attacked a police station in the suburbs of the restive northwestern city of Peshawar Saturday and killed three policemen, including a senior police officer, authorities said. The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terror group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Elon Musk faces US fraud trial

San Francisco: Elon Musk, the CEO of electric car giant Tesla, will face trial Tuesday over allegedly manipulating the stock market with a tweet after a federal judge rejected his request to move the case out of California. The case dates back to August 2018 when Musk tweeted that he had sufficient funding to take Tesla private, causing a whirlwind in the company's share price.

Israeli forces kill two Palestinians

Ramallah (West Bank): Israeli troops shot and killed two Palestinian men during a military raid in the occupied West Bank early Saturday, while a third Palestinian died of wounds sustained in a separate Israeli raid nearly two weeks earlier, according to officials.

Protest in Germany

Erkelenz (Germany): Thousands of people demonstrated in persistent rain Saturday to protest the clearance and demolition of a village in western Germany that is due to make way for the expansion of a coal mine. Swedish climate campaigner Greta Thunberg joined the demonstrators as they protested the clearance of Luetzerath, walking through the nearby village of Keyenberg and past muddy fields. Protesters chanted "Every village stays" and "You are not alone."



On January 19, the Indian foreign minister is expected to visit and we will continue to have debt restructuring talks with India

RANIL WICKREMESINGHE | SRI LANKA PRESIDENT

PASSPORTS TO BECOME MORE EXPENSIVE IN UK

For the first time in five years, the UK government is set to introduce new passport fees for all applications starting February 2023. The price changes, which will come into effect February 2, will affect those who are renewing or applying for a new passport



Covid: China reports almost 60K deaths

SINCE THE VIRUS BROKE, CHINA WAS CAGEY ABOUT REVEALING THE NUMBER OF CASES, ESPECIALLY THE DEATHS IN VIEW OF THE POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Jan 14: China Saturday reported nearly 60,000 Coronavirus deaths in hospitals across the country over the last 30 days, amid criticism from the WHO that Beijing was heavily under-reporting the magnitude of the pandemic. The death toll included 59,938 Covid-19 related deaths at hospitals from December 8 to January 12, the National Health Commission said Saturday, official media here reported.

Jiao Yahui, director of the National Health Commission's medical affairs department, said medical institutes recorded 5,503 deaths as a result of respiratory failure triggered by Covid-19 infections and 64,435 fatalities with underlying conditions, such as cancer or cardiovascular diseases, combined with Covid-19.

The average age of those who died was 80.3, and 90 per cent of the fatalities were aged 65 or over; the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

With this, China's official death toll climbed to 65,210 since the coronavirus first broke out in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019.

China has stopped providing daily Covid statistics since abandoning its strict zero-Covid strategy China also reopened its borders to international travellers January 8 after nearly three years. The World Health Organisation (WHO)



- NEARLY 60,000 COVID-RELATED HOSPITAL DEATHS REPORTED
- CHINA HAS BEEN CRITICISED FOR UNDER-REPORTING COVID DEATHS
- OFFICIAL SAYS EMERGENCY HOSPITALISATIONS HAVE PEAKED
- TRAVEL RECOVERING AHEAD OF LUNAR NEW YEAR HOLIDAY

said Wednesday that China is "heavily underreporting" the number of Covid-19 deaths from the current wave of infections sweeping the country. "WHO still believes that deaths are heavily underreported from China. This is in relation to the definitions that are used but also to the need for doctors and those reporting in the public health system to be encouraged to report these cases and not discouraged," Michael Ryan, executive director of WHO Health Emergencies Programme said in Geneva. The new death toll figures come

as videos and reports in the social media showed that hospitals, morgues and crematoriums were being overwhelmed with bodies. Families where deaths have taken place told the media that they were simply asked to leave the bodies at the morgues without mentioning dates for cremation and they would be handed over the ashes after cremation. The stringent zero-Covid policy, which was lifted last month after rare anti-government protests against President Xi Jinping, who was re-elected for an unprecedented third term in October last year. As soon as the restrictions

China, Bhutan agree to resolve border dispute



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Jan 14: China and Bhutan have reached a "positive consensus" to push forward the implementation of the agreement to expedite negotiations to settle their border dispute through a three-step roadmap.

The 11th Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on the China-Bhutan Boundary Issues was held in China's Kunming city from January 10 to 13, according to a joint statement issued by both countries. Bhutan shares a 477 km-long border with China and the two countries held 24 rounds of boundary talks in a bid to resolve the border dispute. China and Bhutan don't have diplomatic relations but maintain contact through periodic visits by officials.

India and Bhutan are the two countries with whom China is yet to finalise the border agreements, while Beijing resolved the boundary disputes with 12 other neighbours. At the 11th EGM, the two sides, "in a frank, cordial and constructive atmosphere, had an in-depth exchange of views on implementing the MOU on the Three-Step Roadmap for Expediting the China-Bhutan Boundary Negotiations, and reached a positive consensus," the joint statement issued Friday said. "The two sides agreed to simultaneously push forward the implementation of all the steps of the Three-Step Roadmap," it said.

Calif braces for more atmospheric rivers

REUTERS

Selma (US): Jan 14: California's parade of atmospheric rivers may be nearing an end but not before at least two more of the rainstorms are due to drench the waterlogged state starting Saturday, forecasters said.

A series of atmospheric rivers rarely seen in such frequent succession has pounded the state since December 26, killing at least 19 people and bringing floods, power outages, mudslides, evacuations and road closures. The storms have



dropped half the average annual rainfall on the agricultural Central Valley and as much as 15 feet (4.5 m) of snow in the mountains. The six-day forecast called for 4

Britain to supply tanks to Ukraine



ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Jan 14: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak Saturday promised to provide tanks and artillery systems to Ukraine, amid renewed missile attacks by Moscow targeting the Ukrainian capital and other cities.

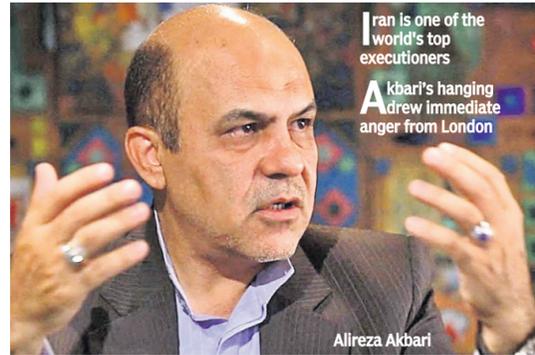
Sunak's Downing Street office said in a statement that he made the pledge to provide Challenger 2 tanks and other artillery systems after speaking to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy Saturday. It did not say when the tanks were to be delivered or how many. British media

has reported that four British Army Challenger 2 main battle tanks will be sent to eastern Europe immediately, with eight more to follow shortly after, without citing sources. Zelenskyy in a tweet Saturday thanked Sunak "for the decisions that will not only strengthen us on the battlefield, but also send the right signal to other partners."

Ukraine has for months sought to be supplied with heavier tanks, including the US Abrams and the German Leopard 2 tanks, but Western leaders have been treading carefully. The Czech Republic and Poland have provided Soviet-era T-72 tanks to Ukrainian forces.

Poland has also expressed readiness to provide a company of Leopard tanks, but President Andrzej Duda stressed during his recent visit to the Ukrainian city of Lviv that the move would be possible only as an element in a larger international coalition of tank aid to Kyiv.

Iran executes former defence ministry official



AGENCIES

Dubai/London, Jan 14: Iran has executed a British-Iranian national who once served as its deputy defence minister, its judiciary said, defying calls from London and Washington for his release after he was handed the death sentence on charges of spying for Britain.

Akbari's hanging drew immediate anger from London, which along with the US and others has sanctioned Iran over the protests and its supplying Russia with the bomb-carrying drones now targeting Ukraine.

Britain, which had declared the case against Alireza Akbari politically motivated, condemned the execution, with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak calling it "a callous and cowardly act carried out by a barbaric regime".

The Iranian judiciary's Mizan news agency reported the execution without saying when it had taken place. Late Friday, British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly had said Iran must not follow through with the sentence.

The execution looks set to pile more pressure on Iran's long-

Iran is one of the world's top executioners

Akbari's hanging drew immediate anger from London

strained ties with the West which have deteriorated further since talks to revive its 2015 nuclear deal hit deadlock and as Tehran unleashed a deadly crackdown on protesters last year.

In an audio recording purportedly from Akbari and broadcast by BBC Persian Wednesday, he said he had confessed to crimes he had not committed after extensive torture.

The Mizan report accused Akbari of receiving payments of 1,805,000 euros, 265,000 pounds, and \$50,000 for spying, Sunak said on Twitter he was "appalled by the execution", saying Tehran had "no respect for the human rights of their own people".

Cleverly said in a statement it would "not stand unchallenged", later announcing Britain had imposed sanctions on Iran's prosecutor general. British statements on the case have not addressed the Iranian charge that Akbari spied for Britain.

For several years, Iran has been locked in a shadow war with the United States and Israel, marked by covert attacks on its disputed nuclear program.

Alireza Akbari was a former Iranian deputy defence minister

Arrested in 2019, he was accused of spying for Britain

UK's Sunak calls it 'a callous and cowardly act'

Britain had said Iran must not follow through with sentence



A shrine parishioner douses himself with cold water during a ritual at the Kanda Myojin Shinto shrine in Tokyo. Pouring cold water on their bodies is believed to be purifying their souls

Top Brazil court greenlights probe of Bolsonaro for riot

AGENCIES

Rio de Janeiro, Jan 14: A Brazilian Supreme Court justice Friday authorized including former president Jair Bolsonaro in its investigation of who incited the January 8 riot in the nation's capital, as part of a broader crackdown to hold responsible parties to account.

According to the text of his ruling, Justice Alexandre de Moraes granted the request from the prosecutor-general's office, which cited a video Bolsonaro posted on Facebook two days after the riot. The video claimed Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva wasn't voted into of-

office, but rather was chosen by the Supreme Court and Brazil's electoral authority. Prosecutors in the recently formed group to combat anti-democratic acts argued earlier Friday that, although Bolsonaro posted the video after the riot, its content was sufficient to justify investigating his conduct beforehand. Bolsonaro deleted it the morning after he first posted it.

Otherwise, Bolsonaro has refrained from commenting on the election since his October 30 defeat.

He repeatedly stoked doubt about the reliability of the electronic voting system in the run-up to the vote, filed a request afterward to



JAIR BOLSONARO

annul millions of ballots cast using the machines and never conceded.

He has taken up residence in an Orlando suburb since leaving Brazil in late December and skipping the January 1 swearing-in of his left-

Anderson Torres held

Brasilia: Brazil's former Justice Minister Anderson Torres, who was in charge of public security in Brasilia during the invasion of government buildings a week ago, was arrested in Brasilia Saturday on suspicion of "omission" and "connivance".



Torres was arrested after returning to Brazil Saturday. He had been on vacation in Florida, the same US state his ex-boss, former right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro, had traveled to after losing last year's election. Demosthenes Torres, one of Torres' lawyers, confirmed the arrest to Reuters. The ex-minister said Thursday that evidence produced by police was taken out of context when his home was raided this week.

ist successor, and some Democratic lawmakers have urged President

Joe Biden to cancel his visa. Following the justice's decision late

Friday, Bolsonaro's lawyer Frederick Wassef said in a statement that the former president "vehemently repudiates the acts of vandalism and destruction" from January 8, but blamed supposed "infiltrators" of the protest — something his far-right backers have also claimed. The statement also said Bolsonaro "never had any relationship or participation with these spontaneous social movements." Brazilian authorities are investigating who enabled Bolsonaro's radical supporters to storm the Supreme Court, Congress and presidential palace in an attempt to overturn results of the October election.

business

of the day quote

From the policy perspective, we believe that the RBI's move at the February MPC meeting will be a close call with core CPI inflation remaining sticky

RAJANI SINHA | CHIEF ECONOMIST, CARE RATINGS

Monopolies on supplies of certain minerals can lead to high prices and could make the energy transition difficult

PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE MINISTER

We have installed over 7,000 EV charging stations in 60 cities across India. We remain committed to playing a prominent role in helping the consumers consider sustainable mobility in the future

AKSHIT BANSAL | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, STATIQ

SHORT TAKES

HDFC Bank Q3 profit rises 20%

Mumbai, Jan 14: HDFC Bank Saturday reported a 19.9 per cent jump in its net profit at ₹12,698 crore for the third quarter ended December 2022, helped by a healthy rise in core income. On a standalone basis, the largest private sector lender's post tax profit grew 18.5 per cent to ₹12,259.5 crore as compared to the year-ago period, as per an exchange filing. The core net interest income grew 24.6 per cent to ₹22,987.8 crore, on the back of a 19.5 per cent increase in advances. The bank's net interest margin was stable at 4.1 per cent when compared to the preceding September quarter.

D-Mart Q3 net profit up 6.7%

New Delhi: Avenue Supermarkets Ltd, which owns and operates the retail chain D-Mart, Saturday reported a 6.71 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit to ₹589.64 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2022. The company had posted a net profit of ₹552.53 crore in the October-December quarter a year ago, said Avenue Supermarkets in a BSE filing. Its revenue from operations was up 25.50 per cent to ₹11,569.05 crore during the quarter under review as against ₹9,217.76 crore in the corresponding quarter of the last fiscal.

Voda's largest layoffs in 5 yrs

New Delhi: Telecommunication player Vodafone is reportedly planning to slash hundreds of jobs, mostly at its London-based headquarters, to cut costs in the global economic slowdown. The Financial Times reported that this will be the company's "biggest round of job cuts in five years". Vodafone employs about 104,000 people globally and 9,400 people in the UK. In November last year, the company said it will cut 1 billion euros (\$1.08 billion) of costs by 2026. Its CEO Nick Read stepped down at 2022 end, replaced by chief financial officer Margherita Della Valle for an interim period.

Gold futures at record high

Mumbai: Indian gold futures hit a record high Friday, tracking gains in overseas market, but the price rise dampened demand in the world's second biggest consumer of the precious metal, dealers said. Local gold futures rose to ₹56,245 (\$691.45) per 10 grams, surpassing the previous record of ₹56,191 hit in August 2020.

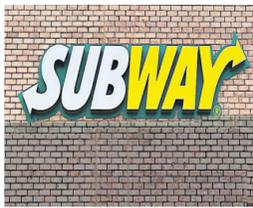
Iconic sandwich chain Subway heading for sale

BECOMING ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST RESTAURANT CHAINS BY AGGRESSIVE EXPANSION, SUBWAY SAW SALES PLATEAUING WHILE SEVERAL COMPETITORS EMERGED

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New York, Jan 14: US-based global sandwich chain Subway, whose control has been held by the families of its co-founders since its inception, may be up for sale soon, with an estimated valuation of over \$10 billion, media reports said.

The Connecticut-headquartered quick-service food chain, known for its signature submarine (sub) sandwiches and wraps, has retained advisers to explore a sale, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing people familiar with the developments. Quoting people as saying that the process may attract potential



corporate buyers and private-equity firms, the paper said that the process is still in its early stages and there

is a possibility that the sale may not go ahead at all.

Subway refused to comment on the purported plans. "As a privately-held company, we don't comment on ownership structure and business plans. We continue to be focused on moving the brand forward with our transformational journey to help our franchisees be successful and profitable," the company was quoted by the WSJ as saying. Set up by 17-year-old Fred DeLuca and financed by

Peter Buck in 1965 as 'Pete's Super Submarines' in Bridgeport, Connecticut, it had several name changes before finally becoming Subway in 1972. It began franchisee operations in 1974, while its first global store was opened in Bahrain in December 1984.

Subway has over 21,000 establishments across the US and over 40,000 in over 100 countries around the world, where it suitably changes its menu in line with local preferences.

FESTIVE DEMAND

Domestic PV sales rise 23% in Dec qtr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: Passenger vehicle wholesales rose 23 per cent year-on-year in the December 2022 quarter, aided by robust demand in the festive period, the automobile industry body Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers said.

The total passenger vehicle dispatches from the companies to dealers in the third quarter rose to 9,34,955 units compared to 7,61,124 units in the same period of the previous financial year.

In December, passenger vehicle sales witnessed an increase of 7 per cent at 2,35,309 units against 2,19,421 units in the year-ago month.

Commenting on the three-month sales data, Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) Director General Rajesh Menon said segments like commercial vehicles, three-wheelers and two-wheelers have also witnessed an increase in wholesales during the period under review. "Festive season has helped in returning good sales numbers for all the segments. However, weakness in rural demand continues, as high food inflation and increased financing cost is impacting the rural market," he noted.

The total commercial vehicles increased by 17 per cent year-on-year to 2,27,111 units in the third quarter, while two-wheelers saw an increase of 6 per cent at 38,59,030 units. Similarly three-wheeler dispatches rose to 1,38,511 units from 82,547 units in the October-December period of last fiscal.

The total sales during the quarter increased to 51,59,758 units from 46,68,562 units in the year-ago period. Commenting on the wholesales in the calendar year 2022, SIAM President Vinod Aggarwal said passenger vehicles have reported the highest-ever sales of 3.8 million units, which is about four lakh units higher than the last peak in 2018.

Similarly, commercial vehicles reported sales of 9.3 lakh units, which is just about 72,000 units lower than the earlier peak in 2018, he added.

However, three-wheeler sales are still lower than in 2010 sales and two-wheeler dispatches are lower than in 2014, Aggarwal said.

Compared to the last calendar year, growth in commercial vehicles has been noteworthy, while the two-wheeler wholesales have grown at a much slower pace in this calendar year compared to the other categories of vehicles, he said.

In December, the total two-wheeler sales rose marginally to 10,45,052 units from 10,15,942 units in the same month last year.

Twitter emptying offices in India

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Jan 14: Social media platform Twitter is in discussions to vacate the co-working seats it has in Delhi and Mumbai, and has already given up the Bangalore facility, sources said.

The process was initiated in December. The company has around 150 seats at the WeWork facility in Mumbai's BKC, and around 80 seats at The Executive Centre in Delhi's Qutub area.

The company had a few co-working seats in Bangalore as well, which it has given up, the sources added, stating that this was a reflection of what was happening within the company globally.

The social networking firm had shut down its global engineering operations (a conventional office) in Bangalore in 2016, and had vacated the office space then. There was no response to an email sent to press@twitter.com. Last November, media reports had said that Twitter had announced that it was temporarily closing some of its offices. This came on the heels of owner Elon Musk's ultimatum to employees: stay with the company "working long hours at high intensity," or quit with three months' severance pay. Reports had said that some employees in India received 'survivor' emails (a term coined by employees for those who weren't fired) that their jobs had not been impacted.



'FINANCIAL ARMAGEDDON'

US under debt default risk

Debt limit is the maximum that the federal govt is allowed to borrow, after Congress set a level more than a century ago to curtail govt borrowing

REUTERS

Washington, Jan 14: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Friday the United States will likely hit the \$31.4 trillion statutory debt limit January 19, forcing the Treasury to launch extraordinary cash management measures that can likely prevent default until early June.

"Once the limit is reached, Treasury will need to start taking certain extraordinary measures to prevent the United States from defaulting on its obligations," Yellen said in a letter to new Republican House of Representatives Speaker Kevin McCarthy and other congressional leaders.

"While Treasury is not currently able to provide an estimate of how long extraordinary measures will enable us to continue to pay the government's obligations, it is unlikely that cash and extraordinary measures will be exhausted before early June," the letter said.

Republicans now in control of the House have threatened to use the debt ceiling as leverage to demand spending cuts from Democrats and the Biden administration. This has raised concerns in Washington and on Wall Street about a bruising fight over the debt ceiling this year that could be at least as disruptive as the protracted battle of 2011, which prompted a brief down-



US ON PATH TO \$31.4TRN STATUTORY DEBT LIMIT JAN 19

SECY WARNS OF US DEFAULT RISK BY JUNE, URGES DEBT LIMIT HIKE

FEDERAL DEBT STOOD \$78BN BELOW THE LIMIT

WHITE HOUSE AGAINST NEGOTIATIONS OVER RAISING DEBT CEILING

grade of the US credit rating and years of forced domestic and military spending cuts.

The White House said Friday after Yellen's letter that it will not negotiate over raising the debt ceiling. "This should be done without conditions," White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters. "There's going to be no negotiation over it."

Congress has in the past raised the debt limit to avoid a default on US debt that economists have warned would be "financial Armageddon". That's what lawmakers did in late 2021 following the last standoff over the debt ceiling. The Republican plan will call on the Treasury Department to keep making interest payments on the debt, the Post reported, citing sources. It may also stipulate the Treasury should continue making payments on Social Security Medicare and veterans benefits, and fund the military,

the newspaper said. Yellen's estimate expressing confidence that the government could pay its bills only through early June without increasing the limit marks a deadline considerably sooner than forecasts by some outside budget analysts that the government would exhaust its cash and borrowing capacity - the so-called "X Date" - sometime in the third quarter of calendar 2023.

PENSION INVESTMENTS SUSPENDED

As of Wednesday, Treasury data showed that US federal debt stood \$78 billion below the limit, with a Treasury operating cash balance of \$346.4 billion. The department Thursday reported an \$85 billion December deficit as revenues eased and outlays grew, particularly for debt interest costs.

Yellen said in her letter that the Treasury this month anticipates suspending new investments in

two government retiree funds for pensions and healthcare, as well as suspending reinvestments in the Government Securities Investment Fund, or G Fund, part of a savings plan for federal employees. The retirement investments are restored once the debt ceiling is raised.

"The use of extraordinary measures enables the government to meet its obligations for only a limited amount of time," Yellen wrote to McCarthy and other congressional leaders.

"It is therefore critical that Congress act in a timely manner to increase or suspend the debt limit. Failure to meet the government's obligations would cause irreparable harm to the US economy, the livelihoods of all Americans, and global financial stability," she wrote.

"This is not the time for panic. We are many months away from the US being unable to meet all of its obligations," said Shai Akabas, director of economic policy at the Bipartisan Policy Center. "But it is certainly a time for policymakers to begin negotiations in earnest."

Just how long the Treasury Department can continue the "extraordinary measures" will depend in part on how much 2022 tax revenue the government collects this spring.

Also, inflation and interest rates have risen faster than some experts estimated last year, and new policies, including the student loan forgiveness program, were introduced, potentially shortening the window.

PBG norms eased to lure coal block bidders

GOVT HAS LAUNCHED THE SIXTH ROUND OF COMMERCIAL COAL MINES AUCTION IN NOV AND HAS PUT ON BLOCK 141 MINES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: The coal ministry has decided that the first revision in Performance Bank Guarantee (PBG) would be done upon grant of mine opening permission for respective coal mines, a move that is expected to reduce financial burden on the bidders.

A bank guarantee is a kind of guarantee from a lending organisation. As per the provisions of the tender document, PBG to be submitted for each successfully auctioned coal mine is to be revised annually based on the National Coal Index (NCI) for the



month of April in the beginning of the year, the coal ministry said.

Since NCI has become double since the launch of first commercial coal mine auctions in 2020, several representations were received from the industry for relaxation in PBG revision provisions.

It was requested that unprecedented increase in NCI has led to

significant financial burden on successful bidders, whose mines are in the pre-operationalisation stage, impacting fund availability for mine operationalisation activities.

The move is expected to reduce financial burden on the bidders during the process of operationalisation of coal mines and is likely to increase participation from the bidders in the sale of commercial coal blocks.

In lieu of the same and to effectuate this amendment in the on-going round of auction, the coal ministry has extended the auction bid due date to January 30 from the earlier January 13.



Gloster Cables Limited, one of India's leading and fastest growing cable manufacturers serving a wide spectrum of business segments and providing cable solutions to a host of industries across the country, organised technical seminar for a day at Bhubaneswar regarding "Gloster - Products & Capabilities - Safety & Maintenance". Dignitaries and professionals from different government departments were present at the seminar.

NBG-Odisha gets first GM

Bhubaneswar: Bikram Keshari Mishra, General Manager, Bank of India has taken over as the first GM to head the newly formed National Banking Group (NBG), Odisha. Prior to this assignment he was GM, NBG-Jharkhand. Mishra had joined Bank of India as Direct Recruit Officer in the year 1990 & have 33 years of vast banking experience in various capacities in different states of India viz Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Jharkhand. The NBG is controlling four zones i.e. Bhubaneswar, Baripada, Keonjhar, and Sambalpur, with a total of 259 branches under its jurisdiction in all 30 districts of Odisha with a total business mix of around ₹38000 crore. His rich and wide banking experience will help Bank of India to garner more business in Odisha and under his leadership the bank will achieve highest level of success in near future.

DRIVING DEMAND

THE CUTS MAY MAKE EV CARS AFFORDABLE TO PEOPLE WHO MAY HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY PRICED OUT OF THE MARKET

REUTERS

Washington, Jan 14: Tesla has slashed prices on its electric vehicles in the United States and Europe by as much as 20%, extending a strategy of aggressive discounting after missing Wall Street estimates for 2022 deliveries. The move, which prompted a

4.5% fall in Tesla's shares in pre-market US trade, came after CEO Elon Musk warned that the prospect of recession and higher interest rates meant it could lower prices to sustain volume growth at the expense of profit.

The lower pricing across Tesla's major markets marks a reversal from the strategy the automaker had pursued through much of 2021 and 2022 when orders for new vehicles exceeded supply. Musk acknowledged last year that prices had become "embarrassingly high" and could hurt demand.

"More stable cost inflation was also a factor in reducing prices," said a spokesperson for Tesla Germany, confirming price cuts in its top European market.

The US price cuts, announced late



In China, Tesla cut prices last week by 6-13.5%, owners protested at delivery centres, calling for compensation

Thursday on its global top-sellers the Model 3 sedan and Model Y

crossover SUV, were between 6% and 20%, Reuters calculations

showed. The basic version of its Model Y now costs \$52,990, down from \$65,990 previously.

That is before an up to \$7,500 federal tax credit that took effect for many electric vehicle models at the start of January.

Tesla also cut prices for its Model X luxury crossover SUV and Model S sedan in the United States.

In Germany, it cut prices on the Model 3 and the Model Y by between about 1% and almost 17% depending on the configuration. It also cut prices in Austria, Switzerland and France.

For a US buyer of the long-range Model Y, the new Tesla price combined with the U.S. subsidy amounts to a discount of 31%. In addition, the Tesla move broadened the vehicles in its line-

up eligible for the Biden administration tax credit.

In France, customers buying the Model 3 for 44,990 euros (\$48,773) will now get a further price reduction through a government subsidy of 5,000 euros. The threshold for the EV scheme is 47,000.

Before the cuts, Tesla inventory in the United States, as tracked by models its website shows as immediately available, had been trending higher. Prices on used Tesla models had also been dropping, increasing pressure to adjust new-car prices.

For 2021, the United States and China combined had accounted for about 75% of Tesla sales, although it has been growing sales in Europe, where its Berlin plant has been ramping up output.

England test awaits India

Reid feels tie vs England tougher than Spain game

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rourkela, Jan 14: A perfect start to their campaign with a dominant win over Spain, notwithstanding, India will face a stern test when they take on an equally impressive England in their second pool match of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup here Sunday.

India outclassed Spain 2-0 with a near flawless show in their opening Pool D match Friday at the brand new Birsa Munda International Hockey Stadium but England is an equally tough side, if not more.

The home team cannot drop the intensity and quality it showed against Spain as England too are on a high after a 5-0 thrashing of Wales in their opening match.

Egged on by a packed crowd at the 21,000 capacity Birsa Munda stadium, India showcased superb attacking hockey in the first two quarters and scored through local hero Amit Rohidas from a penalty corner before Hardik Singh doubled the lead with a brilliant solo effort.

Skipper Harmanpreet Singh and his deputy Rohidas then produced a defensive masterclass - which impressed head coach Graham Reid. Harmanpreet and Co. would look to dish out another strong defensive show against England, who scored at least one goal each in all the four quarters.

Veteran PR Sreejesh and Krishan Bahadur Pathak were also in their elements in front of the Indian goal but their English counterpart Oliver Payne was no less as he thwarted some determined efforts from the Welshmen, especially in the final quarter. The only weakness of the Indians was penalty corners as they could not directly convert any of the five they secured against Spain.

Harmanpreet, the best player and top scorer of the team in almost



every tournament in recent years, had an off day by his high standards, as he missed a penalty stroke besides failing to find the target from penalty corners.

He admitted his below-par show after the match, and will be looking to make amends against England. Not being able to convert penalty corners can cost India dear against a team like England.

The Indian players will also have to be cautious about getting into the

referee's book as they had to play the major part of the final quarter without Abhishek, who got a yellow card for a foul.

A win against England is important as that will take India one step closer to the quarterfinals. The hosts will fancy their chances against Wales, the lowest ranked side in the group at 15th, to top the pool, considered a group of death.

England are one rung above India at fifth in world rankings

and there is not much to differentiate between the two sides in the past year and historically also.

Last year, the two sides played three matches against each other with their last game, played at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, ending in a 4-4 draw. They played out a 3-3 draw in the first leg of FIH Pro League before India won 4-3 in the second, both games played in April.

Nick Bandurak, who was the

top scorer in the 2002 CWG with 11 goals, was on target against Wales, as was Phil Roper who was another prolific player in Birmingham. England scored three field goals, the third from Nicholas Park while Liam Ansell struck twice from penalty corners.

Historically, India had won 10 matches as against seven by England while four games ended in draws. Spain will play Wales in another Pool D match here Sunday.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rourkela, Jan 14: England will be tougher opponents than Spain whom India outclassed 2-0 in their opening World Cup match and the home team cannot lower its guard in the second group match Sunday, head coach Graham Reid said.

Local hero Amit Rohidas and midfielder Hardik Singh scored in India's dominant win against Spain on Friday. A win against England, ranked fifth in the world, on Sunday will help India put one foot in the quarterfinals as they can fancy their chances of beating Wales in their final Pool D match. India are ranked sixth in the world while Wales are 15th.

"We are up against England next and it will be tougher, they are ranked higher than us. We know how tough England are in the Commonwealth Games," Reid said.

Last year, the two sides faced each other three times with their last match played at the CWG in Birmingham, ending 4-4 in the group stage. They played out a 3-3 draw in the first leg of the Pro League match before India won 4-3 in the

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

second, both games played in April. "So, we will try to continue our good work (from the Spain match). We did really well defensively (against Spain), we have to continue it," Reid added.

Captain Harmanpreet Singh agreed that England would be tough opponents and the home side will have to play their best hockey to beat them. "We are taking it match by match. Spain is done now and our focus is on England and we are planning for that," he said.

"Winning penalty corners is very important and we can be better in PC conversion. We are hoping we will do better in that regard," said the drag-flicker who was not at his best in the match against Spain.

He could not find the target in the five penalty corners India got and also wasted a penalty stroke. "Once again, we need team effort. We have to make up for those who do not do that well on a particular day."

"I started from the Panposh sports hostel (in Rourkela) and playing at home is a wonderful feeling. The support from such a large crowd motivated us but once we are on the pitch we try to focus on the game. It is a team effort and because of the team I got the chance to score in front of the home crowd which included my family members. We are not under pressure and the key to our success will be to execute the plans of the team"



GRAHAM REID

AMIT ROHIDAS

Dutch, NZ make winning start

BIRSA MUNDA STADIUM WORLD'S LARGEST 'HOCKEY-SPECIFIC ARENA'



The Netherlands players celebrate a goal against Malaysia during their match

in the 19th minute to hand world no.3 Netherlands, who won the title in 1973, 1990 and 1998, the lead before Jip Janssen converted a penalty stroke four minutes later.

Teun Beins (46th) made it 3-0 for the Netherlands by converting a penalty corner a minute into the fourth and final quarter, while Jorrit Croon scored the final goal a minute before the final hooter.

The Dutchman are atop Pool C on account of better goal difference than New Zealand, who also have three points from the win. While Netherlands and New Zealand will lock horns in their next pool match Monday, Malaysia will take on Chile on the same day.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rourkela, Jan 14: The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has told this agency that the brand new Birsa Munda International Hockey Stadium is the world's largest all-seater field hockey-specific arena and called it a "work of art".

The FIH's confirmation put at rest the controversy surrounding the 21,000 capacity facility after the Odisha government claimed that it is the world's largest stadium.

After the inauguration of the magnificent stadium named after Indian tribal freedom fighter Birsa Munda, Odisha government officials have claimed that it was the largest venue in terms of sitting capacity.

But BJI MLA Shankar Oram, from Biramitrapur in Sundargarh district, had counter-claimed that the stadium is not the largest but fourth in the world.

But the FIH said that the state-of-the-art stadium, at the outskirts of the Steel City of Rourkela, is indeed the largest all-seater field hockey stadium.

"This stadium is not only a work of art in terms of architecture but also the largest all-seater field hockey-specific arena in the world," the FIH said in an e-mail.

The World Cup matches began at the stadium Friday, just days



after its inauguration and without hosting any senior international event or match before the showpiece.

The world body chose not to reply on the issue but said that it was never in doubt about the readiness of the stadium for the World Cup.

"But in any case we were in permanent touch with Hockey India and Odisha regarding the organisation of the World Cup and never had any concerns regarding the readiness of the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela,"

FIH's senior communications manager Nicolas Maingot said.

Oram had claimed that the National Hockey Stadium in Pakistan's Lahore, with a capacity of 45,000 people, is the world's largest, followed by Chandigarh Hockey Stadium (30,000) and Weingart Stadium (multipurpose) in Los Angeles in the US (22,355). Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, which is hosting 24 matches of the World Cup, has a capacity of 15,000. There is no official list of the world's largest hockey stadiums.

A stadium packed to the brim watched India outclass Spain in their opening Pool D match Friday after England and Wales played the first ever international match earlier in the day.

The Birsa Munda Stadium was built in a record time of 15 months to host the World Cup matches. The stadium will host 20 of the 44 matches of the tournament. Coaches and players across the 16 participating teams have nothing but admiration for the stadium.

Belgium, Germany script scintillating wins

Conversation over limited overs' captaincy between Virat, Shastri revealed in new book

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 14: Defending champions Belgium and World No.4 Germany defeated their respective oppositions in their Pool B matches at the Kalinga Stadium here, Saturday. Belgians blanked Korea 5-0, while the Germans thrashed Japan 3-0.

Belgium-Korea game promised to be a thriller with the World No.2 side going head-to-head against the Asian team who were in brilliant form during the FIH Hockey Nations Cup in December 2022. Korea gave a great account of themselves in the first half, going toe to toe with Belgium in attack while also keeping the Belgian attack at bay as the match remained goalless at halftime.

However, Belgium outplayed Korea after the break. They broke the deadlock in the first minute of the second half with Alexander Hendrickx burying a penalty corner. The first goal opened the flood-

gates for Belgium and they tacked on four more goals in the final 16 minutes of the game to earn a comfortable win. Tanguy Cosyns,

Florent van Aubel, Sebastien Dockier and Arthur de Sloover were the other scorers for Belgium. The match between Germany



Belgium players celebrate a goal against Korea at Kalinga Stadium, Saturday

and Japan followed a similar pattern to the Belgium-Korea game as Japan frustrated the two-time champions. However, a drop in intensity in the second half gave the German's a foot in the door and they made full use of the opportunity to grab the goals and take all three points.

Gonzalo Peillat was stopped twice in the first half from the penalty corners, so Germany tried an intricate variation in the second half and it unlocked the Japanese defence with captain Mats Grambusch getting the final touch.

Germany scored a second on a brilliant counter as a pass by Mathias Muller from his own half found Christopher Ruhr behind the Japanese defence, and he rounded the keeper and put the ball in the back of the goal brilliantly. Some more good work by Ruhr then allowed Thies Prinz to get on the scoresheet to make it 3-0 to Germany in the 49th minute and seal the win.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 14: Virat Kohli was desperate for ODI captaincy in 2016 before then head coach Ravi Shastri asked him to respect MS Dhoni's judgement and wait for the mantle to be passed on to him, former fielding coach R Sridhar revealed in his new book.

In his book 'Coaching Beyond: My Days With Indian Cricket Team', co-authored by veteran journalist R Kaushik, Sridhar spoke extensively about communication which he felt was the hallmark of the coaching staff during his time with the Indian team.

"As far as the coaching group is concerned, one of the non-negotiables is being honest about developing a culture where you can look each player in the eye and tell him the truth, no matter how bitter or unpalatable that might be," Sridhar wrote in his book.



Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri

On page 42 of the chapter 'Cracking The Communication Code', Sridhar recollected an incident from Kohli's early days when he was already leading the Test squad but was captain-in-waiting as far as white ball squad was concerned.

"There was a time in 2016 when Virat was very eager to be the captain of the white-ball team too. He said a few things that showed he was looking for the captaincy," Sridhar narrated.

"One evening, Ravi called him and said, 'Look, Virat, MS gave it (the captaincy) to you in red-ball

cricket. You have to respect him. He will give it to you in limited-overs cricket, too, when the time is right. Unless you respect him now, tomorrow when you are the captain, you won't get the respect from your team'," Sridhar said.

According to Sridhar, Shastri in no uncertain terms told Kohli to wait till Dhoni hands it over to him in limited overs cricket.

"Respect him (Dhoni) now, irrespective of what is going on. It will come to you, you don't have to run behind it," Shastri told Kohli. "To his credit, Virat took the advice on board. Eventually, in a year's time, he got the white-ball captaincy too."

Termining Shastri as a "fabulous communicator who talks straight and doesn't mince words," Sridhar also wrote that the former head coach did the proverbial dirty job of informing players when they were dropped.