



CASUAL ATTITUDE

Actor Aahana Kumra says if she had it her way, she would like to come to the red carpet in shorts and t-shirts

LEISURE P2



DOGS GET HITCHED

In a wedding ceremony, seven-month-old female dog Jelly gets hitched to her beloved Tommy in UP

TWO STATES P8



A STEP CLOSER

Ukraine came a step closer to winning the fleet of modern battle tanks it hopes could turn the course of the war

INTERNATIONAL P10

Germany, Belgium play out 2-2 draw

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 17: Defending champions Belgium found the equaliser with six minutes left in the match to play out a thrilling 2-2 draw against Germany and keep themselves in the hunt for a direct quarterfinal qualification in the FIH Men's World Cup here Tuesday.

Cedric Charlier gave Belgium the lead in the ninth minute with a field goal but Germany came back strongly and struck two goals through Wellen Niklas (22nd minute) and Tom Grambusch (52nd, penalty stroke).

Victor Wegnez scored a field goal in the 54th minute to save Belgium from defeat in the Pool B match.

Belgium and Germany are on four points from two matches and the group topper will be decided in their respective last matches on January 20 at the Birsu Munda Stadium in Rourkela.

Belgium take on Japan while Germany face South Korea.

Earlier, South Korea came from behind to edge past Japan 2-1 in Pool B match.

MORE P12



HOCKEY FEVER: Young hockey fans pose for a photo during the ongoing FIH Men's World Cup at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday. PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK

Online med certificate must for DL from Jan 26

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 17: The Odisha government has made online medical certificates mandatory for those above 40 years of age applying for Driving Licence (DL) or its renewal from January 26, an official said Tuesday.

As per the provision of the Central Motor Vehicles Rule (CMVR) 1989, a medical certificate (in Form 1A) is mandatory for any applicant over 40 years of age, both for fresh licence and renewal.

"At present, the applicants submit a manual certificate in paper format. In this process, the genuineness of the medical certificate cannot be ascertained as fake certificates are also being used by many," said joint transport commissioner (technical) Dipti Ranjan Patra.

In order to make the process transparent and ensure medical certificates are made by genuine doctors, the state transport authority (STA) has developed a new online doctor registration portal where about 167 MBBS doctors having Medical Council of India

■ **As per provision of the Central Motor Vehicles Rule (CMVR) 1989, a medical certificate (in Form 1A) is mandatory for any applicant over 40 years of age, both for fresh licence and renewal**

■ **At present, applicants submit medical certificate manually in hard copy. In the process, the genuineness of the certificate cannot be ascertained as fake ones are also being used by many**

(MCI) registration have been enrolled, the official said.

"These doctors will now issue medical certificates to the applicants through the Sarathi portal, and no uploading of form 1A would be required," Patra said, adding that starting January 26, online issuance of medical certificates will be mandatory for DL and LL applicants more than 40 years of age.

The joint commissioner said this initiative will also ensure that no one uploads a fake medical certificate and gets a DL.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Proud moment for you all! Your contribution to nation building by paying taxes is higher than the rich

Pak PM for 'sincere' talks with India

■ *It is the first time that a Pakistani leader has specifically said that the country has learnt its lessons from three wars with India, which had only brought more miseries, unemployment and poverty*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Jan 17: Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has sought 'serious' and 'sincere' talks with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi for the resolution of the 'burning' issues, including on Kashmir, and said the UAE could play an important role in facilitating the resumption of dialogue between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.

Sharif made these comments

during an interview with the Dubai-based Al Arabiya news channel Monday. Relations between India and Pakistan have been strained over the Kashmir issue and cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan. India has previously rejected any third-party mediation on the Kashmir issue. "My message to the Indian leadership and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is that let us sit down on the table and have serious and sincere talks to resolve our burning issues like Kashmir," Sharif said.

He said Pakistan and India are neighbours and have to 'live with each other.'

"It is up to us to live peacefully, make progress or quarrel with each other, and waste time and resources. We have three wars with India and it only brought more misery, poverty, and unemploy-



ment to the people," he explained. "We have learned our lesson and we want to live in peace provided we are able to resolve our genuine problems. We want to alleviate poverty, achieve pros-

perity, and provide education and health facilities and employment to our people and not waste our resources on bombs and ammunition, that is the message I want to give to Prime

Minister Modi," he elaborated. India has maintained that terrorism and talks cannot go together and Islamabad should provide a conducive atmosphere for resumption of dialogue.

The ties between the two countries nosedived after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating the State into two Union Territories August 5, 2019.

India's decision evoked a strong reaction from Pakistan, which downgraded diplomatic ties and expelled the Indian envoy. Trade ties between Pakistan and India have essentially been frozen since then.

"We are nuclear powers, armed to the teeth and if God forbid a war breaks out, who will live to tell what happened," he warned.

Continued on P4

CBI unearths 17 kg gold from former railway official

PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, Jan 17: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has unearthed 17 kilogram of gold and ₹1.57 crore in cash during searches on the premises of a retired railway principal chief commercial manager in Bhubaneswar, officials said Tuesday.

January 3, the central agency had booked Pramod Kumar Jena, a 1987-batch Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS) officer who retired in November last year, for allegedly amassing assets to the tune of ₹1.92 crore disproportionate to his known sources of income. Jena joined the Indian Railways March 6, 1989.

The officials said the CBI searched Jena's premises in Bhubaneswar, Jagatsinghpur and Kolkata.

"Rs 1.57 crore in cash, deposits in postal saving instruments and bank FDs to the tune of ₹33.33 crore, bank balance of ₹1.51 crore, mutual fund investments of ₹47.75 lakh, gold bars, gold biscuits/coins & gold jewellery of ₹17 kg (approximately ₹9.5 crore) and documents related to immovable properties were found from the bank locker/premises of accused and others including family members," revealed CBI sources.

"His spouse Rosina Jena is a housewife with no big source of income, but she regularly files ITR (Income tax returns). PK Jena had no other source of income except his own salary and rental income. The daughters of Jena are also filing ITR returns," an official alleged, citing the FIR. **Continued on P4**

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	60655.72 ↑ 562.75
NIFTY	18053.30 ↑ 158.45
DOLLAR	81.76 ↑ ₹0.14
EURO	88.25 ↓ ₹0.03
GOLD	₹56,410 ↓ ₹72
SILVER	₹69,277 ↓ ₹509

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	29.4°C	27.8°C
TEMP MIN	18.7°C	18.0°C
Humidity	87%	82%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Foggy weather mostly	

MAN BLUDGEONED TO DEATH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 17: A 35-year-old man was bludgeoned to death over past enmity in the wee hours of Tuesday at Salia Sahi under Maitri Vihar police limits here.

The deceased identified as Sushil Hembrum, who hailed from Mauyrbhanj, was staying at Salia Sahi for a few months now.

Hembrum and the prime accused, Biswanath Kisku who also hails from Mayurbhanj, worked as daily wagers. Kisku was arrested by police later in the day.

"During probe, we established

that Hembrum had a fight with Kisku's brother over some issues Sunday. To take revenge, Kisku along with one of his cousins attacked Hembrum with a wooden plank, leaving him critically injured. Later, they fled the place," said ACP (Zone-V) Sanjeeb Kumar Satapathy.

The ACP added that Hembrum was rushed to the Capital Hospital, where he was declared 'dead on arrival'. "We have registered a case (11/23) in this regard and Kisku has been taken into custody," the Zone-V ACP said, adding that efforts are on to nab other accused.

Minors raped at Patia rly stn

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 17: Two minor girls were reportedly abducted and raped at Patia railway station here Monday night, an official said, Tuesday.

The incident came to the fore after the victims, aged 12 and 14, narrated their ordeal before their parents, who informed the Childline authorities Tuesday.

According to Childline sources, the victims, who reside with their parents in Patia area, were playing near the railway station Monday



when two youths of the locality abducted them and took them to the railway station where they took

turns to outrage their modesty.

"They even threatened the girls of dire consequences if the minors dare to reveal their ordeal before anyone. Later, the victims managed to come out of their clutches and reach home Tuesday morning," said Childline Bhubaneswar director Benudhar Senapati.

"The Government Railway Police (GRP) has registered a case (10/23) in connection with the incident," Senapati said, adding that a dedicated GRP team has launched a probe.

China's population shrinks for first time

INDIA POISED TO EMERGE AS MOST POPULOUS COUNTRY

AGENCIES

Beijing, Jan 17: China's demographic crisis deepened in 2022 as its population declined for the first time since 1961 due to a plunging birth rate, the country's statistics office said on Tuesday, amid a forecast that India is poised to overtake the Communist giant as the world's most populous country.

China's population in 2022 - 1.4118 billion - fell by 850,000 from 2021, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said.

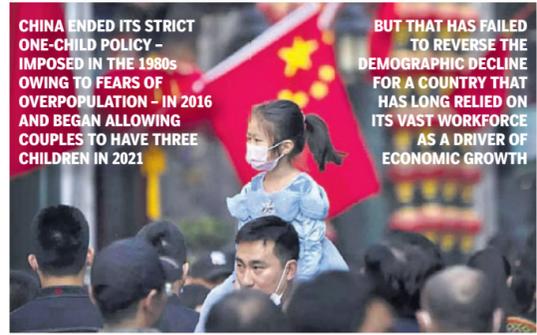
The NBS announcement comes

at a time when China's economic growth fell to its second-lowest in five decades, registering a paltry three per cent increase in 2022.

According to a recent report by the World Population Prospects 2022 by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, India is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country in 2023.

According to the report, India is projected to have a population of 1.668 billion in 2050, more than China's 1.317 billion by the middle of this century.

"China and India are countries with a big population and we have ample resources in the working force. This is a strong internal dynamic for economic development,"



Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said.

"The two countries should take advantage of their population dividend to develop each other's re-

spective national development and make greater contributions to the international community," he said.

According to the NBS, China registered about 9.56 million new-

borns last year, down from 10.62 million in 2021.

China's birth rate stood at 6.77 births per 1,000 people in 2022, down from 7.52 in 2021, it said.

The death rate nationwide stood at 7.37 per 1,000 people last year, putting the natural growth rate at negative 0.6 per 1,000 people.

The last time China reported a population decline was in 1961.

China's concern is not simply a declining population, which was accentuated by the decades-old 'one child policy', scrapped in 2016, but also a rapidly ageing population.

As per the revised policy, Chinese people can now have up to three children. China conducts a nationwide population census every decade, with the latest being done in 2020. **Continued on P4**

SHORT TAKES

Nadda to continue as BJP prez till June 2024

NEW DELHI: BJP president JP Nadda's tenure, set to end this month, has been extended till June 2024 in view of the upcoming Assembly elections this year and the Lok Sabha elections next year. Informing about the decision taken in the BJP National Executive meeting, Home Minister Amit Shah said that Defence Minister Rajnath Singh proposed to extend the presidential term of Nadda till June 2024, which was approved. Shah said that due to the pandemic, the membership drive could not be held, and nor could the organisational elections, and due to this, it was decided to extend Nadda's tenure. He claimed under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi and the chairmanship of Nadda, the 2024 Lok Sabha polls would see the BJP win even bigger than 2019.

UN lists Let's Makki as global terrorist

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan-based deputy leader of terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) Abdul Rehman Makki has been designated as a global terrorist by the United Nations, subjecting him to an assets freeze, travel ban and arms embargo. The UN Security Council's 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee added 68-year-old Makki, the brother-in-law of JUD/LeT Chief Hafiz Saeed, to its list of designated terrorists after China withdrew its hold on a joint proposal by India and the US. Makki and other LeT/JUD operatives have been involved in raising funds, recruiting and radicalising youth to violence and planning attacks in India, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), the committee said.

leisure

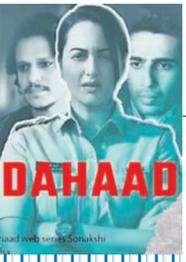


SELENA GOMEZ FINDS LOVE IN DREW TAGGART

Singer-actress Selena Gomez, who recently slammed a section of netizens over body shaming, is said to be enjoying time with *The Chainsmokers* star Drew Taggart. The couple is apparently not afraid to showcase their "casual" relationship, reports *The Mirror*.

SONAKSHI-STARRER DAHAAD TO BE SCREENED AT BERLINALE

Sonakshi Sinha, Vijay Varma and Sohumi Shah-starrer series *Dahaad* will be premiered at the upcoming edition of the Berlin Film Festival. With this, the Reema Kagti and Ruchika Oberoi directorial has become the first Indian series to screen at the Berlinale and compete in the Berlinale Series Competition.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will be indecisive today, which is not usually the case with you. Ganesh says this could lead you to indulge in speculation, which is not so bad unless you risk all your money in it. Besides, when it comes to matters of the heart, you must exercise a great deal of caution.

TAURUS
All is not likely to go well during this day says Ganesh. Though you will sail smoothly most of the day, problems are very likely to come up. At the professional level you are not likely to face obstacles or difficulties. Your relations with your parents turn awkward and unpleasant.

GEMINI
You will be surrounded by conflicts today. However, you will come to realise within a short while the solutions required to troubleshoot your way out of your difficult circumstances. You will desire solitude and peace so much so that you will not find even your family members welcome company, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Today, you will put your heart and soul into whatever task you take up. And, that's a great thing to do, says Ganesh. Don't lose heart though, if despite the best efforts, the results of your efforts are not too forthcoming. Feeling dejected is only going to hamper your progress. Remember that you'll receive your due sooner or later.

LEO
You need to keep your temper in check and guard against being aggressive today. You need to channelise your energies towards some productive pursuits, otherwise you may make someone the target of your anger. The good thing about the day is you will make satisfactory progress on work related issues.

VIRGO
You are renowned for your leadership qualities and today they will be much appreciated for the way you manage your team. You will get a long-due promotion, and will come in for some extra cash. Ganesh says you received all this by wisely balancing work and home, so be careful not to slip up on this front.

LIBRA
Ganesh says beware of overspending today. Those of you having close ties abroad may find them beneficial. Ganesh says you should always remain optimistic.

SCORPIO
Socially, you enjoy being in limelight as all the eyes are focused on you. However, beware of evil eyes that may not have good intentions towards you. You are a good soul and never hurt anyone. But, at times, it's important to know your foe's weakness to be on the safer side.

SAGITTARIUS
Brace yourselves; the day has a lot of uncertainties today. First being financial. You may have to shell out money for unexpected expenses. But, this may also teach you to be economically independent. Always look at the brighter side, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
You will be a live wire, today. With amazing exuberance you have completed mammoth tasks and have spread the energy around. It will give you tremendous job-satisfaction, foresees Ganesh. Everything seems well and good the personal front, too. Spending some quality time your spouse will relax your mind and keep you in an upbeat mood.

AQUARIUS
You are a strong-willed person, and during the toughest of times you remain focused. A constant smile on your face and positive attitude will help you win the hearts and minds of people at work as well as at home.

PISCES
Today you will feel like sharing your innermost feelings with those that you are close to. You will find yourself communicating better and this will result in attracting intellectual people towards you. You will get an opportunity to work with very educated and well established people. This will result in personal progress at work, says Ganesh.

Rasika: Good things take time to make

Mumbai: Actor Rasika Dugal had a busy 2022 as she shot for as many as six projects back-to-back, which are all expected to come out this year. She had a major release with *Delhi Crime - Season 2*, last year that left fans wanting to see more of her onscreen. Mention this, and the actor says she believes that "all good things take time".

She says, "Accha kaam karne mein time lagta hai. I have never felt the pressure and never want to take on the pressure of churning out work speedily. Good things take time to make and I respect that style of working. And, in my opinion, one release of a good show like *Delhi Crime* in a year is worth many".

Switch to 2023, and Dugal is excited about the projects that are lined up for release this year. "I experimented with a variety of genres last year. Now, I am excited to see how all of it is received. There is a sports drama series, there is a supernatural thriller series, a dark comedy thriller and a dramedy and an improvised film. Among the ongoing work, there is *Mirzapur-Season 3*, which always receives so much love from the audience and I am sure we won't disappoint them this season either".

AGENCIES

Yami loses her cool at paparazzi

Mumbai: Yami Gautam was spotted visiting a salon on a Monday evening. She recently wrapped the shoot of her upcoming film *Lost*. She was greeted by the paparazzi as she stepped out of the salon. However, the actress lost her cool when she heard someone shouting while the photographers rushed to click her pictures.

In the video that has surfaced online, Yami was seen wearing an oversized blue denim jacket and black trousers. But before posing for pictures, Yami asked the photographers who was shouting amongst them. "Shout kaun kar raha tha pehle yeh batao," Yami asked, to which the paparazzi responded saying, "Mam koi bahar ka tha." Yami again asked the same question for reassurance before finally obliging the paparazzi with photographs.

On the work front, Yami has a power-packed lineup with projects like *Chor Nikal Ke Bhaga*, *OMG2* and *Dhoom Dham* among other unannounced projects. The actress has recently expressed her wish to do a biopic of the iconic and her favourite actress Madhubala.

AGENCIES



Was a 'mawali' in college: Aahana

Mumbai: Aahana Kumra known for her bindass attitude shares that unlike her glamorous persona that she radiates as an actress today, back in her younger days she was quite the opposite. Seen in films like *Lipstick Under My Burkha* and *India Lockdown*, the actress mentions that she was a 'mawali' in college.

In her tongue-in-cheek style, she shares, "The whole metamorphosis happened thanks to my stylist. Otherwise, when I was young I would wear 'ganji', bootcut pants and walk around with one 'chhatra' (umbrella) and if a boy tries to talk to me I would give him one whack with it. I was quite a 'mawali' in college."

This cool and casual attitude about her dressing continues even today. She says, "If I had it my way then I would like to come to the red carpet in shorts and t-shirts. It is because of the business that I am in I have to focus so much on my dressing. I also feel like you got to be and play a certain part in this business. It is a circus!"

AGENCIES

When Rajamouli mocked KJo for asking RRR's Hindi rights

Mumbai: SS Rajamouli's *RRR* is currently making waves globally. After winning the prestigious Golden Globes Award 2023 for its song, *Naatu Naatu*, the film went on to bag the Critics Choice Award for Best Foreign Film.

Amidst this, an old video of Rajamouli and Karan Johar from an old promotional event is going viral on social media. At the event, Karan had asked Rajamouli why he was not given the Hindi rights to *RRR* like his *Baahubali*

franchise. To this, Rajamouli had replied, "I asked you to be the presenter of *Baahubali* films. You made

tens and hundreds of crores with that. So, when a producer makes so much money, usually as director I expect some gifts, sir. And what did you give me? You called for your talk show. You gave me a phone and a Bluetooth speaker and you wanted the rights of *RRR* Hindi."

Rajamouli further said, "Sir, look at Jayantilal sir, he has promised me a sea-facing flat in Bandra after *RRR* is a success. Right next to your house." He concluded, "You will be shocked to know what my producer DVV Danayya has promised me... one-acre plot in Jubilee Hills."

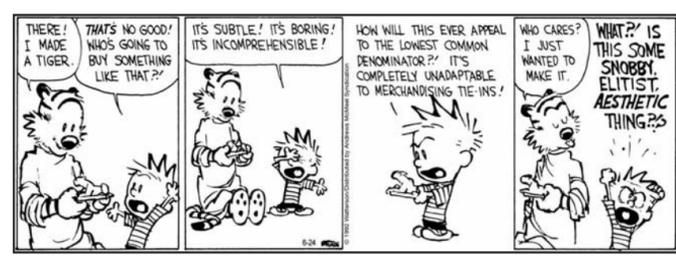
AGENCIES



PEANUTS



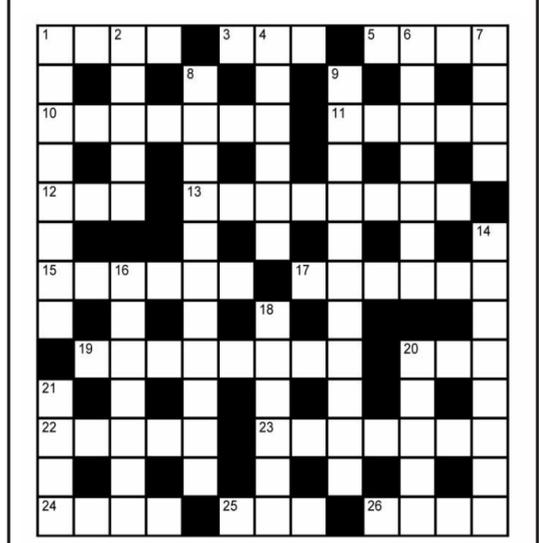
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



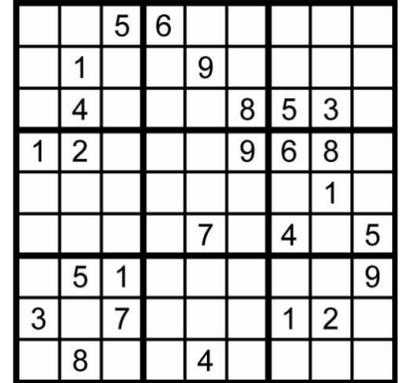
FUN post CROSSWORD



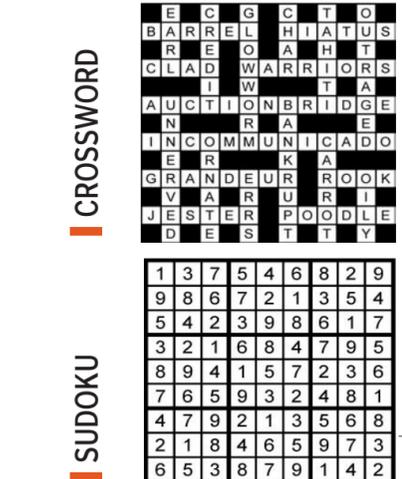
- Copyright ©2023 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Shrewd and smart
 - 3 Shanty
 - 5 Wood stork
 - 10 Scourge
 - 11 Happen
 - 12 Rascal
 - 13 Courtliness
 - 15 Real property
 - 17 Skin disorder
 - 19 Lookout man
 - 20 Breach
 - 22 Bowed stringed instrument
 - 23 Bedchamber
 - 24 Effortless
 - 25 Bewilder
 - 26 Two-party vendetta
 - 4 Loose long overcoat
 - 6 Two-wheeled transportation
 - 7 Nimble
 - 8 Gaudy outward display
 - 9 Neighbourhood attractions (5,6)
 - 14 Mollycoddled
 - 16 Vine support
 - 18 Incapable
 - 20 Hand warmer
 - 21 Pinnacle
- Down**
- 1 Being in captivity
 - 2 Foul, as a motor (3,2)

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



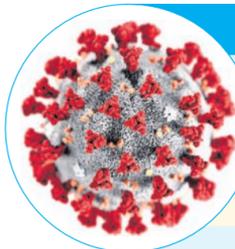
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



STAGE CRAFT

Artistes from Kolkata perform the play 'Oedipus Rex' at 11th Ajit Natya Mahotsav at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	67,17,64,900	64,31,37,172	67,32,692
India	4,46,81,154	4,41,48,309	5,30,726
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

Oppn sees red in OPGC divestment

THE BJP TERMS IT AS AN ATTEMPT BY THE BJD GOVT TO RAISE FUNDS FOR UPCOMING ELECTIONS, WHILE THE CONG QUESTIONS THE RATIONALE BEHIND SALE OF A 'PROFIT-MAKING' PSU

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 17: Opposition BJP and Congress Tuesday slammed the state government's move to disinvest 49 per cent of the shareholding of the state-owned Odisha Power Generation Corporation (OPGC).

The state government, which owns 100 per cent of the share, has invited Expression of Interest (EOI) from international bidders for purchasing 49 per cent of the shareholding of the company. Interested bidders are asked to submit their EOI on or before February 28, 2023.

BJP MLA Mukesh Mahaling alleged that the BJD government has made up its mind to sell all public entities to collect huge amounts of 'chanda' from private companies for the upcoming election.

Strongly opposing the move, senior Congress leader and former Finance Minister Panchanan Kanungo said, "When the state government claims that the state's financial condition is very strong and it is planning to make a bigger budget and spending crores of rupees on beautification projects,



THE STATE GOVT, WHICH OWNS 100% OF THE OPGC SHARE, HAS INVITED EOI FROM INTERNATIONAL BIDDERS FOR OFFLOADING 49% STAKE OF THE POWER COMPANY

INTERESTED BIDDERS ARE ASKED TO SUBMIT THEIR PROPOSALS ON OR BEFORE FEBRUARY 28, 2023

what is the need to sell the profit making OPGC."

The state government has also privatised many of the power entities when electricity has become

a basic need of people now. It is very unfortunate that the government is privatising the OPGC, he said.

On the other hand, BJD leader Dhruva Sahoo said disinvestment in OPGC was made by the Congress government during the regime of former chief minister JB Patnaik.

"When the AES company wanted to sell its share, the Odisha government acquired it. I think the government is moving to disinvest the OPGC to infuse more money in the corporation for its development," the BJD leader said. OPGC was incorporated in 1984

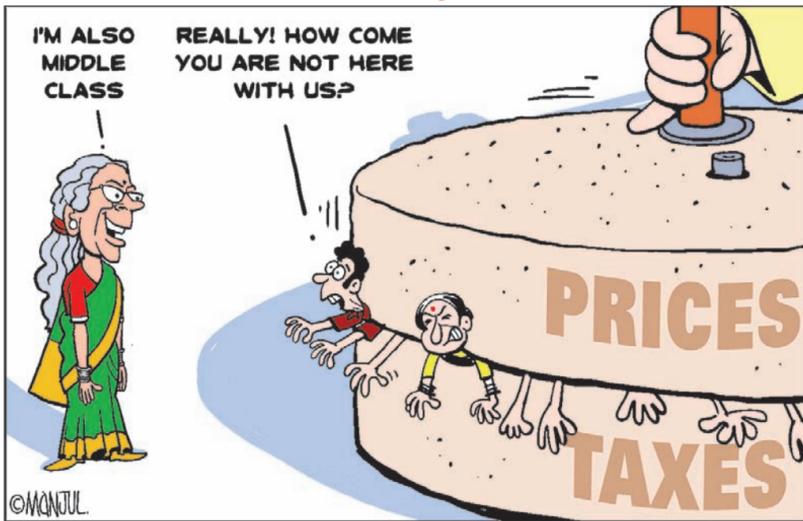
with the objective of establishing, operating and maintaining thermal power stations and it started generating power in 1996-97. The government sold 49 per cent share of the company to AES Corporation Ltd, a USA-based company.

In 2020, AES sold all its shares to the state-run Odisha Hydro Power Corporation (OHPC) for around Rs 1,000 crore. While the company was running on losses in 2020, it has made a profit this year. OPGC operates thermal power plants of 1740MW capacity at Banarpal, Jharsuguda. The phase-I unit (2x210 MW) has been running successfully for the last more than 25 years. The phase-II (2x660MW) was commissioned in 2019.

Phase-I unit has coal linkage from the mines of Mahanadi Coal Field, the phase-II units are sourcing coal from the Manoharpur coal line of Odisha Coal & Power Limited, a subsidiary of OPGC through a dedicated Merry Go Round system.

The corporation is contemplating to expand its present capacity through the implementation of Phase III by installing Unit 5 and 6 having 660 MW capacity each.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Mohanty on nat'l exec meet

New Delhi: State BJP president Samir Mohanty Tuesday said several issues of Odisha were discussed during the national executive meeting of the party and that he would brief the state leadership about the outcome of the meeting during the state executive meeting to be held January 22.

Wales players' tryst with hockey

THIS IS FOR THE FIRST TIME THE WALES TEAM IS PLAYING FIH MEN'S HOCKEY WORLD CUP



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 17: First President of South Africa Nelson Mandela had once said, "There is no passion to be found playing small - in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living." This goes well with most of the hockey players from Wales who are playing the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup, 2023 here despite working in several capacities in different establishments.

Driven by passion, many of the players from the Wales team, which has qualified for the world cup for the first time, have embraced hockey not only to bring glory to their nation but also to explore the players within them.

Many of these players do not play the game regularly and neither are professional hockey players. They work in different capacities like accountants, managers and employees at sportswear shops.

"The Wales team which has qualified for the world cup for the first time ever has players working as full-time teachers, professors and accountants. Playing hockey for Wales is a part-time role," says Ria Burrage-Male, chief executive of Hockey Wales.

The team is being sponsored by Study in Wales. After securing their spot on home turf during October 2021 World Cup Qualifiers, the team will be displaying its sporting skills in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, Ria said.

The partnership between Hockey Wales and Study in Wales is driven by the shared desire to inspire change and it will see support for the team beyond the world cup. Both organisations fully support promoting Wales as a country that has a strong focus on equality, diversity and inclusiveness, Ria added.

Wales join top teams around the world including India, Germany, England, the Netherlands and Australia in the competition. It will clash with India at Kalinga Stadium here January 19.

Ria further said: "Hockey Wales has been on an incredible journey so far. In just six years, the men have moved up from 36th to 15th in the World Rankings, with limited resources. Qualifying for the World Cup for the first time ever is an incredible achievement, and a true testament to the efforts of everyone involved."

Study in Wales is part of the Global Wales partnership and represents Wales' universities and colleges. Laura Ferhussan Head of Markets and operation, Global Wales said, "Our main aim is to promote Wales as a steady destination and promote Wales to the world, and what we can do and what we can offer."

International students play an invaluable role in diversifying and globalising Wales' university campuses and communities at a time when retaining an international outlook is more important than ever, Laura said.

Hubby of woman who died by suicide nabbed



AGENCIES

Cuttack, Jan 17: The husband of a 30-year-old woman who was found hanging from the ceiling fan in her rented accommodation in Cuttack city after allegedly killing her two-year-old stepson was arrested Tuesday.

Police suspect that the deceased woman, identified as Shilpi Khuntia, died by suicide after killing her stepson Sunday night. The bodies were found the next morning.

The incident took place in Sriram Nagar locality in Madhupatna area of Cuttack city, and the room where the bodies were found was locked from the inside, a police officer said.

"The bodies have been sent for post-mortem examination and the cause of the deaths can be ascertained only after getting the reports," Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Anil Mishra said.

The woman's husband Santosh Kumar was arrested based on a complaint filed by her family.

Santosh married Shilpi last year after the death of his first wife, who had given birth to his son.

Neighbours and Shilpi's relatives claimed that Santosh and his second wife frequently quarreled over financial matters.

India 5G phone market may expand by 70%

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 17: The India 5G smartphone market is expected to expand by more than 70 per cent by the end of calendar year 2023, a report said Tuesday.

The India smartphone market recorded more than 13 times growth in its 5G shipments from the year of its initial introduction in 2020.

"From a mere 4 per cent in CY 2020 to a potential more than 45 per cent market share in CY 2023, 5G smartphones have definitely come a long way," said Menka Kumari, Analyst-Industry



Intelligence Group (IIG), CyberMedia Research (CMR).

In CY2022, close to 100 5G smartphones were launched in the India market.

"In 2023, we anticipate close to 75 per cent of the new smartphones to be introduced in the India mar-

SAMSUNG, ONEPLUS AND VIVO LED THE INDIA MARKET IN 5G SMARTPHONE SHIPMENTS IN CY2022

IN THE 5G VALUE FOR MONEY (RS 10,000-RS 25,000) PRICE SEGMENT, XIAOMI AND REALME WERE THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

ket to be 5G-capable," she added.

Samsung, OnePlus and Vivo led the India market in 5G smartphone shipments in CY2022.

In the 5G Value for Money (Rs 10,000-Rs 25,000) price segment, Xiaomi and realme were the major

contributors.

"Going forward, we anticipate further momentum for 5G smartphone shipments in the new year driven by strong consumer demand and aggressive 5G network deployment by Indian telcos," said Shipra Sinha, Analyst-Industry Intelligence Group (IIG), CMR.

The key for mass 5G adoption in India will depend, amongst others, on the introduction of 5G smartphones in the affordable smartphone segment (less than Rs 10,000).

"Alongside, better 5G availability and accessibility will be key for consumer experience," Sinha added.



RUSH FOR JOBS: A huge number of teacher aspirants thronged the Board of Secondary Education (BSE) office in Cuttack, Tuesday, for filling up forms for Odisha Teacher Eligibility Test (OTET)

Photo exhibit takes City folks down memory lane



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 17: The third day of .FEST turned as exciting as the previous two with the inauguration of a photo exhibition titled 'Sebe au Ebe' (Then and Now) at the Idco exhibition ground here Tuesday. The exhibition aims to take the City residents down the memory lane with photos showing

the transition of Bhubaneswar over the past 70 years.

The exhibition is showcasing photographs of Bhubaneswar, one of the first planned city of independent India, since the 1860s to the present time.

This apart, Tuesday was also the concluding day of Bhubaneswar Festival of Storytelling (BHUFESTO) where eminent actress and director Nandita Das moved the audience with her oral storytelling skills, with stories specially



aimed for children. Later, Ravana Chhaya, widely acclaimed shadow puppetry of the state, attracted attention of the audience.

In the evening, the musical concert, a part of .FEST, witnessed an electrifying performance by the talented Indian playback singer Divya Kumar who sang some of his chartbuster songs from 'Shubhaarambh' and 'Maston Ka Jhund'.

Also the star attraction for the evening was popular singer Neeti Mohan who demonstrated her brilliance with her melodious voice singing songs like 'Jiya Re'.

The fourth day of the fest will include performances from singers like Lisa Mishra, Sniti Mishra, Rituraj Mohanty and the rapper Big Deal will dazzle the audience with performance.

The celebration starts at 5pm and lasts till midnight.

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Devising innovation key to nourish school edu: Dash



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 17: Inaugurating the two-day review-cum-training meeting of BEOs & DEOs of Berhampur zone at Krushi Bhawan in Bhubaneswar Tuesday, School and Mass Education minister, Samir Ranjan Dash highlighted the role of the department in implementing education-oriented initiatives to create a meaningful learning experience for the generations of tomorrow.

Addressing the gathering, Das also laid pressing importance on the collective functionality of different wings of S&ME department to achieve the best possible outcomes for academic excellence of students to affirm Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's dream of a transformed and prosperous Odisha.

Underlining the importance of firming the foundation of education ecosystem, Dash shed light on policy and regulatory issues, implementation of best practices,

tion, health and agriculture. As the department with the finest resourced manpower, it is our responsibility to turn this dream into a reality. The collaborative outreach of head teachers, teachers, CRCCs, BEOs and DEOs will definitely deliver the best results for the state in this regard," opined Dash.

Giving a pat on the efforts of the participants, Dash said better and improvised strategies in policy implementation at the ground level has helped the state government to improve the student parity and improve the existing student-teacher relation. Discussions were also held on developing refined frameworks of monitoring approaches to provide a way to assess the crucial link between implementers and beneficiaries on the ground and decision-makers.

The following sessions were held on discussions on various policies and affairs of the Directorate of Elementary Education (DEE), Directorate of Teacher Education and State Council of Educational Research & Training (TE & SCERT), Mid-Day Meal (MDM) and OSEPA.

Aswathy S, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, S & ME department moderated the session and Durga Prasad Mohapatra, SPD-OSEPA delivered the welcome address.

Minister laid importance on the collective functionality of different wings of S&ME department to achieve the best possible outcomes for academic excellence of students

offering solutions for implementation challenges and the need for establishing frameworks to improve education delivery by devising innovations in education to achieve the ambitious objectives of strengthening school education.

"The year 2036 will witness 100 years of Odisha's attainment to the status of an independent state. To commemorate the historic event, it is the dream of Chief Minister to see Odisha as the leading state in the country in terms of educa-



FOR PEOPLE'S CAUSE: Guests attending a state-level meeting organised by Odisha Bidyut Karmachari Mahasangha at Sachin Tendulkar Indoor Hall in Cuttack, Tuesday

CBI unearths 17 kg gold from ex-rly official

Continued from P1

In locker after locker, the illicit wealth kept coming out, officials said, adding that the searches are still going on and some more lockers need to be opened up.

In its FIR, the agency alleged that at the start of the check period on April 1, 2005, Jena had assets worth Rs 4.53 lakh in the form of bank balances and plots, which spiralled to over Rs 4.33 crore at the end of the period March 31, 2020, they said.

"Information disclosed that after giving the benefit of incomes as mentioned in their Income-Tax Returns, the total income of PK Jena and his family members from all known sources was to the tune of Rs 3.25 crore during the check period from April 1, 2005, to March 31, 2020," it alleged.

After calculating his income and expenses incurred during the corresponding period, the CBI alleged that there was no satisfactory explanation for Rs 1.92 crore of assets which it said were 59.09 per cent over his genuine sources of income.

Pak PM for 'sincere' talks with India

Continued from P1

During the interview, Sharif said the United Arab Emirates (UAE) leadership could play an important role in bringing Pakistan and India together.

New Delhi has maintained that Kashmir is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan and no third country has a role in it.

"The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh are and always will be integral and inalienable parts of India. No other country has a locus standi to comment on the same," the Ministry of External Affairs has said previously. Sharif said the UAE was a second home for millions of Pakistanis, days after he visited the Gulf nation, which was aimed at securing fresh loans, ramping up bilateral cooperation and trade ties.

He also lauded Saudi Arabia for being a "friendly and brotherly country." "Before Pakistan came into being, and was carved out of India, millions of Muslims had brotherly relations with Saudi Arabia and were visiting Makkah and Madina," he added. Last week, Pakistan's Foreign Office said it welcomed third-party mediation in the resolution of all outstanding issues with India, including Kashmir.

'Ensure fair allotment to PMAY beneficiaries'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 17: The state BJP Tuesday approached Governor Ganeshi Lal for transparent and fair allocation of PMAY-G houses to beneficiaries in Odisha.

A delegation of BJP led by party chief whip Mohan Majhi submitted a memorandum to the Governor in this regard.

"The Centre has allotted additional 9.5 lakh houses to Odisha under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G). However, recent unpleasant experiences and incidents of favouritism and rampant corruption in allocation of PMAY-G houses to beneficiaries is derailing the ambitious scheme and is an outright denial of rightful houses to the eligible beneficiary," said the BJP in memorandum.

Rural Development ministry has chalked out detailed procedure and mechanism to ensure strict vigil and public scrutiny to ensure that the validation of beneficiaries is fair and transparent, leaving no room for ineligible households to get listed because of favouritism.

However, the party alleged that the state government has completely offloaded its responsibility for fair and transparent allocation of houses letting the process



to be hijacked by local leaders and people with vested interests.

"Identification of ineligible beneficiaries and validation of provisional list has also been wrested from the public without zero systemic check and balances or scope of intervention by district administration, block, gram panchayat level officials," the memorandum said.

The saffron party further said that in most rural areas people have not been able to file complaints as the process requires them to provide personal details and a registered mobile number which may create life-threatening situations for the complainant from people with vested interests.

"In absence of awareness of rejection criteria, it is observed that

provisional lists are getting approved without intervention from public. This jeopardises the whole proposition of public scrutiny," they alleged. The BJP leaders requested the Governor to look into the matter and issue necessary instructions to the state government to ensure systemic checks with provision of adequate intervention by district block administration ensuring ownership and responsibility in transparent and fair selection of beneficiaries under PMAY-G.

Speaking on the issue, BJD leader Dhruva Sahoo said that the allotment of houses will be made as per the procedure. About the left-out eligible beneficiaries, he said, "We also request the Centre to provide additional houses for the left-out beneficiaries."

Train derails near Sivalingapuram station

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar Jan 17: The Visakhapatnam-Kirandul train Tuesday derailed while approaching Sivalingapuram railway station in Kottavalasa-Araku section, the

East Coast Railway (ECoR) said.

As per official sources, one wheel set of a general second class coach of the train got derailed. No casualties were reported due to the derailment. All passengers of the coach were shifted to other coaches.

DRM Anup Satpathy along with his team of officers immediately rushed to the site in Accident Relief Medical Train to monitor the restoration works. After detachment of the derailed coach, the train resumed its journey.

ROAD SAFETY WEEK Ambulance drivers vow for road safety

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 17: As all over the nation Road Safety Week is being celebrated from January 11 to 17, Ziqitza Health Care Limited (ZHL), the operating agency for 108 ambulance services in the state, organised an awareness campaign Tuesday where all its drivers took oath for safe driving. At part of the campaign, employees of ZHL also performed street plays and group dance spreading the message of safe driving on road.

Speaking on the occasion, police (traffic) deputy commissioner Thakur Prasad Patra said, "We advise everyone to obey traffic rules while driving, ask them to don't drink and drive, avoid rash driving, wear seat belt, and refrain from using mobile phones. Let everyone come together to make roads safer."



Based on different parameters of safe ambulance driving like accidental timing and response time, the drivers of the agency were awarded in the event.

"Currently, ZHL is operating 1,124 108 ambulances in 30 districts of the state. Similarly, six 108 boat ambulances are stationed at areas cut-off by rivers. A dedicated call centre of the agency and executives at the Bhubaneswar-based integrated centre work together in identifying the exact location of the patient and assist them to get the nearest available ambulance as fast as possible," said an executive of the agency.

China's population shrinks for 1st time in over 60 years

Continued from P1

In a non-nationwide census year like 2022, China runs a population sampling survey on November 1 each year, meaning the number of deaths for December is not available, an official from the NBS said.

China's total population size peaked in 2022, much earlier than expected, which means the country's population will maintain a negative growth from 2023 or enter an era of negative growth, Cai Fang, former deputy director of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said previously.

Yuan Xin, a professor from the Institute of Population and Development at Nankai University's School of Economics, said in 2022 the negative population growth was the inevitable result of the country's long-term low fertility rate and China's population entering an era of zero growth.

The population size during the early stage of contraction will still be huge. China's population began to fall in 2022, but the total population will still exceed 1.4 billion in 2035, and will still be around 1.3 billion in 2050, Yuan told state-run Global Times. China implemented a third-

child policy in May 2021 and rolled out a series of stimulus measures to boost population growth.

A number of cities, provinces and regions across the country have rolled out incentive policies such as issuing subsidies to families with a second or third child.

From the perspective of gender, the male population was 722.06 million, the female population was 689.69 million and the sex ratio of the total population is 104.69.

As per the official data, in terms of age structure, the working-age population between 16 and 59 stood at 875.56 million, accounting for 62 per cent of the national population, and the population aged 60 or above reached 280.04 million, accounting for 19.8 per cent of the total population. Around 209.78 million were aged 65 or above, accounting for 14.9 per cent of the total population, the NBS said. China, previously an agrarian country, has now been rapidly urbanised with 920.71 million living in urban areas, an increase of 6.46 million by the end of 2021, totalling to 65.22 per cent.

The permanent residents in rural areas declined to 491.04 million, a decline of 7.31 million.

Hyenas can differentiate long-distance calls within their group

On quiet nights across large swaths of the African bush, you may hear a series of whooping calls in the distance. This unique sound is the long-distance vocalisation used by spotted hyenas (*Crocuta crocuta*) to communicate with each other.

For hyenas, it's advantageous to know who is calling before deciding to respond. They don't treat every member of their group the same – and the caller could even be an intruder in their territory.

In animal societies, identity signals are common. They mediate interactions within groups, and allow individuals to discriminate group-mates from out-group competitors. However, individual recog-

nition becomes increasingly challenging as group size increases and as signals must be transmitted over greater distances.

We hypothesised that for hyenas long-distance calls could be used to determine the individual identity and the group membership of the caller.

Our research sought to determine what information is in these calls, and how hyenas are able to determine whether they are hearing a group mate or an intruder.

We found these calls were individually distinct. Hyenas from the same clan did not sound similar enough to identify the caller's group membership from voice alone. This means hyenas must be able to re-



member the voices of their group mates, an impressive feat of memorisation. It also has implications for how hyenas maintain contact with each other and coordinate their movements over long distances.

Our results suggest that individual identity of the caller is im-

portant enough and that a group signature is not enough information for a listening hyena to decide whether to respond or not. Furthermore, distinctive voices may more easily evolve and identifying the individual is enough for hyenas to remember what group the caller belongs to.

■ HYENAS FROM THE SAME CLAN DID NOT SOUND SIMILAR ENOUGH TO IDENTIFY THE CALLER'S GROUP MEMBERSHIP FROM VOICE ALONE

■ THE RESULTS SUGGEST THAT INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY OF THE CALLER IS IMPORTANT ENOUGH AND THAT A GROUP SIGNATURE IS NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION FOR A LISTENING HYENA TO DECIDE WHETHER TO RESPOND OR NOT

Hyena social groups
Spotted hyenas can be found in a range of habitats throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Their population is estimated to be between 20,000 and 50,000 individuals, with the highest known concentrations in Tanzania's Serengeti ecosystem. They live in

social groups, called clans that range in size from only six in harsh semi-desert habitats in Namibia to over 125 individuals in Kenya's Maasai Mara National Reserve.

Within these social groups, spotted hyenas have a strict dominance hierarchy that determines who gets to feed first at carcasses and kills. When a female hyena has new cubs, they enter the dominance ranking right below their mother, pushing their older siblings lower in the pecking order.

Spotted hyenas share and defend a territory as a group, but those groups can be large and individuals are often spread out across the landscape.

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Bitter internecine war plagues BJD in Ganjam

Fighting has sparked concern among hopefuls putting their poll prospects at stake in Aska, Kabisuryanagar and Khallikote Assembly constituencies



gathering at Beguniapada and made several complaints against the local MLA. Local voters suspect that the simmering tension might turn into an explosive situation if the party leaders do not act fast. The senior leaders in the party are yet to take any steps to stem the resentment brewing among the workers.

In the third case, a former MLA and party workers conducted large gatherings to voice their opposition against the local MLA of Khallikote Assembly segment. Till now, three women MLAs are at the receiving end of the party workers' anger.

The Gopalpur MLA, after being sacked from the ruling party, is now an independent MLA. His supporters have formed Pradip Sena and going all out against the party leaders in the Assembly segment. Political analysts said that this is indicative of the bitter internecine war plaguing the party.

The political secretary of the Chief Minister has been assigned the task to look after the political developments and other issues in the Assembly segment.

Similarly a senior retired officer is managing the politics and other affairs in Hinjili Assembly segment. A senior party leader alleged that lack of any organisational activities has led to an increase in indiscipline and dissidence among the party leaders and workers.

The district BJD president said that very soon an organisational meet will be organised at Chhatrapur or any other place in the district.



WALKING THE RAMP: Models participate in a fashion show on the concluding evening of Silk City fest in Berhampur, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

Bandh for city hospital hits life in Kendrapara

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, Jan 17: Normal life was thrown out of gear here Tuesday when members of Medical Banchao Kriyanusthan Committee observed a 24-hour bandh demanding conversion of the old building of the district headquarters hospital (DHH) at Khadianga in the town into a city hospital.

All business establishments remained closed and vehicles stayed off the roads as protestors burnt tyres and put up barricades at over 30 places. Attendance in all banks, government and private offices was thin as the agitators resorted to picketing and did not allow movement of people during the bandh.

The agitators held a protest meeting and road blockade at Tinimuhani Square on Cuttack-Chandbali road,



the main entry point of the town.

Movement of vehicles on Cuttack-Chandbali main road was severely affected due to the bandh.

Notably, all departments of the DHH barring Gynaecology and Blood Bank were shifted from the old building at Khadianga to new building at Samagudia January 9, 2023. Since then, the residents have been demanding conversion of the old building into a city hospital.

The old building is currently functioning as urban health centre, where OPD services are available from 8am to 12 noon and 4pm to 6pm.

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For detailed terms and conditions, Commission and application format please visit our website www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in & <http://tenders.gov.in> or contact Office of the Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, East Coast Railway, Khurda Road Division, P.O: Jatni, Dist: Khurda, PIN: 752050.

PR-909/N/22-23 Divisional Commercial Manager /Khurda Road

Spiritual talk workshop at PPL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paradip, Jan 17: Employees need motivation and inspiration from time to time to give their hundred per cent at workplace and remain stress free, more so in a factory and manufacturing site, this is utmost required. In order to address this issue, Paradeep Phosphates Limited (PPL) authorities organised a day-long motivational & spiritual talk and workshop for its employees.

Renowned spiritual guru Rajyogini Bramha Kumari Sunita Didi from Bramha Kumaris headquarters Mount Abu, Rajasthan was invited to organise the workshop. She is a life member of the Bramha Kumaris and heads the media, IT, business, education and women's wing at the headquarters.

Sunita Didi presided over two sessions, one for employees and one for all women participants. The topic for employees was 'Being Positive,



No Matter What', in which she narrated the entire procedure how one individual can be happy at workplace and ignore all negative vibes around so that he/she can give the best input in order to enhance the overall productivity of the organisation. Similarly in the session for women, she highlighted the 'Four Faces of Women' which is essential for every woman to realise their role in constructing a better society.

Pranab Bhattacharyya, Chief Manufacturing Officer and Unit Head, thanked all employees for attending the extremely useful workshop.

Body found on NH-16

Ganjam: A blood-stained body of a man was found alongside the National Highway-16 under Rambha police limits in this district, Monday. Sources said a few people from a tourist bus alighted from the vehicle to answer the nature's call near the NH when some of them spotted the body and informed the patrolling vehicle. Police from Huma outpost rushed to the spot and seized the body. Police however, did not find any documents of the deceased to establish his identity. Preliminary inquiry revealed that the deceased might have been beaten to death as blood stains have been found on the nose and mouth. There were abrasion marks on the body too. The body has been sent for post-mortem and further investigations are on, police said.

Two detained for gangrape of minor

Chandbali: Two persons were detained on charges of their involvement in alleged gangrape of a minor girl under Banshada police limits in Bhadrak district, police said Tuesday. Banshada police are interrogating the duo while another accused is absconding. Police said three youths gagged the minor when she had gone out to relieve herself and took her to a prawn gherry and took turns to rape her, December 12 evening. The matter came to the fore after the survivor's father lodged a complaint at Banshada police station, Monday. Police registered a case and detained the duo while a manhunt has been launched to nab the third accused.

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3 Period of completion	1 month
4 Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal	From 11.00 A.M. of 19.01.2023 to 5.00 P.M. of 30.01.2023
5 Last date / time of receipt of bids in the portal	5.00 P.M. of 30.01.2023
6 Date & time of opening of bids	11.00 A.M. of 31.01.2023
7 Name and address of the officer inviting bid	The Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Cuttack- 753004, Odisha, Ph. (0671) 2979063, email: eehptctil@gmail.com , sephdct521@gmail.com

Further details can be seen from e-procurement portal <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>
Sd/- Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Cuttack
OIPR-13225/11/0003/2223

Indoor air pollution five times worse than outdoors



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 17: As Delhi-NCR reels under massive air pollution after Diwali every year, leaving people with respiratory illnesses gasping for fresh air, experts Tuesday said that as most people spend winter days inside and even though the indoor air quality may appear to be better than outdoor air quality, it can be up to five times worse.

The indoor and outdoor air pollution are often treated as two separate entities but outdoor pollutants, such as vehicle exhaust fumes, pollen and mould spores, can also enter our indoor spaces.

According to Dr Vipul Gupta, Chief - Neurointerventional Surgery and Co-Chief Stroke Unit at Artemis Hospital in Gurugram - it is believed that indoor air pollution is worse than outdoor air pollution as it is in a contained area which enables the potential pollutants to harm us even more.

"The harmful dust, dirt and gases present inside buildings are linked to several health concerns like cardiovascular diseases, chronic lung diseases and/or development of several infections," Dr Gupta told IANS.

The main cause behind indoor air pollution is known to be gases or particles released into the air, substances like building materials, tobacco smoke, wood-burning stoves cause indoor pollution. Once inside, they can react with indoor pollutants, creating a complex cocktail of dirty air.

"Likewise, indoor pollutants, such as smoke from burning wood or cooking fumes, can exit buildings through ventilation. For example, air fresheners and deodorants may contain Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and benzene, while cleaning products can contain benzene and household fumes and odours," Ginger Lee, Senior Electronics Engineer, at consumer electronics com-

pany Dyson told IANS. Furniture and carpets can also emit formaldehyde and flame retardants that accumulate in the air, while emissions from cooking appliances, such as ovens and stoves, may contain a range of substances that deteriorate indoor air quality.

"As modern homes generally have better sealing, these pollutants can become trapped and are unable to escape," said Lee. According to a report in the Indian Journal of Community Medicine, statistics suggest that in developing countries, health impacts of indoor air pollution far outweigh those of outdoor air pollution.

Around 4.2 million people die prematurely due to indoor air pollution, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Lee said that their purifiers make the invisible visible, helping users to understand the types of pollution they are exposed to on a daily basis and giving peace of mind that these pollutants are being captured and that they are breathing clean air indoors. The HEPA+Carbon filter removes 99.95 per cent of pollutants as small as 0.1 microns such as allergens, bacteria, pollen and mould spores and harmful gases. Dr Gupta advised people to ensure ventilation as it will freshen the air present inside the room and will help in removing the polluted air.

"Along with ventilation, decluttering or cleaning your rooms/households every now and then is important for never letting dust settle and trap pollutants inside. Indoor plants are also a great way to prevent indoor air pollution as they will purify the air quality present inside," he noted.

Bank of India Gold Auction Notice

Bhubaneswar Zonal Office, Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015

It is hereby brought to the notice of the following gold loan borrowers, their legal heirs, persons engaged in business of gold ornaments and general public that in spite of repeated notices by the Bank, the following borrowers are not repaying their dues to the Bank. Notice is hereby published that if they fail to deposit all their dues in their respective gold loan accounts (including Up-to-date interest and all costs charges /expenses) by Dt.30.01.2023, their pledged gold ornaments will be sold in online auction on <http://gold.samil.in> on 31.01.2023 from 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM., Contact Person: Debasis Subudhi, Mob.: 8249273250, Yagus Khanna-Mob.-9899800180. For this Bank shall not be held responsible for any inconvenience or damage caused to the concerned borrowers and no allegations or representations will be entertained from any borrowers in this regard. Bank reserves the right to cancel the auction without assigning any reasons in case, the bidding price so arrived at is observed to be low or inadequate. Further, if need be, Bank reserves the right to change the date & time of the above scheduled auction or cancel the same without assigning any reasons thereon.

Sl. No.	A/c. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower(s)	Gross Wt. in Gram	Net Wt. in Gram	Total Dues as on 16.01.2023(excluding unapplied Charges)
KANDIA BRANCH, KANDIAHAT KENDRAPADA ODISHA 755016					
1.	51097761000073	Titu Malik, At: Panasaganda, P.O.: BD Pur, Dist.: Kendrapada, Odisha- 755016	11.3	11.3	₹ 40,076.58
2.	51097761000077	Titu Malik, At: Panasaganda, P.O.: BD Pur, Dist.: Kendrapada, Odisha- 755016	6.505	6.505	₹ 23,856.44
KHANDAGIRI BRANCH, PLOT NO.: 1215,1514, KHANDAGIRIBARI, KHANDAGIRI, BHUBANESWAR, ODISHA-751030					
1.	558677610000390	Sarada Prasanna Praharaj, S/o- Late Sarat Chandra Praharaj, Plot No.: 1010/2256, Kapilaprasad, P.O.: Sundarpada, P.S.: Airfield Police Station, Bhubaneswar, Khorda-751002	60.28	52.9	₹ 1,49,500/- (Gold Loan) ₹ 18,52,431/- (LAP loan)
JAYADEV VIHAR BRANCH, 1/1D, STAR HOUSE, JAYADEV VIHAR, BHUBANESWAR- 751015					
1.	556473710000004	Dillip Kumar Mohapatra, C/o- Debananda Behera, Plot No.: 947/4049, Prasanti Vihar, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar- 751003	23.210	19.284	₹ 67,912.65
2.	556477610000152	Dillip Kumar Mohapatra, C/o- Debananda Behera, Plot No.: 947/4049, Prasanti Vihar, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar- 751003	15.950	13.500	₹ 58,669.84
4.	556477610000170	Jyotsna Rani Mahapatra, Plot No.: 947/4049, Prasanti Vihar, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar-751003	17.000	15.000	₹ 64,217.98
5.	556477610000183	Lajabanti Pradhan, House No.: 724, Near Gandhi Market, IRC Village, Bhubaneswar-751015	17.520	16.650	₹ 54,823.74
6.	556477610000214	Sansar Digaal, Hotel Pal Heights , J/7, Jayadev Vihar, Bhubaneswar-751015	15.510	13.180	₹ 25,507.35
7.	556477610000245	Niranjan Behera, Jyote Motors Pvt Ltd, A/62, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015	16.000	14.720	₹ 52,140.79
RAGHUNATHPUR BRANCH, PLOT NO.: 1317/2939, NEAR MAUSIMA MANDIR, AT/PO: RAGHUNATHPUR, DIST.: KHURDA-751024					
1.	557777610000129	Gautam Kamila, Plot No.: 81 and 82/970 At: Haridaspur, P.O.: Naharakanta, Bhubaneswar, PIN-752101	251.22	202	₹ 7,25,000/-
KUHUNDA BRANCH, KUHUNDA					
1.	558877610000531	Ghanshyam Sethy, C/O-natbar Sethy Kunuda Jaypur, Benupura	4.95	3.3	₹ 11,620/-
2.	558877610000532	Ghanshyam Sethy, C/O-natbar Sethy Kunuda Jaypur, Benupura	20.22	15.92	₹ 55,785/-
BIJUPATTANAIK PARK BRANCH, CDA SEC 10 JUDGE COLONY					
1.	512377610000469	Samarendra Samal, Plot No.: 2F 965, Sec-11, CDA-753014	10.2	9.7	₹ 37,900/-
BUDDHESWARI COLONY BRANCH, PLOT NO.: 786, CUTTACK ROAD, BHUBANESWAR- 751006					
1.	513677610000091	Om Prakash Grover, C/o- Jitendra Choudhury, Plot No.: 871/1783, Near SBI Colony, Kesura, P.S.: Sahidnagar, Bhubaneswar- 751002	99.06GMS	83 GMS	₹ 3,45,629.33
2.	513677610000150		17.000GMS	16.150GMS	₹ 60,770.28
NK ROAD, NABAKALEBARROAD,PURI					
1.	555877610000343	Bikash Kumar Mallik, C/o-Balaram Mallik,Bentapur,Bramhagiri, Puri	56	30	₹ 1,44,535.29
2.	555877610001331	Pradeep Biswal, S/o- Kahanu Biswal, Dhankuti Saha, Puri Municipality, Puri	36.37	9	₹ 30,207.17
3.	555872610000012	Soumendra Kumar Pattnaik, S/o- Surendra Kumar Pattnaik, Marchikot Lane, Puri	13	11.8	₹ 30,868.84
TANKAPANIROAD BRANCH, 1298 (P), BRAHMESWARPATANA, BHUBANESWAR-751018					
1.	557177610000370	Bidulata Jena, 2415,Jharana sahi,Badagada Brit Colony,Bhubaneswar-751018	18.49	17.9	₹ 73,725.48
2.	557177610000376	Bidulata Jena, 2415,Jharana sahi,Badagada Brit Colony,Bhubaneswar-751018	15.44	13	₹ 53,287.19
3.	557177610000360	Manorama Dash, LB-233 Badagada Brit colony Bhubaneswar, Khordha 751018	21.4	18.19	₹ 69,361.85

Date: 17.01.2023
Place: Bhubaneswar
Authorized Officer
Bank of India

If you can always smile at life, life will always smile at you.

THE MOTHER



Not Religion

The latest Oxfam report has nailed the truth in India where a microscopic rich minority is getting richer and the majority grovelling in poverty. Yet, the main political discourse seems oriented towards religion. The Congress, which is desperately trying to refurbish its image as a party of the masses through its 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' campaign, is getting into the trap. Instead of raising the issue of dire economic plight of the majority, it is now busy identifying which Opposition parties are having tacit understanding with the BJP. The so called sickular crowd seems to have lost the plot.

The Oxfam report says that 'economic inequality in India is being added to a society that is already fractured along the lines of religion, caste, region and gender.'

The stark reality in India is that 73 per cent of the wealth generated in 2017 went to 1 per cent of the rich. The richest have cornered a huge part of the wealth created through crony capitalism and inheritance while the poor are still struggling to earn minimum wages and gain access to quality education and health care for which government investment is minimal.

The focus could have been on the issue that even if India reaches a 5 trillion economy, 4.75 trillions will, most likely, be with the 1 per cent mentioned in the recent Oxfam report. The rest 0.25 trillion may get distributed among the rest of the 1.5 billion people.

It looks as if the Congress is shifting gear towards religion, away from the economic crisis that is harming every single household of this country today. This will only help the BJP gain rich political dividends as religion of the majority is the prime plank for that party. The Congress strategy of dragging in the secular credentials of parties, including Aam Admi Party, Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM will divert focus and make it look like the minorities are the only issue for the Congress.

Congress spokesman Jairam Ramesh cast doubts about the sincerity of Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP and Owaisi's AIMIM to fight the BJP. According to the Congress assessment, both the parties are working at the behest of the BJP to blunt the edge of anti-incumbency factor and eat into the Congress votes. As such the two parties are, in the Congress' eye, supposedly agents or 'B' teams of the BJP working to make the Congress irrelevant in the country's politics and help the BJP retain power both at state and national levels.

The Congress cites the outcome of recent Assembly elections in Gujarat and Goa as examples of the two parties' backstabbing it, while maintaining a façade of antipathy towards the BJP. For this reason, it is convinced, the AAP fielded candidates in the Gujarat Assembly election in such a manner that ensured the anti-incumbency factor did not help the Congress swell its vote base. On the contrary, it cut into Congress' votes, thereby helping the BJP increase its vote share. Along with these two outfits, the Congress seems to be also considering Badruddin Ajmal's AIUDEF, K Chandrasekhar Rao's TRS (renamed BRS), Naveen Patnaik's BJD, AIADMK, Akali Dal and YSR Congress Party as part of the 'B' Team helping the BJP clandestinely.

The Congress may not be far from the truth. It is true all these political parties and their leaders do not raise issues that might harm the BJP's poll prospects anywhere. The AAP, for instance, was silent on the Bilkis Bano case and the fate of cases of atrocities on the minorities during the Gujarat elections.

Similarly, Owaisi's anti-Hindootva rhetoric is nothing but a ploy to help the BJP's gameplan of consolidating its Hindoo vote base by playing the communal card aggressively. In fact, Owaisi and his party have long become suspect in the eyes of some other Opposition parties as well in Bihar and West Bengal. In the last Assembly elections in both these states his fight against the BJP was considered to be hypocritical despite his anti-Modi posturing. His main agenda, as alleged by the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal and the RJD in Bihar, was to dent the support of the minorities for the two parties to help the BJP surge ahead of its main adversaries taking advantage of the division of votes.

It is doubtful if turning the secular-religious debate into the main election plank, as the Congress seems to be doing once again will help the non BJP cause.

The flaw of such a policy is that it weakens Opposition unity so much that the fight against the BJP appears doomed. Opposition alliances in the past were built on a so-called principle of extending issue-based support with economy being the main focus. A common minimum programme aimed at improving the economy that will help the majority of the populace takes care of disparities, mismatch and suspicion of allies so that the bigger goal of ousting the ruling party or alliance out of power could be achieved.

The Congress seems not yet prepared to follow this trajectory at least at the moment. By talking about the secular credentials of some Opposition parties it is only betraying its incapacity for understanding the plight of masses despite its mass-contact campaign.

Unemployment, low wages, crippling of the micro, small and medium enterprises due to demonetization, utter failure of foreign policy resulting in the total isolation of India on the global theatre and lastly the divisions created through language and such issues along with the obviously blatant encouragement given to a few select industrialists who are cornering everything in this country should be issues raised that would make people sit up and think.

Let religion be kept away from the discourse.

WISDOM CORNER

Gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions. The more you express gratitude for what you have, the more likely you will have even more to express gratitude for. ZIG ZIGLAR

I have learned silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet, strange, I am ungrateful to those teachers. KAHILIL GIBRAN

I have realized that the past and future are real illusions, that they exist in the present, which is what there is and all there is. ALAN WATTS

WORDSWORTH

Farrago

Farrago, in its more usual sense of a confused mixture, turns up so often in phrases of condemnation like "a farrago of excess and obfuscation", "a farrago of deceit and lies", or "a rambling farrago of half-digested knowledge", that it has become one of those all-purpose dismissive words that ought to appear in public only when attached to a health warning. The word has no meaning for most people apart from negative associations in such set phrases. To judge from the company it keeps, it is much favoured by judges and journalists but by hardly anybody else. It's hard to be sure from the evidence, but there are indications that people are sometimes using farrago to mean a lot of noise and argument about nothing very much, or some happening or event which has gone disastrously wrong. The Oxford English Dictionary has on file an example from as long ago as 1989 that looks as though it is going that way — David Kalstone wrote in *Becoming A Poet*: "Recalling the 'farrago' years later, Bishop said that she never again sent Moore any of her poems for suggestions or approval". It looks very much as though people are confusing it with fiasco or furor, and through that confusion creating a new deprecatory sense for the word. But then, farrago has been a negative word right from its first recorded appearance, in the middle of the seventeenth century in John Row's *Historie of the Kirk of Scotland*: "A strange miscellanee, farrago, and hotch-potch of Poperie, Arminianisme, and what not". This is only a few years after farrago appeared in the language in its original literal sense.

FOCUS JOSHMATH CALAMITY

ANTHROPOGENIC CREATION

Reports on the sinking town of Joshimath get worse. Water is now said to be gushing out of fields while houses are developing cracks. In fact, parts of the hill town may have sunk by nearly 2.2 feet (70 cm) based on ground investigation of affected areas carried out recently. The gateway to famous pilgrimage sites is indeed facing subsidence and hitting headlines these past few days. Moreover, the latest report is way ahead of ISRO's survey on surface deformation which found 5.4 cm subsidence in just past 12 days. Obviously, the hill town, as also many others, is unable to keep pace with rapid urbanisation and the heavy tourist inflow during summer season. The state authorities have ignored warnings by experts who have repeatedly cautioned about the area's vulnerability.



Road and tunnel constructions in a fragile mountain ecosystem are creating havoc and leading to the present-day crisis in Joshimath and this is being done despite objections raised by environmental engineers and seismologists



Dhurjati Mukherjee

IT CANNOT BE DENIED THAT THE HILLS, JUST LIKE CITIES, NEED INVESTMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE. BUT THAT HAS TO BE SCIENTIFICALLY PLANNED, KEEPING IN MIND THE GEOLOGICAL FACTORS

For the past few decades, the entire region from Chamoli to Joshimath has been familiar with disasters. The glacial avalanche known as the Chamoli disaster led to flash floods in the Rishiganga and Dhauliganga rivers, tributaries of the Ganga, in February 2021. The disaster killed 200-odd people, including workers trapped in the Tapovan Vishnugad hydropower plant's tunnel on Dhauliganga river. Worse, despite the region's geological and environmental sensitivity, numerous hydroelectric projects, including the Vishnugad hydel project have been approved in areas such as Joshimath and Tapovan.

A scientific study 'Joshimath localized subsidence and erosion of the AT Nala' carried out way back in 2006 by the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, revealed that parts of the town were "sliding by one cm every year." But even then, the NTPC was building two tunnels as part of its hydroelectric project, opposed by geologists with some warning if the tunneling work was not shelved, Joshimath, gateway to Badrinath, may sink. Experts expressed urgency on the need to find a passage for the water coming out of the ground. Road and tunnel constructions in a fragile mountain ecosystem are creating havoc and leading to the present-day crisis in Joshimath and this is being done despite objections raised by environmental engineers and seismologists. Executive Director of Uttarakhand Disaster

Management Authority, Piyooch Routela, had in a scientific journal in May 2010 cautioned that Joshimath has been "showing signs of distress due to burgeoning anthropogenic pressure." He pointed out that the town is covered with a thick layer of overburdened material. Large boulders of gneisses and fragments of basics and schistose rocks are embedded in grey-coloured, silty-sandy matrix. This makes the town highly vulnerable to sinking. Over the years, experts have highlighted the lack of enforcement of building laws leading to unplanned settlement and weak structures, unmindful of the carrying capacity of the town that witnesses high tourist inflows every summer. Moreover, the town does not have proper drainage facilities. According to YP Sundriyal of HNB Garhwal University: "The gradually weathering of fine materials between the rocks of debris, water percolation has decreased the cohesive strength of the rocks over time. This resulted in landslides, triggering cracks in the houses."

Obviously, too much construction has caused several large-scale landslides. Between 2009 and 2012, the CSIR chief scientist DP Kanungo recorded 128 landslides in the Chamoli-Joshimath region. He published his findings in *Landslides: Journal of the International Consortium on Landslides*, in 2014. In 2018, a report published in *Current Science* highlighted major landslides in

the region, including the massive landslide on May 19, 2017, at Vishnuprayag, the confluence of the Dhauliganga and Alaknanda rivers, eight km from Joshimath.

In 2021, the 13.2 MW Rishiganga Hydropower Project and the 520 MW NTPC Hydropower Project turned a natural disaster into a major human tragedy. The NDMA report on the Chamoli disaster in April 2022 clearly stated that it will be necessary to focus on finding alternative sources of energy, as the area appears to be environmentally sensitive. Meanwhile, investigations have prompted geologists to attribute the cracks to accelerated sinking in parts of the town triggered by the sudden discharge of the aquifer's water since the night of January 2-3. But this crisis was predicted long ago. Even as recently as August, a team of geologists visited towns around Joshimath and noticed cracks in specific locations named in Sema, Sunil and Ravigram. The team in its report recommended counter measures including steps to enhance the drainage facilities and control erosion along the segments of the Alakananda river, north of the town. Thus, it is believed that a major portion of the damaged houses need to be permanently removed and population shifted to a safer location after implementation of landslide zonation areas. As regards the rehabilitation process, land has already been identified at three locations — Koti Colony, Jati Booti Udyan and

Pipalkoti — which are close to Joshimath. It is understood that Geological Survey of India will conduct a study of these three locations and then the design of houses will be made as per proper specifications by the Central Building Research Institute (CBRI). Meanwhile, state authorities are also considering building vulnerability assessment and repair and retrofitting, where applicable, in the less affected zones.

Keeping the above in mind, it may be stated that there is a need for a scientific study of mountains to investigate the carrying capacity and the structural characteristics. In this connection, it's good to know that Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has decided to carry out a technical and scientific study of all cities and towns in the hills and that construction will be stopped in places found to have exceeded the carrying capacity. Any future development plan would be done based on its findings, he had announced a few days back.

So far, 782 houses from an earlier estimate of 678 houses have been affected due to ground subsidence and 81 families shifted to safer places. At the same time it has been reported that Karnaprayag, located 82 km south-west of Joshimath, is too sinking.

The fact that Joshimath being a key tourism point, especially pertaining to religious tourism, makes the issue more complicated. Strict adherence to experts' views needs to be followed, which are not much different from earlier studies. However, there must be a balance in that tourists should not face much hardship and travel to the religious places may be safe and easy. It cannot be denied that the hills, just like cities, need investment and infrastructure. But that has to be scientifically planned, keeping in mind the geological factors. Faster travel facilities and large-scale construction can wait till scientific scrutiny is conducted. Apart from Joshimath, which has made headlines, it is time to ponder whether construction of a railway line in quake-prone Gangtok would be advisable and pursued without getting the scientific nod. The authorities must remember the idiom: a stitch in time saves nine.

The writer is Sr. Consultant & Guest Faculty at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kolkata. ©INFA

IN JEST THIS

If you're the first, you make history

Only 12 men have ever walked on the moon, but most people — if they racked their brains hard enough — would be able to name only one of them: Neil Armstrong.

That's because he was the first human to walk on the moon, and if you're the first human to achieve a major feat, you get fame and acclaim. If you're the second human to achieve the same feat, you get a pat on the back, a box of chocolates and, if you're lucky, an autographed photo of the first human to achieve the feat.

This is partly why the Russians didn't try too hard to land on the moon. The Americans had already been there, so why bother? No point in being the second country to land on the moon.

But Russia (or the Soviet Union) missed an opportunity to make history. They could have landed their spaceship on the moon and sent one of their cosmonauts onto the surface to utter these immortal words: "That's one small step for woman, one giant leap

for womankind." The first woman to walk on the moon would be almost as famous as Neil Armstrong. She would certainly be more famous than the other 11 men who have walked on the moon.

The opportunity is still there, of course. No one has been to the moon since December 14, 1972, when the Apollo 17 crew completed their mission.

The first 12 people to walk on the moon were all white men. Russia, America or another country could make history by taking a diverse group of astronauts to the moon. They could make history with (1) the first African to walk on the moon; (2) the first Asian to walk on the moon; (3) the first Hindu to walk on the moon; (4) the first Muslim to walk on the moon; and (5) the first gay person to walk on the moon.

Yes, there's still plenty of history to be made in outer space. But you don't have to be an astronaut to make history. There are plenty of opportunities left on earth, particularly for women.

For example, Anoud Al-Asmari recently made history as the first Saudi woman to be officially certified as a FIFA referee. This is a great achievement for Saudi Arabia. It gives me hope that someday, perhaps in the near future, someone will make history as the first Saudi woman to be officially certified as a completely free individual. (Someone who can get married without her father's permission.)

Women are achieving firsts all over the world. In America, Maura Healey recently became the first woman and first LGBTQ+ person to be elected governor of Massachusetts. Manpreet Monica Singh made history as well, becoming the first female Sikh judge in the US. And perhaps most impressive, Olivia Pichardo, an 18-year-old pitcher, made history when she made the cut for Brown University's baseball team, becoming the first woman to play for a Division 1 varsity college baseball team. All her teammates will be men, but none quite as fa-

mous as Olivia. In India, Sania Mirza made history in tennis, but another Sania Mirza is making history without a racquet. This Sania Mirza hails from Uttar Pradesh's Jasovar village and is undergoing training to be a fighter pilot for the Indian Air Force. Before long, she will become India's first Muslim woman fighter pilot.

The other Sania Mirza made history in 2009 when she won the mixed doubles championship at the Australian Open, becoming the first Indian woman to win a major tennis title.

I don't know how many other Sania Mirzas are going to make history in the coming years, but don't be surprised if you open a newspaper one day and read this: "As election results were announced yesterday, supporters of Sania Mirza, a 35-year-old woman from Agra, celebrated her historic victory with loud music and dancing, as she became the first Sania Mirza to win a seat in the Lok Sabha."



Melvin Durai

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN ASTRONAUT TO MAKE HISTORY. THERE ARE PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES LEFT ON EARTH, PARTICULARLY FOR WOMEN

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Unhealthy for democracy

Sir, There is little doubt that the Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi flagrantly violated the 'constitutional principle' by skipping portions and adding some on his own to suit his whims during his recent address in the state Assembly that created a huge controversy. His action shows a growing pattern under the current BJP-led government at the Centre that uses the Governors' offices in the non-ruling BJP states as an instrument to debilitate the constitutional roles of the state governments. A good Governor must stay above politics and manifestly be seen as impartial and fair. The Constitution gives no discretion or volition to Governors in the matter of convening the session of the Assembly. In fact, in 1936-37 when the Congress party won the elections in seven provinces, it took office on the condition that the British Governors would not interfere in the functioning of its ministers and refrain from exercising 'discretion and special powers.'

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Horrible crash

Sir, The twin-engined ATR 72 aircraft crash near Pokhara airport in Nepal has once again underlined the need for a foolproof mechanical and human system to keep the aircrafts all over the world safe. A combination of pilot fatigue, pilot mishandling and malfunctioning system could have caused the deadly crash. It is reported that the weather was fine and the skies were clear. Therefore, pilot-related stress or fatigue could have been an important factor. But the aircraft was 15 years old and was supposedly flying with an old transponder and an equally old and unreliable data. Experts are examining whether the aircraft was unfit to be flown in the first place. Flying in Nepal is a big challenge as the nation is home to eight of the world's fourteen highest mountains. If one adds poor navigation infrastructure and inadequate pilot training processes, then the reasons of the crash become more obvious.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Populist measures

Sir, The Congress has resorted to populist measures to woo women voters in Karnataka ahead of Assembly polls in April/May this year. AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi announced a monthly dole of Rs 2,000 to each household led by a woman if Congress is elected. Besides, last week it announced 200 units of free electricity to all homes in the state if voted to power. However, the Congress' cash scheme must be taken with a pinch of salt, considering its promises of a monthly dole in Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, and HP remain on paper.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

national

of the day quote

The BJP has given the country a new phrase: Governance of Saturation. It is actually Governance of Indigestion by over indulgence of meaningless slogans and one liners

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS LEADER

Upcoming elections to the Maharashtra Legislative Council have clearly shown confusion in the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA (UDHAV BALASAHEB THACKERAY) LEADER

The Rajasthan government is working on a priority to uplift every section of society through transparent, accountable and sensitive good governance

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

SHORT TAKES

Boy kills mother

Tikamgarh (MP): A 16-year-old boy Tuesday allegedly shot dead his mother in Tikamgarh city of Madhya Pradesh as he was apparently angry with her for scolding and beating him on several occasions, a police official said. The boy, a student of class 11, used his father's licensed rifle to shoot at his 43-year-old mother at their home, killing her on the spot, the official said. His father, who works as a security guard in a bank, was not home at the time. After committing the crime, the teenager informed the police and waited for them to arrive at the scene, the official said.

Man booked

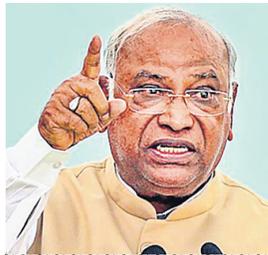
Patna: Police in Bihar's Gaya filed an FIR against a man found dragging his pet dog for one km from his motorbike on Tuesday. The shocking incident was witnessed in Gandhi Maidan area of Gaya where a person came with his pet dog. As it was not running with him, he tied its chain to his bike and dragged it for one km. The incident was spotted by a car occupant, who made a video of animal cruelty, and also intervened to save the dog, which had sustained several injuries and was bleeding. Following the incident, the video was uploaded on social media.

Criminal held

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (STF) have arrested self-proclaimed chieftain of banned outfit 'Azad Hind Fauj', which was active in Bihar's Sheohar, Sitamarhi, Motihari and Muzaffarpur districts. The accused, Nitesh Kumar Singh (45) alias Maharaj who carried a cash reward of Rs 50,000 announced by Bihar Police, was arrested from Vibhuti Khand police station area in Lucknow's Gomti Nagar. A native of Sheohar district, Singh was named in a mass murder in Pakaridyal locality of Motihari district in 2016.

Hearing adjourned

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court Tuesday adjourned, to January 30, the hearing of JNU student Sharjeel Imam's two different pleas seeking regular bail and interim bail in connection with a 2020 riots case involving allegations of sedition. A division bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Talwant Singh was dealing with a petition seeking interim bail in a case where he was charged under Section 124A (sedition) of the Indian Penal Code. Counsel for Imam said that he has been granted bail in another case where sedition charges were present.



The BJP has widened the gap between the rich and the poor so much that the common man continues to sink in its abyss

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

COLD WAVE CONTINUES

Drass town in Ladakh region froze at minus 29 degree Celsius Tuesday even as severe cold wave continued in the Valley, as per the MeT office



Reach out to every section of society: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 17: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday asked BJP members to reach out to every section of society, including minorities such as Bohras, Pasmandas and Sikhs, and work for them without electoral considerations, party sources said here.

In his address at the BJP national executive, which concluded with his address, Modi noted that nearly 400 days are left for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and asked party members to serve every section of society with full dedication in a speech described by several participants as his big vision to expand the saffron organisation and lead the country in every aspects.

Various party members who were part of the audience said the prime minister spoke highly of 'sufism' and also asked them to meet professionals from different walks and visit places like universities and churches to connect with them.

The prime minister said India's best era is coming and the party should dedicate itself to the country's development and turn 'amrit kaal', the 25 year period till 2047, into 'kartavya kaal' (era of duties). Sources said he also cautioned the party against any sense of 'overconfidence' and cited example of the BJP's loss in Madhya



Pradesh in 1998 despite the unpopularity of then Congress government led by Digvijay Singh. Modi was then a key minder of the BJP's organisational affairs in the state.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis told reporters that Modi, in his address to the BJP national executive meet, emphasised on reaching out to all sections of society. "The BJP is no longer merely a political movement but a social movement as well that is working to transform socioeconomic conditions," Modi told the executive, he said.

The prime minister said people in 18-25 age group have not witnessed the political history of India and are not aware of "corruption and wrongdoings" that took place under previous governments. "So, they need to be made aware. Let them know about the good governance of the BJP," he said.

LG not my headmaster: Kejriwal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 17: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Tuesday used the Hindi proverb "begaani shaadi mein Abdullah deewana" to hit out at LG VK Saxena, questioning his authority with a "he is not my headmaster" jibe.

Addressing the Delhi assembly on the issue of the LG's alleged interference in his government's work, Kejriwal even claimed that Saxena told him during their meeting last week that the BJP won 104 seats in MCD polls because of him.

Kejriwal's comments came a day after he led a march to LG's office from Delhi Vidhan Sabha to protest against his alleged interference in the functioning of the AAP government. Kejriwal alleged that Saxena suffers from a "feudal mindset" and does not want good education for poor children in the city.

"Not even my teachers checked my homework as the LG scrutinises my files. The LG is not my headmaster. People have elected me as chief minister," he said. Last week on Friday, Kejriwal had met Saxena and following the meeting. The chief minister alleged that Saxena had called the 2018 Supreme Court judgement "a mere opinion" after Kejriwal had told him that it said that LG has no independent decision-making authority.

Reiterating those allegations, Kejriwal further claimed the LG told



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal speaks during a session of the Delhi Legislative Assembly, in New Delhi

Kejriwal's comments came a day after he led a march to LG's office from Delhi Vidhan Sabha to protest against his alleged interference in the functioning of the AAP government

The Chief Minister said he has the mandate of two crore people of Delhi but who is LG

him during the meeting that the BJP won 104 seats in the MCD polls because of him and that the saffron party would win all the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi in the next general elections.

Talking about how LG twice objected to the proposal of his government of sending teachers to Finland, he said Saxena said teachers can be trained in India. The chief minister alleged that the LG "suffered from a feudal mindset and doesn't want that the poor children in Delhi get good education".

"I was a good student... My school teachers did not check my homework the way LG is checking - this spelling is wrong or he is not my headmaster. Who is LG, where has he come from? He is sitting on our heads. Begaani shaadi mein Abdullah deewana (a stranger who takes too much interest in the affairs of others)," lashed Kejriwal.

The chief minister said he has the mandate of two crore people of Delhi but who is LG. "I told him dur-

ing the meeting: "I have been chosen by the people of Delhi. I asked him who has chosen you. He said that I have been appointed by the President," he said.

Kejriwal compared LG to the Viceroy that were appointed during the British rule. "Viceroy used to say: You bloody Indians don't know how to govern! Today LG is saying: You Dilwallas don't know how to govern!" he added.

Continuing the attack, Kejriwal questioned LG whether he will decide where we should send our children to study? "Our country is lagging because of such people with a feudal mindset," he claimed.

The chief minister also turned a bit philosophical and said that nothing is permanent and he might not be in power in Delhi in future. "Nothing is permanent in life. We may be in power at the Centre tomorrow, with our LG. Our government will not harass people. We will respect the mandate of people" Kejriwal said.

He said the LG does not have the power to make decisions on his own. "The Supreme Court has clearly said that he cannot take a call on issues barring the police, land and public order." Kejriwal added. The chief minister also showed a list of "children of BJP MPs, MLAs and ministers who have studied abroad", and said everyone should have access to the best education.

Mathura residents send letters in blood to PM, CM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mathura (UP), Jan 17: As protests against the proposed development of Bankey Bihari temple corridor in Mathura intensifies, the local residents and shopkeepers have now sent letters written in blood to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

The protesters stated that the proposed development is uncalled for and it would rob them of ancestral homes and affect their livelihoods. Besides, the area's heritage value will be ruined by the construction.

Over 300 shops and houses are to be demolished for the proposed corridor. Bankey Bihari market association president Amit Gautam said on Tuesday, "In protest against the proposed development of the corridor, over 300 shops operating in the vicinity around the temple were closed on Monday.

"We have written letters, using our blood as ink, to the Prime Minister and chief minister demanding not to allow the destruction of the area in the name of the flawed plan of development."

He said that the protests will intensify if the government does not withdraw the plan. For the proposed corridor an eight-member committee had completed a survey earlier this month on the orders of the Allahabad high court.

THE PROTESTERS STATED THAT THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IS UNCALLED FOR AND IT WOULD ROB THEM OF ANCESTRAL HOMES AND AFFECT THEIR LIVELIHOODS. BESIDES, THE AREA'S HERITAGE VALUE WILL BE RUINED BY THE CONSTRUCTION. OVER 300 SHOPS AND HOUSES ARE TO BE DEMOLISHED FOR THE PROPOSED CORRIDOR



Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait with farmers distributes food during ongoing month-long annual traditional Hindu festival 'Magh Mela' in Prayagraj PTI Photo

3 detained following violence in college

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 17: Three youths have been detained after two student groups clashed and opened fire in a Meerut college.

The incident took place two days after a former college student was assaulted, allegedly by a current student leader of the institution.

No one suffered injuries in the firing incident but panic gripped the area.

Circle Officer, Civil Lines, Arvind Chaurasia, said: "We have detained three youths, and a search is on to nab others involved in the firing. Two outsiders were cornered by college students and were being thrashed. We took the outsiders into our custody."

According to reports, two days ago, former Meerut College student Pushpender Singh was allegedly beaten by a current student leader, Vijit Talyan, in Begum Bagh locality.

The clash was in retaliation to the incident. Pushpender Singh has been admitted to a hospital with injuries. The CO said: "A student, Priyanshu Singh, who was part of Talyan's group was targeted during the attack but he had locked himself in a room. Preliminary investigation revealed that it is a fight between two student groups."

The police have filed an FIR against unnamed accused for rioting and using firearms as the identification process is on. Police are yet to reveal the identity of the three detained youths.

IndiGo passenger opens emergency door

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Bangalore, Jan 17: A passenger accidentally opened the emergency exit of an IndiGo plane after boarding at Chennai airport last month and the aircraft, which was on the ground, was subject to mandatory engineering checks before it flew to Tiruchirapalli.

On Tuesday, Opposition Congress targeted Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya, amid reports that the passenger, who accidentally

opened the emergency exit of the plane was the BJP Yuva Morcha chief.

It has also questioned as to why the government hid the incident so long.

Neither Surya nor his office has reacted to the allegations so far. In a statement on Tuesday, IndiGo said a passenger travelling on flight 6E 7339 from Chennai to Tiruchirapalli on Dec 10, 2022, accidentally opened the emergency exit during the boarding process.

"The passenger immediately apologised for the action. As per SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures), the incident was logged and the aircraft underwent mandatory engineering checks, which led to a delay in the flight's departure," it said.

The airline declined to comment about the identity of the passenger. A senior official at aviation regulator DGCA on Tuesday said the event was duly reported and that no safety was compromised.

Man flees Delhi 5-star hotel leaving ₹23 lakh bill

Shareef checked into the hotel by impersonating an important functionary of the UAE government's 'Office of His Highness Sheikh Falah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan' and giving a fake business card, according to police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 17: Police are on the lookout for a man who stayed at a Delhi 5-star hotel for four months by posing as a senior functionary of the UAE royal family and fled without paying bills worth more than Rs 23 lakh, officials said Tuesday.

The accused, Mahamed Shareef, had checked into the Leela Palace New Delhi on August 1 last year. He was staying in room number 427 and fled from the hotel on November 20, they said. He, besides cheating the hotel of Rs 23.46 lakh in outstanding bills, also decamped with valuables, including silver bottle hold-

ers and a mother of pearl tray, police said.

Shareef checked into the hotel by impersonating an important functionary of the UAE government's 'Office of His Highness Sheikh Falah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan' and giving a fake business card, according to police. They said that he also gave a UAE resident card on arrival at the hotel.

"It seems the guest purposely gave these cards to create a false image and garner extra trust with intent to cheat and deceive the hotel at a later stage," the hotel management said in its complaint.

The guest had also made a few part settlements in the month of



August and September 2022 worth 11.5 lakhs for room charges, the total outstanding still stands at Rs 23,48,413 against which he had issued a post-dated cheque worth Rs 20 lakhs due for November 21, 2022

which was duly submitted to our bank on September 22, 2022, but due to insufficient funds the cheque bounced," it said.

On November 20 last year, around 1 pm, the man fled from the hotel

with valuables, a senior police official said. The complainant said, "This seems to be completely pre-planned since we were under the impression that by November 22, 2022, the hotel will get the dues cleared through the cheque he had submitted." This clearly signifies that "Mr. Shareef had malafide intentions and a clear intent to deceive hotel authorities. This is a clear case of theft, cheating and fraud against The Leela Palace, New Delhi," the complaint stated.

Footage from CCTV cameras, installed inside and outside the hotel's premises, is being checked to ascertain Shareef's activities, the official said. "Multiple teams have been formed to trace the accused man. We have not been able to establish his occupation yet and are working to gather his personal details. We have put his phone number on surveillance to get his last location," he said.

Rahul hits out at BJP, RSS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hoshiarpur (Punjab), Jan 17: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Tuesday accused the BJP and the RSS of capturing institutions and putting pressure on the EC and the judiciary, and also declared that he will not visit an RSS office even if someone slits his throat.

Answering a question on the possibility of reaching out to his cousin and BJP MP Varun Gandhi, he said their ideologies do not match. "I can never go to an RSS office. You can slit my throat, but I will not go. My family has an ideology, it has a thought system," he said at a press conference here on the sidelines of his Bharat Jodo Yatra. "I can meet him, hug him. But I cannot accept that ideology, that is impossible," he said.

He accused the RSS and the BJP of controlling institutions. "This is not a fight between one political party and another political party. It is now a fight between the institutions which were captured by them and the opposition. Out of which one factor is EVM," he said to a question on Electronic Voting Machines. Normal democratic processes in the country are now "missing", he claimed. He also asserted that it is abundantly clear that economic distress, unemployment and price rise will deal a "severe blow" to the BJP.

His remarks on Varun Gandhi come amid speculation that the BJP MP, who often has been critical of his own party, might be joining the Congress.

To a question, the Congress leader said Varun is in the BJP and if he walks into the yatra, he will face a problem, implying that the saffron party might object. Gandhi, whose foot march is passing through Punjab, also took a swipe at the ruling AAP government in the state, saying Punjab should be run from Punjab only, not from Delhi.

"It is a historical fact. If it is run from Delhi, then people of Punjab



There is a pressure on all the institutions. There is a pressure on the press, there is a pressure on bureaucracy, there is a pressure on the Election Commission, they put pressure on the judiciary

will not accept it. It is not political but it is a fact," he further said. Gandhi Monday had said that Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann should not be remote controlled and should run the state independently.

On the Shiromani Akali Dal raising questions on his visit and seeking his apology for Operation Bluestar and the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, Gandhi said the former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had made his position and that of the Congress very clear.

Former Congress president Sonia Gandhi has also done that and "I fully endorse what (former) Prime Minister Singh ji and Sonia Gandhi ji said. I have also made my stance abundantly clear in the past," he said.

Gandhi said there was no security lapse in the march Tuesday after a man came rushing to meet him and tried to hug him.

"I do not know why you are calling that a lapse. I think the person was checked by the security peo-

ple, he was a bit overexcited. There is quite a lot of enthusiasm to the Yatra. Many people get overexcited and that was the case where he was a bit extra charged up, so there is no problem in that. It has happened many times before. I wouldn't call that a security lapse," said Gandhi.

The man rushed towards Gandhi to hug him during the yatra but was stopped by Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring. Inspector General of Police G S Dhillon said there was no security breach. The march, which started from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu September 7, will conclude in Srinagar by January 30, with Gandhi hoisting the national flag in the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir.

It has so far covered Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

Punjab, Haryana battle severe cold conditions

PUNJAB, HARYANA AND THEIR COMMON CAPITAL CHANDIGARH HAVE BEEN IN THE GRIP OF SEVERE COLD FOR THE PAST OVER THREE WEEKS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Jan 17: Severe cold weather conditions prevailed in Punjab and Haryana, with Bathinda, Faridkot and Hisar recording sub-zero minimum temperatures Tuesday.

Bathinda and Faridkot in Punjab reeled under a piercing chill, record-



REPRESENTATION IMAGE

ing minimum temperatures of minus one degrees Celsius each, according to the Meteorological Department's weather report. Biting cold also swept Amritsar, which recorded a low of 1.4 degrees Celsius while Ludhiana reg-

istered a minimum of 1.6 degrees Celsius. Patiala, Pathankot, Gurdaspur, Moga and Mohali were also under the grip of severe cold, recording respective minimums of 2 degrees Celsius, 2.9 degrees Celsius, 2.8

degrees Celsius, 0.8 degrees Celsius and 6.2 degrees Celsius. Chandigarh, the common capital of the two states, recorded a low of 5.7 degrees Celsius.

In Haryana, freezing cold swept Hisar, which recorded a minimum temperature of minus 1.3 degrees Celsius. Cold wave also swept Sirsa, which recorded a low of 0.2 degrees Celsius.

Karnal, Narnaul, Rohtak, Bhiwani and Ambala also reeled under biting cold, recording respective night temperatures of 2.3 degrees Celsius, 1.5 degrees Celsius, 1.8 degrees Celsius, 2.6 degrees Celsius and 5.2 degrees Celsius. Punjab, Haryana and their common capital Chandigarh have been in the grip of severe cold for the past over three weeks.

Mann scraps liquor mfg unit in Ferozepur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Jan 17: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann Tuesday ordered the immediate closure of a distillery and ethanol plant in Ferozepur after a month-long agitation against the unit by local villagers.

Alleging that the distillery was polluting groundwater in several villages and causing air pollution, the villagers staged demonstrations in front of the plant for the past six months under the banner of Sanjha Zira Morcha.

In a video message announcing the distillery's closure, Mann said, "For purity of Punjab's water, air and its land, and keeping in view the interests of the people, after consulting legal experts, I announce that orders have been issued to shut down the liquor factory in Zira with immediate effect."

"In future, too, if anyone takes law into one's hands, be it concerning pollution norms, laws related to mining or the Transport department, any law framed by the government, if anyone violates that deliberately or for any vested interests or for economic gain causes harm, no matter how big (powerful) that person may be, will not be spared." The Samyukt Kisan Morcha had also expressed solidarity with the agitating Ferozepur villagers.

Shahjahanpur bird sanctuary in UP attracts many visitors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shahjahanpur (UP), Jan 17: A bird sanctuary that houses winged animals, Indian as well as exotic, and built by a Shahjahanpur-based bird lover is drawing a huge crowd.

Pankaj Batham says when he was young, he saw his grandmother had a special bond with birds, rearing them and sometimes even "talking" to them. "After her death, I took her passion and set up a farm for 28 foreign breeds of birds and hundreds of different varieties of birds of the country," he told PTI.

Batham said some of the foreign breeds of birds at the farmhouse, spread over four acres, include Lady Amarantha (Malaysia), Ringnet (Poland), Yokohama (Vietnam), Silkie (US) and Whitecap (Holland).

Besides, there is Kadaknath breed of cock and Masakali variety of pigeon. From time to time, the birds are given vitamins and antibiotics to keep them healthy, he said.

"Every time before I have my meals, I take a round of the farm to check whether any bird is unwell. Two staff members are deputed for food and water to the birds," he said. Batham said he procures foreign-breed birds online. These birds come to Kerala from foreign countries and then reach Lucknow by



REPRESENTATION IMAGE

Masakali pigeon, seen in movie "Maine Pyar Kiya", enthralls the visitors to the farm when it meanders and spreads its feathers to shape like an umbrella

train. From there they are brought to the farm, he said, adding a foreign-breed bird costs around ₹25,000. Masakali pigeon, seen in Hindi film industry movie "Maine Pyar Kiya", enthralls the visitors to the farm when it meanders and spreads its feathers to shape like an umbrella.

An Australian parrot is also there in the farm. Batham said every day around 9 am hundreds of birds arrive at the farm and he feeds them too.

Professor of Zoology in Swami Sukhdevanand College Dr Ramesh Chandra told PTI that foreign breed birds have different behaviour and they adapt themselves to the new environment easily.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

UP: Self-defence project for 10,000 girls launched

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 17: Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission (UPSMD) has launched a self-defence training pilot project for 10,000 girls in 16 cities of the state.

The programme, which is being implemented by the Sports, Physical Education, Fitness and Leisure - Skills Council (SPEFL-SC) under the UPSMD's Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) initiative, aims to teach self-defence techniques and strategies to women so that they can fight back against harassment and assault.

Minister of vocational education and skill development, Kapil Dev Aggarwal, who announced the launch of the three-day self-defence training program, distributed "Nirbhaya Kits" containing chain alarm, safety whistle and, spray to each candidate at Lucknow's ITI, Aliganj.

He also said similar training



REPRESENTATION IMAGE

The programme, which is being implemented by the Sports, Physical Education, Fitness and Leisure - Skills Council (SPEFL-SC), aims to teach self-defence techniques and strategies to women so that they can fight back against harassment and assault

Minister of vocational education and skill development, Kapil Dev Aggarwal, distributed "Nirbhaya Kits" containing chain alarm, safety whistle and, spray to each candidate at Lucknow's ITI, Aliganj

also started in three other centres - ITI Mohanganj, Mahila ITI Charbagh and ITI Charbagh.

UP govt to plant 35cr trees this yr

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 17: The Uttar Pradesh government, this year, will plant 35 crore trees as part of the annual plantation drive.

Minister of state for environment, forest and climate change (independent charge), Arun Kumar Saxena said that the preparations for the plantation will begin in March with soil work while the saplings will be grown in the nurseries.



REPRESENTATION IMAGE

Last year, there were 35 crore trees that were planted in the state - 25 crore in a day - under the 'Vriksharopan Janandolan 2022'.

The government aims to increase the state's green cover to 15 per cent by 2030 and ambitious plantation targets are being set every year since 2017. According to the State of Forest Report (SoFR) 2021, 9.2 per cent of the total geographical area (GA) of the state has a green cover (which includes both forest cover and tree cover).

UP to launch family ID portal

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Jan 17: The Uttar Pradesh government will launch the family ID portal next month where families can register as a unit for a joint identification number that will help them avail benefits of various government schemes.

The planning department has signed up with an organisation to lead the project with it, which will also help the department identify frauds in schemes like pension, ration distribution, etc., which will be linked with the ID. Currently, the ration card details are being used to generate a provisional ID which is being used in the social welfare department to seed with data of pensioners. The next high priority scheme where



REPRESENTATION IMAGE

seeding will take place is the Kanya Sumangala Yojana.

Principal secretary, planning, Alok Kumar said that considerable work at the backend has taken place to enable the launch of the portal.

"Apart from various departmental teams, we are also getting technical support from Samagra Transforming Governance, which is a mission driven governance consulting firm based out of Delhi," he said in a statement.

The official said, "The plan is to link more than 50 schemes of the Centre and state with the family ID so that the benefit of these can be given transparently to the actual beneficiaries and weed out fake beneficiaries."

Utkarsh Vijay, the vice president of the firm, said that seeding of the Family ID is currently taking place using ration card data and this is being shared with various departments.

TOMMY WEDS JELLY

With band, baaja, baraat dogs get hitched

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 17: This wedding had all the essentials like 'Band, Baja, Baraat', lavish food cooked in 'desi ghee' and guests dancing to filmy songs, but the bride and groom who took the 'perhas' were dogs named Tommy and Jelly.

The marriage was held on the auspicious day of Makar Sankranti (January 14) for which all the arrangements were made at Sukhrawali village of Aligarh district, where a tent was erected for the ceremony.

Devesh Chaudhary said that the idea was mooted by his nephew who has eight months old Tommy, a male dog.

"Jelly is a female dog whose owner is my father-in-law Dr Ram Prakash Singh, a resident of Tikri Raipur in Atrauli area of Aligarh.



REPRESENTATION IMAGE

When we gave him the idea of marriage, he readily accepted it," Devesh Chaudhary told PTI.

Chaudhary's uncle Dinesh Chaudhary, who is Tommy's owner and former head of Sukhrawali, made all the arrangements. A guests' list was prepared and pan-

dit was called to perform the marriage.

The 'baraat' (marriage procession) of Tommy, with a garland taken out in the village with 'dhol' playing and people dancing to its beats, Devesh Chaudhary said. During the marriage, the pandit performed all the rituals with 'mantras', and 'saat perhas' (seven rounds of fire) was also done, he said.

"For guests, dishes prepared in 'desi ghee' included two vegetables, halwa, raita and puri. We spent about ₹1 lakh on the function,"

Devesh Chaudhary said. The food was also served to stray dogs in nearby areas.

"We arranged several e-rickshaws on which the food was kept and went to nearby areas and fed stray dogs," he said. Those who attended the marriage also appeared very enthusiastic as it was peculiar and they participated in all the rituals held in a real marriage. "With this marriage, we also tried to give a message against animal cruelty. The marriage might appear symbolic but our purpose to give the message was served," Devesh Chaudhary said.

Tommy, the pet dog of Dinesh Chaudhary, the former Sukhrawali village head, took perhas with the seven-month-old female dog Jelly of Dr Ramprakash Singh, a resident of Tikri Raipur in Atrauli

of the day quote

People of Meghalaya want a change (in government). There have been issues between Assam and Meghalaya. There should be a peaceful resolution to the border dispute between the two states

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

The party during its National Executive Meeting has identified a total of 1.3 lakh 'weak booths.' Necessary steps would be taken to strengthen them

RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD | BJP LEADER

The Centre has made concerted efforts to increase the representation of women in central government jobs and provide them a balance between professional and family life

JITENDRA SINGH | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Student found dead in hostel

Ranchi: The body of a student was found hanging in the hostel of Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ranchi on Tuesday. It is being suspected that the deceased was murdered as his hands were tied at the back with a rope. The deceased has been identified as Shivam Pandey, a resident of Varanasi. Pandey's room is on the fifth floor of the hostel, located in Nagdi police station area of the city. On receiving information of the incident, the police reached the spot and recovered the body, which has been sent to RIMS for post-mortem.

Sex racket busted

Gurugram: The Gurugram police have arrested two managers, seven customers and 18 women for allegedly operating a sex racket from two spa centres in Gurugram, the police said Tuesday. The arrested have been booked under different sections of the Immoral Trafficking Act and an FIR has been registered against them at the Sector 29 police station. According to the police, they acted following a tip off about prostitution carried out at the Spa centres in Mega City Mall located on Mehrauli-Gurugram Road.

Man looted

New Delhi: A 42-year-old man was shot at and Rs 5 lakh snatched from him by four bike-borne assailants on a busy north Delhi road, police sources said here on Tuesday. The victim has been identified as Hunny Kumar Kalra, a resident of Vijay Nagar area and the incident occurred on Saturday.

Man arrested

Amaravati: A man arrested on allegations of theft of sheep was found dead under suspicious circumstances in a police station in Andhra Pradesh's Anantapur district Tuesday. Ramanjaneyulu was found dead in Rayadurgam police station. Police said he hanged himself to a fan in the computer room. Some villagers had caught him and another person Srinivasulu for theft of sheep on Monday. They thrashed the accused and later handed them over to police.

Jawan ends life

Amaravati: Suicide by two personnel of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) within 24 hours at Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Andhra Pradesh's Nellore district has shocked the security staff. Sub-inspector Vikas Singh, who was on night duty, shot himself in the head with his pistol on Monday night.



The Narendra Modi government is following a policy of deliberately withholding Collegium recommendations for months and years to keep the fate of named judges in limbo

RANDEEP SURJEWALA | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

FIRST TIME

Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, visited the NCC Republic Day Camp 2023 at Delhi Cantt in New Delhi January 17. This is for the first time a CDS has visited NCC Republic Day Camp



Biswanath Prasad Parvati Devi Jaiswal Memorial Trust, Delhi, organised the Manas Ratna Samman Samahroh 2023 December 15. Swami Balkananda Giri Maharaj (right), the guest of honour, with Trust's chairman Shivprasad Jaiswal (middle) and Ravi Prakash Jaiswal (left) were present on the occasion



Medini Jaiswal performs Bharatanatyam at Manas Ratna Samman Samahroh 2023 organized on December 15 in Delhi

Dawood Ibrahim has remarried: Nephew

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 17: Fugitive underworld don Dawood Ibrahim has a second wife who is a Pakistani and he has lied about divorcing his first wife, his nephew has told the National Investigation Agency which is probing a case pertaining to a global terrorist network and a criminal syndicate involved in terrorist and criminal activities in India.

The statement of Alishah Parkar, son of Dawood's sister Haseena Parkar, is part of the charge sheet filed by the NIA in the case in November last year. The case is related to a global terrorist network and a transnational organised criminal syndicate, namely 'D-Company', which it claimed is involved in various terrorist and criminal activities in India.

"Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar wife's name is Maizabin and he is having three daughters Marukh (married to Jumaid, son of Javed Miandad), Mehrin (married) and Maziya (unmarried) and one son Mohin Nawaz (married)," Alishah Parkar said in the statement, which was made available recently.



The statement of Alishah Parkar, son of Dawood's sister Haseena Parkar, is part of the charge sheet filed by the NIA in the case in November last year

"Dawood Ibrahim is having a second wife, she is Pakistani Pathan," he said, adding that Dawood Ibrahim shows that he has divorced his first wife, but the fact is it's wrong. He further mentioned that Dawood Ibrahim lives in a defence area behind Abdullah Gazi Baba Dargah in Karachi, Pakistan, along with his family. The NIA in its charge sheet alleged that Ibrahim had sent a "huge amount of money" through hawala channels to accused arrested in the case pertaining to aiding terrorist activities of 'D-Company' in India.

4 Kanjhwala accused charged with murder

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 17: The Delhi Police has slapped murder charges against four of the accused in the Kanjhwala accident case in which a woman was killed after being dragged by a car, officials said on Tuesday.

Six of the seven accused in the case were initially charged under section 304 (Culpable homicide not amounting to murder), they said. Police said Amit Khanna (25), Krishan (27), Mithun (26), and Manoj Mittal, who were inside the car at the time of the incident have been slapped with murder charge.

Earlier, the police had said murder charges were slapped against six of the seven accused. "We have added murder charges against four accused who were present inside the car at the time of the incident," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Harendra K Singh. A murder charge may attract death penalty or imprisonment for life and fine.

"In the Sultanpuri incident, after collection of physical, oral, forensic and other scientific evidence, the police has added section 302 IPC in place of section 304 IPC," Sagar Preet Hooda, Special Commissioner of Police (Law and order) said.

The move comes a day after the Delhi Police told a sessions court that it will invoke section 302 of the Indian Penal Code in the case. In a statement, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Harendra K Singh said the police has moved the Motor Accident Claim Tribunal (MACT) for early grant of compensation to victim's family. After examination of facts and circumstances, a case under sections 279 (Rash driving or riding on a public way) and 304A (Causing death by negligence) of the Indian Penal Code was registered, he said. During further investigation, section 304 (Punishment for culpable homicide not amounting to murder), 120B (criminal conspiracy) and 34 (common intention) were also added in the case on the same day on which the incident was reported, he said.

India welcomes UNSC's terror tag for Makki

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 17: India on Tuesday welcomed the UN Security Council decision to declare Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) leader Abdul Rehman Makki as a global terrorist and said it would continue to press the international community to take credible, verifiable and irreversible action against the menace.

External Affairs Ministry spokesman Arindam Bagchi said threats from terrorism in the region remain high and sanctions by the UNSC were an effective tool to curb such threats. "We welcome the decision of the UN Security Council's ISIL and Al Qaida Sanctions Committee to list Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist Abdul Rehman Makki, who is also the brother-in-law of LeT leader Hafiz Saeed," Bagchi said in response to questions.

Makki, the 68-year-old brother-in-law of Jamat-ud Dawra (JuD) chief and Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed, was designated

a global terrorist by the UN after China lifted its hold on a joint India-US proposal to blacklist the deputy chief of Pakistan-based terror group LeT.

Bagchi said Makki has occupied various leadership roles in LeT, including raising funds for the organisation. "Threats from terrorist organisations in the region remain high and listings and sanctions by the UNSC, are an effective tool to curb such threats and dismantle terror infrastructure in the region," Bagchi said.

He said India remained committed to pursuing a zero-tolerance approach to terrorism and will continue to press the international community to take credible, verifiable and irreversible action against terrorism. In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin described terrorism as a "common enemy of humanity" and praised Pakistan's efforts in taking action against the scourge.

"The relevant people have been



convicted and sentenced by Pakistan. The listing also shows Pakistan's firm combat against terrorism, it is a recognition," Wang said, without elaborating why China, a close ally of Pakistan, decided to put a technical hold in the first place.

In the past also China has been stalling India's efforts to impose UNSC sanctions on Pakistan-based terror operatives. Jamaat-ud-Dawa

External Affairs Ministry spokesman Arindam Bagchi said Makki has occupied various leadership roles in LeT, including raising funds for the organisation

In the past China has been stalling India's efforts to impose UNSC sanctions on Pakistan-based terror operatives

chief Hafiz Saeed and Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar were placed under UNSC sanctions after years of diplomatic manoeuvres by India.

The proposals to impose sanctions on Hafiz Saeed's son Talha Saeed, LeT leader Shahid Mehmood, JeM operative Abdul Rauf Asghar, also a key conspirator of the December 2001 attack on the Parliament building, and LeT's

Sajid Mir are still pending before the UN Security Council.

"When I was the Ambassador at the UN, it took us 10 years to designate Masood Azhar. It has taken a much shorter time for the next level of success," Syed Akbaruddin, India's former Permanent Representative at the UN, said.

"The hope is that those who are in the pipeline, now, will be speeded up further, so it clearly indicates a change of pace, a faster ability to get things done and our willingness to take on difficult circumstances. We were able to thwart their (Chinese) stranglehold indicating a willingness that today, we are not the same India of the past. We are willing to confront and push towards our goals and our interests," Akbaruddin said. Makki's listing comes seven months after China, a close ally of Pakistan, had put a hold on a joint proposal by India and the US to designate the head of the political affairs wing of JuD/LeT.

Two terrorists killed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Jan 17: Two Lashkar-e-Toiba terrorists were killed in a brief encounter with security personnel near the court complex in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam district on Tuesday, police said.

"On a specific input about the movement of terrorists through Budgam, a joint area domination party of the Army and Police tried to stop one suspected vehicle near the court complex. Terrorists fired upon and in retaliation two terrorists were killed," a police spokesperson said.

Additional Director General of Police, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said the slain terrorists were affiliated to proscribed outfit Lashkar-e-Toiba and have been identified as Arbaaz Mir and Shahid Sheikh, both from Pulwama district. Kumar

said both the terrorists had escaped from a cordon and search operation last week in the nearby Magam area.

An AK rifle and a pistol were recovered from them, he said. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an event, DGP Dilbag Singh said the militants were probably looking for a new hideout after they fled from the previous one last week.

"There was an operation in Redbugh area two days ago in which there was some firefight, but terrorists managed to escape. We were looking for them and check-points had been put up for that. "We had inputs about their movement in a vehicle. When this vehicle was signalled to stop, terrorists came down and started firing. In the retaliatory fire, two terrorists were killed," Singh said.

71-yr-old dragged by scooter after accident

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Jan 17: In a horrific incident, an elderly man was dragged for almost a kilometre by a scooter-borne youth, who attempted to flee after hitting the former's SUV on Tuesday.

A video of the 71-year-old Muthappa, a publisher by profession, holding on to the speeding two-wheeler precariously on a road stretch has gone viral, creating a sense of outrage. The scooter rider identified as Sahil, hit Muthappa's SUV from behind, and when he attempted to question the former, he tried to escape.

Muthappa then tried to hold on to the scooter to ensure that he didn't flee, but was dragged by the scooter-borne man for almost a km on Magadi Road. Police have detained the scooter-borne man, police sources said, adding that the



A video of the 71-year-old Muthappa, a publisher by profession, holding on to the speeding two-wheeler precariously on a road stretch has gone viral, creating a sense of outrage

victim is undergoing treatment. "He was arrogant, did not stop after hitting my Bolero from behind and tried to flee away. So I did not want to leave him. He tried best to escape and wanted me to leave his scooter,

he rode the vehicle like a snake. Couple of youngsters followed and tried to attack and stop him. Finally a couple of auto drivers and bikers managed to stop him and caught hold of him," Muthappa said.

Joshimath sinking: Anatomy of a Himalayan disaster in the making

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Joshimath (Uttarakhand), Jan 17: Joshimath is a town on the edge. It's the very precipice for thousands of people, despairing as the lives they have always known slip away just as their mountain town sinks a little more each day and cracks on their homes get dangerously wider.

Families are segregated, and pets and cattle remain unattended as people move out to safety. Many small businesses have shut shop or are in the process of doing so. The future looms dark and uncertain with residents saying they are not sure how long it will take for the earth to swallow their hometown.



"This is a disaster in the making. Many of its implications will unfold in the days to come. You will soon see an epidemic of mental issues cropping up in the town," Atul Sati, president of the

Joshimath Bachao Sangarsh Samiti and environmental activist, said.

The fear of the unknown tomorrow is constant. Two weeks after she woke up to a loud sound, akin to stones crumbling against each other, Nita Devi is still in a daze. The family has been evacuated to safety and she returns each day to see if her home is still intact.

"I have just one request from the government - provide us with a house. We just need a roof over our heads," she said, her eyes welling up. Next to a red cross, a stark contrast to the blue walls of what was once her home, is an orange sticker saying "unusable". For the 65-year-old, the vivid colours are cruel irony for the gloom ed-

ing her life and that of her town.

"Where can we go from here? My son had a furniture business here which is now shut. My grandson used to go to school here," she said, pointing to gaping fissures that were not so long ago hairline cracks on the walls of her home. "My son told me it is dangerous to live in the house as the land around the neighbourhood is sinking."

Nita Devi and her family are not alone. Joshimath, a town of nearly 23,000 people in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district at a height of over 6,150 feet, is slowly sinking, said experts. Disaster response teams are on standby and officials ready plans to evacuate 40 per cent of the town if the sit-

uation worsens. However, fears all

of Joshimath town might need to be evacuated as every life matters.

Cracks have developed in nearly 850 buildings, including a temple and the Auli Ropeway, and on pavements and streets. An estimated 165 buildings are in danger zone. Some hotels now lean on each other. Over 600 people from 145 families have so far been shifted from their homes to schools, gurdwaras, hotels and hostels. A walk through the streets in some places tells the story of the slow devastation that the subsidence has caused. A team of experts from seven organisations has been constituted to study and give recommendations on the situation in Joshimath.

international

of the day quote

Mutual understanding is an important prerequisite for cooperation. Online communication, no matter how frequent or how technologically advanced, is no substitute for in-person meetings

LIU HE | VICE PREMIER OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Sweden and Finland must deport or extradite up to 130 terrorists to Turkey before the Turkish parliament will approve their bids to join NATO

RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN | PRESIDENT OF TURKEY

We are facing a threat of the collapse of a world as we know it, the way that we are accustomed to it and to what we aspire

OLENA ZELENKA | UKRAINE'S FIRST LADY

SHORT TAKES

Activists resume protests in Germany

Berlin: Dozens of climate activists glued themselves to a main street in Germany's western city of Cologne and to a state government building in Duesseldorf Tuesday to protest the destruction of a village to make way for a coal mine expansion, German news agency dpa reported. The protests came a day after the last two climate activists holed up in a tunnel beneath the village of Luetzerath left the site.

8 shot, 1 critical at MLK Day event

Fort Pierce (US): Police in Florida said eight people were shot during an Martin Luther King Jr. Day event, with one of the victims listed in critical condition. The St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office confirmed all the victims in the Monday shooting in Fort Pierce were adults, WPBF-TV reported. The shooting occurred at Ilous Ellis Park at 5:20 p.m. During an MLK Car Show and Family Fun Day, which the sheriff's office said was attended by more than 1,000 people, the TV station reported.

Another Hindu temple vandalised in Australia

Melbourne: A second Hindu temple has been vandalised in Australia with anti-India graffiti, leaving the community in a state of shock, a media report said Tuesday. The vandalism of the historic Shri Shiva Vishnu Temple in Carrum Downs, Victoria, comes just days after the BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir in Mill Park was vandalised by anti-India supporters, The Australia Today reported.

Six killed in Calif shooting

Los Angeles: Six people were killed in a shooting in central California in the US, local media reported. Two of the victims of the shooting in Goshen, Tulare County, are a 17-year-old mother and a six-month-old baby, Xinhua news agency reported. The Tulare County Sheriff's Office said in a release posted on its Facebook page that deputies were called to a home in the 6800 Block of Harvest Road in Goshen just after 3:30 a.m. Monday local time for multiple shots heard.

Belarus, Russia start joint drill

Minsk: Belarus and Russia have launched a joint tactical air force exercise that will last until February 1, the Belarusian Defence Ministry has said. The main goal of the exercise is to "increase operational compatibility" during joint combat training missions, Xinhua news agency reported, citing a statement by the ministry.



Due to a shortfall of government revenue, we have taken measures to cut spending. Public salaries, pensions and welfare activities must continue despite hardships

BANDULA GUNAWARDANE | MEMBER OF THE SL PARLIAMENT

NEPAL PLANE CRASH: DEATH TOLL RISES TO 71

Nepalese authorities Tuesday started handing over to family members the bodies of those killed, two days after Yeti Airlines' aircraft with 72 people, including five Indians, crashed in the resort city of Pokhara, as the death toll rose to 71



Tanks for Ukraine in sight

AGENCIES

Dnipro, Ukraine/Kyiv, Jan 17: Ukraine came a step closer Tuesday to winning the fleet of modern battle tanks it hopes could turn the course of the war against Russia, after the West's big holdout Germany said this would be the first item on its new defence minister's agenda.

In the central city of Dnipro, authorities called an end to the search for survivors in the ruins of an apartment building destroyed during Russian missile attacks Saturday.

Forty-four people were confirmed killed and 20 still unaccounted for in the attack, the deadliest for civilians of a three-month Russian missile bombardment campaign. Seventy-nine people were wounded and 39 rescued from the rubble.

Nearly 11 months after Russia invaded, Kyiv says a fleet of Western battle tanks would give its troops the mobile firepower to drive Russian troops out in decisive battles in 2023.

German-made Leopard battle tanks, workhorse of armies across Europe, are widely seen as the only plausible option available in sufficient numbers. But they cannot be delivered without authorisation from Berlin, which has so far demurred.

With Western allies meeting at a US airbase in Germany Friday to pledge military support for Ukraine, Berlin is under intense pressure to lift its objections this week, in what would be one of the most consequential shifts in Western aid so far.

The decision sits on the desk of Germany's new Defence Minister Boris Pistorius, named on Tuesday to replace Christine Lambrecht, who quit after missteps including



NEW GERMAN DEFENCE MINISTER ANNOUNCED AS BORIS PISTORIUS

BERLIN HOLDING UP TANKS FROM OTHER EUROPEAN ALLIES

DEATH TOLL IN DNIPO RISES TO 44

a cheerful New Year's message about the war that opponents called tone deaf.

"When the person, when the minister of defence, is declared, this is the first question to be decided concretely," German Economy Minister Robert Habeck told Deutschlandfunk radio broadcaster Tuesday, before the appointment was announced.

In his first comments in the job, Pistorius, a regional politician viewed as close to Chancellor Olaf Scholz, made no mention of weapons for Ukraine: "I know the importance of the task," he said in a statement.

"It is important to me to involve the soldiers closely and to take them with me," Pistorius is due

to host US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin Thursday ahead of Friday's big meeting of allies at Ramstein air base.

Germany has been cautious about approving weapons that could be seen as an escalation. But allies increasingly argue that concern is misplaced, with Russia showing no sign of backing down from its assault on its neighbour.

Britain broke the taboo over heavy tanks over the weekend, pledging a squadron of its Challengers. But it has too few to form the basis of a Ukrainian force. Washington's Abrams tanks run on turbine engines, seen as burning too much fuel for Ukraine to field in large numbers.

That leaves the Leopards, which Germany made in the thousands during the Cold War and which are now fielded by armies across Europe. Poland and Finland have already said they would send Leopards if Berlin gives re-export approval.

Russia plans 'major changes' in forces

MOSCOW: Russia said Tuesday that it would make "major changes" to its armed forces from 2023 to 2026, promising to shake up its military structure after months of setbacks on the battlefield in Ukraine. In addition to administrative reforms, the Defence Ministry said it would strengthen the combat capabilities of its naval, aerospace and strategic missile forces. "Only by strengthening the key structural components of the Armed Forces is it possible to guarantee the military security of the state and protect new entities and critical facilities of the Russian Federation," Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the changes had been made necessary by the "proxy war" being conducted in Ukraine by the West, which has been sending increasingly heavy weaponry to Ukraine to help it resist Russian forces.



Yemen rebels, Saudis in back-channel talks to maintain ceasefire



Yemen's war began when the Houthis descended from their strongholds in northern Yemen and seized the capital of Sanaa in 2014

Saudi Arabia entered the war in 2015, heading a military coalition with the United Arab Emirates and other Arab nations

The conflict became a proxy war between regional foes Saudi Arabia and Iran

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cairo, Jan 17: Amid Yemen's longest-ever pause in fighting — more than nine months — Saudi Arabia and its rival, the Iran-backed Houthi rebels, have revived back-channel talks, according to Yemeni, Saudi and UN Officials. The two sides hope to strengthen the informal cease-fire and lay out a path for a negotiated end to the long civil war.

The quiet is fragile, with no formal cease-fire in place since a UN-brokered truce ended in October: It has been shaken by Houthi attacks on oil facilities and fiery rhetoric from Yemen's internationally recognised government, allied with Saudi Arabia, which complains it has so far been left out of the talks. Lack of progress could lead to a breakdown and a renewal of all-out fighting.

But all sides appear to be looking for a solution after eight years of a war that has killed more than 150,000 people, fragmented Yemen and driven the Arab world's poorest country into collapse and near starvation in one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

Saudi Arabia restarted indirect

exchanges with the Houthis in September, when it became clear the UN-brokered truce wouldn't be renewed. Oman has been acting as intermediary. "It's an opportunity to end the war," a UN official said, "if they negotiate in good faith and the talks include other Yemeni actors." Like other officials, the UN official spoke on condition of anonymity because of the fragility of the talks.

A Saudi diplomat said his country has asked China and Russia to exert pressure on Iran and the Houthis to avoid escalations. Iran, which has been regularly briefed on the talks by the Houthis and the Omanis, has so far supported the undeclared truce, the diplomat said. The Houthis maintain their grip over the north, Sanaa, and much of the heavily populated west. The government and militias hold the south and east, including the key central areas with most of Yemen's oil reserves. The war has bled beyond Yemen's borders, with the Houthis attacking Saudi Arabia and the UAE with ballistic missiles and explosive-laden drones.

China's Covid death data underestimate true toll, says report

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 17: The nearly 60,000 Covid-related deaths China reported for the first five weeks of its current outbreak, the largest the world has ever seen, may underestimate the true toll by hundreds of thousands of fatalities, experts were quoted as saying in a media report.

China's abrupt pivot from Covid Zero in early December (2022) unleashed a surge of omicron infections and led to 59,938 virus-related deaths in the nation's hospitals through January 12, Bloomberg news agency reported, citing the figures disclosed by the National Health Commission.

While the number swamps the few dozen deaths previously recorded in the official tally - which drew widespread criticism both at home and abroad, including from the World Health Organisation (WHO) - experts say it's still likely to be an underestimate given the enormous scale of the outbreak and the mortality rates seen at the height of omicron waves in other countries that initially pursued a Covid Zero strategy, the news agency reported.



Kite surfers ride the waves in windy weather on the sea in Saint-Malo as the storm Gerard is raging through the western parts of the country, France REUTERS

UN calls on Pak to curb forced marriages

In an appeal to Pakistan, the UN has urged the authorities to "stop the alleged abuse and kidnapping of teenagers, who are trafficked far from their homes and made to marry men sometimes twice their age"

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Islamabad, Jan 17: Pakistan has been made to realise its consistent failure in ensuring religious security to minorities with the United Nations (UN) calling for immediately curbing coerced religious conversions, child marriages, kidnapping of teenage girls and their forced conversions and marriage to men twice their age.

In an appeal to Pakistan, the UN has urged the authorities to "stop the alleged abuse and kidnapping of teenagers, who are trafficked far from their homes

and made to marry men sometimes twice their age".

Rights experts, while reporting to the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), presented many reports, giving clear indications of outright involvement of religious authorities and the complicity of security forces and the justice system, in cases of kidnapping, forced conversions and child marriages.

Despite the fact that Pakistan has made efforts to pass legislations prohibiting such illegal practices, rights experts have called on the Pakistan government to take tangible and on ground steps to curb the consistently increasing injustice to minorities.

"We urge the government to take immediate steps to prevent and thoroughly investigate these acts objectively and in line with domestic legislations and international human rights commitments. The perpetrators must be held fully accountable," the experts said.

"Pakistan's courts have enabled the perpetrators by accepting fraudulent evidence from them, regarding the age of the victims and their



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGES

willingness to marry and convert to Islam," a group of independent experts and special rapporteurs of the UN emphasised, putting significant focus on upholding the rights of women and children.

Criticising the justice system being manipulatively flawed in

love marriages," they maintained.

"We are very concerned that marriages and conversions have taken place under the threat of violence to these girls, women or their families. The abductors force their victims to sign documents, which falsely attest to their being of legal age for marriage as well as marrying and converting of free will. These documents are cited by the police as evidence that no crime has occurred," the rights experts said.

They added that it is important and pivotal that all victims, regardless of religious background, are afforded access to justice and equal protection under the law. The experts emphasised on the need for Pakistani authorities to adopt and enforce legislations prohibiting forced conversions, forced and child marriages, kidnapping, and trafficking, calling for compliance by the country's commitments to international human rights to combat slavery and human trafficking and to uphold the rights of women and children.

'Prachanda' expands Cabinet to 23 with 6 women in ministry

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, Jan 17: Nepal Prime Minister Pushpakamal Dahal "Prachanda" Tuesday expanded his eight-member Cabinet to 23 with the induction of 12 ministers and three ministers of state, including six women ministers.

Prachanda, the 68-year-old CPN-Maoist Centre leader was sworn in as the Nepal Prime Minister December 25 last year, for the third time after he dramatically walked out of the pre-poll alliance led by the Nepali Congress and joined hands with opposition leader K P Sharma Oli.

The new ministers include Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Energy Rajendra Lingden, Minister for Foreign Affairs Bimala Rai Poudyal, Minister for Communication and Information Technology Rekha Sharma, Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation Sudan Kirati, Minister for Industry and Commerce Damodar Bhandari, and Minister for Health Toshima Karki among others.

China opposes Dalai Lama's planned visit to SL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, Jan 17: China Tuesday opposed a suggested visit by Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama to Sri Lanka, saying the bankrupt island nation must safeguard the bilateral relationship.

A top Chinese embassy official here met the powerful Buddhist prelates in the central town of Kandy to express opposition to the visit for which no dates have been fixed yet.

"Charged d'affaires Hu Wei stated that the government and people of China, including in the Tibet autonomous region, strongly oppose any foreign country receiving the Dalai Lama in any name because the 14th Dalai Lama is absolutely not a simple monk as he self-claimed, but the head of the feudal serfdom," the statement said.

The Chinese concerns followed a meeting by several Sri Lankan Buddhist monks who had met the Dalai Lama at Both Gaya in India earlier this month and invited the spiritual leader to visit the island country, a predominantly Buddhist nation.

of the day quote

Localisation has been a key differentiator as we have continuously developed products based on Indian insights



HONG JU JEON | LG ELECTRONICS INDIA MD

It is wrong to assume that an industry body will automatically become an SRO (self-regulatory organisation). Any industry body will not be SRO. It will be a body representing all the stakeholders



RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR | MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND IT

Due to improved ease of doing business environment in India, it is now possible to start a business in a day in the country



ANURAG JAIN | DPIIT SECRETARY

SHORT TAKES

Govt allocates 3 more coal blocks

New Delhi: The government Tuesday allocated three more coal mines under commercial mining to the successful bidders. With this, allocation orders have been issued for 48 coal mines so far having a cumulative peak rated capacity 89 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) under commercial mining. Representatives of successful bidder received allocation orders from Additional Secretary (Coal) M Nagaraju who stressed on participation of private sector for contributing towards energy security, the coal ministry said in a statement. The cumulative production capacity of the three blocks mines is 3.7 MTPA and its geological reserves is 156.57 MT. These mines are expected to generate an annual revenue of ₹408 crore and will attract capital investment of ₹550 crore.

'OMCs' profitability to be restored in FY24'

New Delhi: State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) are likely to see weak earnings in current fiscal year despite fall in oil prices mainly because of losses they incurred on holding prices in the first half, Moody's Investors Service said Tuesday. "As international oil prices cool on economic slowdown concerns, marketing losses will ease for the three state-owned refining and marketing companies, IOC, BPCL and HPCL. Still, overall earnings for fiscal 2023 ending on March 31, 2023 will be weak because of marketing losses in the first half, when net realized prices did not increase as much as international prices because of fuel price caps," it said.

Mineral production rises 9.7 pc in Nov

New Delhi: The country's mineral production rose by 9.7 per cent in November as compared to the year-ago period, the mines ministry said Tuesday. The cumulative growth for April-November was 4.7 per cent over the corresponding period of the previous financial year, according to provisional figures of the Indian Bureau of Mines. "The index of mineral production of mining and quarrying sector for the month of November, 2022 at 105.8, is 9.7 per cent higher as compared to the level in the month of November, 2021," the mines ministry said in a statement. The output of important minerals in November included coal (761 lakh tonnes), lignite (32 lakh tonnes), natural gas (utilised) 2,779 million cubic metres, petroleum (crude) 24 lakh tonnes and bauxite at 2,228 thousand tonnes.



The argument that India will replace China is very premature as India is much smaller economy as of now

RAGHURAM RAJAN | FORMER RBI GOVERNOR

Rising home prices, rentals a new inflation threat

Housing rentals and ancillary costs have a 10.07% weightage in India's consumer price inflation basket and are near three-year highs, posing a fresh worry for the central bank that had to contend with rising food prices for most of last year



REUTERS

Mumbai, Jan 17: Rising home prices and rentals in large Indian cities could pose a new challenge to the country's central bank in its fight against inflation, even though headline consumer price rises have likely peaked, analysts warn.

Housing rentals and ancillary costs have a 10.07% weightage in India's consumer price inflation basket and are near three-year highs, posing a fresh worry for the central bank that had to contend with rising food prices for most of last year.

Housing has turned sticky and is being watched closely for indications of second-order effects, a senior official aware of the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) thinking said.

Urban housing inflation rose to 4.47% year-on-year in December 2022, versus 3.61% in the same period a year ago and 3.21% in December 2020, data from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation showed.

Though the index eased slightly in November and December from 4.58% in October, it remains close to its highest levels since 2019.

India's retail inflation fell to 5.72% in December, within the RBI's comfort zone of 2%-6% for a second straight month after staying above the upper end for the first 10 months of last year.

However, core inflation, which typically excludes volatile food and fuel prices, remained close to 6%.

"Core inflation has continued to remain sticky and hence an increase in housing inflation poses a significant risk to the overall inflation outlook," said Aditi Gupta, an economist at Bank of Baroda.

She noted that the non-food basket has shouldered much of the recent inflationary pressure.

In the top seven cities, rentals rose 20%-25% on average in 2022 from pre-pandemic levels, with some of the more popular housing societies recording a jump of more than 30%, real estate consultancy firm Anarock said.

Some trends - like hybrid work culture and the need for bigger homes - are likely to stay despite

the pandemic impact waning and could spill over into core inflation amid 'sticky' rental prices, said Ranjani Sinha, chief economist at credit rating agency CareEdge Group.

A housing price index, compiled by the RBI to capture home sales, also shows a steady rise to its highest in over a decade as of the quarter ended September last year.

Average house prices in the top seven cities - National Capital Region, Kolkata, Mumbai Metropolitan Region, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bangalore - increased 4%-7% between October and December, according to Anarock.

That was mainly due to a rise in both input costs and post-COVID demand.

While housing prices are not part of the consumer price inflation basket, their effect is captured through construction and raw material prices, and analysts do not expect a slowdown any time soon.

In fact, housing prices will rise steadily in the next few years, roughly in line with overall economic growth, a Reuters poll of property experts last month showed.

Bank of Baroda's Gupta echoed that prediction.

"While global commodity prices have eased, they still remain elevated. Realtors will continue to push the rise in input prices to consumers. Even on the demand side, it continues to remain strong, which will push prices higher," she added.

Higher interest rates have not been much of a deterrent so far and are unlikely to affect demand going forward. At least not until rates cross 9%, estimates Dhaval Ajmera, director at realty developer Ajmera Realty and Infra India.

Analysts said rising house prices would also feed into higher demand for services like electricity and repairs, ultimately working their way into the overall inflation basket.

RUSSIAN OIL BINGE DRAGS DOWN OPEC'S SHARE

Russia became the third-largest oil supplier to India in 2022, making up about 15% of total purchases, dragging down OPEC's share to the lowest in more than a decade. Refiners in India, the world's third-biggest oil consumer and importer, have been gorging on Russian oil sold at a discount after some Western companies shunned buying from Moscow following its invasion of Ukraine last February.



China's GDP sinks to 3% in 2022, 2nd lowest in 50 yrs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Jan 17: Hit hard by the zero-Covid policy and slump in the real estate market, China's economy shrank to three per cent in 2022, registering its second lowest growth rate in 50 years in the world's second-largest economy, according to official data released here Tuesday.

The annual GDP of China totalled 21.02 trillion yuan (USD 17.94 trillion) in 2022, falling below the 5.5 per cent official target, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said.

The slow pace was blamed mainly on the strictly implemented zero-Covid policy leading to periodic lockdowns and the ruling Communist Party's crackdown on big industrial firms besides the lingering real estate crisis.

This is the slowest growth of the Chinese economy since the 2.3 per cent registered in GDP in 1974.

The slow pace was blamed mainly on the strictly implemented zero-Covid policy leading to lockdowns

Significantly this year, China's GDP in terms of dollars declined from USD 18 trillion in 2021 to USD 17.94 trillion last year mainly due to a sharp rise of the dollar against RMB (the Chinese currency) in 2022.

In RMB terms, the Chinese economy last year posted 121.02 trillion yuan against the 2021 figure of 114.37 trillion yuan.

The GDP growth in the fourth quarter was 2.9 per cent year-on-year, compared with 3.9 per cent in the third quarter as it was hit hard by recurring covid lockdowns of various urban centres, including the top industrial and business hubs like Shanghai.

Industrial output, an important economic indicator, expanded by 3.6 per cent year-on-year in 2022 and 1.3 per cent in December.

China's fixed-asset investment went up 5.1 per cent in 2022.

RBI cautions states against reverting to old pension scheme



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 17: The Reserve Bank has sounded a note of caution on reversion to the old pension scheme by some states, saying it poses a major risk on the 'subnational fiscal horizon' and would result in accumulation of unfunded liabilities in the coming years for them.

The observations in the RBI's Report titled 'State Finances: A Study of Budgets of 2022-23' comes in the backdrop of Congress-ruled Himachal Pradesh becoming the latest state announcing reverting to the Dearness Allowance (DA) linked Old Pension Scheme (OPS).

Earlier, governments of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand informed the central government and the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) about their decision to restart the OPS for their employees. The government of Punjab on November 18, 2022 too had issued a notification regarding implementation of the OPS for the state government employees who are presently being covered under the NPS.

In 2004, the Union government came out with the National Pension System (NPS), a defined contribution pension scheme replacing the old pension scheme.

"A major risk looming large on the subnational fiscal horizon is the likely reversion to the old pension

scheme by some states. The annual saving in fiscal resources that this move entails is short-lived," the RBI report said. By postponing the current expenses to the future, the report said states risk the accumulation of unfunded pension liabilities in the coming years.

Under the old pension scheme, employees get a defined pension. Under this, an employee is entitled for a 50 per cent amount of the last drawn salary as pension.

However, the pension amount is contributory under the National Pension System, which is in effect from 2004. Several economists too have expressed concern over reverting to the OPS saying it would put stress on states' finances.

Former Deputy Chairman of the erstwhile Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia recently spoke against bringing back the OPS, saying it is one of the biggest 'revadis'.

For 2022-23, the RBI report said states have budgeted an increase in revenue spending, mainly led by non-developmental expenditure such as pension and administrative services.

Budget allocations towards medical and public health and natural calamities have been lowered, while housing outlay has been increased. Committed expenditure, comprising interest payments, administrative services and pension, is expected to increase marginally from 2021-22 (RE), the report said.

RESULTS CORNER

Bol Q3 net profit up 12 pc

Mumbai: Better asset quality and the resultant lower provisioning along with higher net interest margin helped public sector lender Bank of India record a 12 per cent rise in net profit at ₹1,151 crore for the quarter ended December 2022. Total income rose to ₹14,159.60 crore in the reporting quarter from ₹11,211.14 crore a year ago, the city-based bank said Tuesday. The bottom line was boosted by higher domestic net interest margin which rose by 121 basis points (bps) to 3.72 per cent year-on-year and by 23 bps sequentially, while global margins improved by 101 bps to 3.28 per cent year-on-year and by 24 bps sequentially, Managing Director and Chief Executive AK Das told reporters in a conference call. As a result along with higher loan sales saw the bank's net interest income soaring 64 per cent to ₹5,596 crore from the year ago period, he said, adding, however, non-interest income declined to ₹1,432 crore from ₹1,835 crore primarily roiled by treasury losses. He, however, guided for a moderation in the full year margin to around 3.25 per cent as the deposits get repriced. As the bank is yet to fully increase the deposit rates, the reporting quarter saw its yield on advances rising by 65 bps to 7.67 per cent year-on-year and by 46 bps from the previous quarter.



Bank of Maharashtra Q3 profit more than doubles

Bhubaneswar: State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) Monday reported more than two-fold jump in its profit at ₹775 crore in the quarter ended December 2022 due to increase in net interest income and improved asset quality. The Pune-headquartered public sector bank, which is eyeing a qualified institutional placement (QIP) of ₹500-1,000 crore in the fourth quarter, reported a net profit of ₹325 crore in the year-ago period. Gross advances rose by about 22 per cent y-o-y to ₹1,56,962 crore. Within this, corporate advances grew by 25 per cent; retail (23 per cent), MSME (22 per cent) and agriculture (9 per cent). Total deposits increased by about 12 per cent to ₹2,08,436 crore as of December-end 2022. Within total deposits, the proportion on low-cost current account, savings account deposits stood at 52.50 per cent. Speaking about quarterly number, BoM Managing Director AS Rajeev said the net profit surged by a 138.76 per cent and operating profit has shown a growth of 35.94 per cent to ₹1,580 crore as against ₹1,162 crore in the same quarter a year ago. He said the bank aims to protect the profit growth in the current quarter and also maintain the Net Interest Margin (NIM) at the current level of 3.6 per cent.



Sensex surges 563 pts as RIL, HDFC twins shine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 17: Equity benchmarks shrugged off lacklustre global cues to clock smart gains Tuesday, buoyed by strong buying interest in index heavyweights Reliance Industries and HDFC twins.

However, a depreciating rupee and unabated foreign fund outflows capped the gains, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rallied 562.75 points or 0.94 per cent to settle at 60,655.72. The broader NSE Nifty climbed 158.45 points or 0.89 per cent to 18,053.30.

Larsen & Toubro topped the Sensex gainers chart with a jump of 3.51 per cent, followed by Hindustan Unilever, HDFC, HCL Technologies, HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries.

In contrast, SBI, Bajaj Finserv, IndusInd Bank, Wipro, Tata Steel and Bajaj Finance were among the laggards, shedding up to 1.67 per cent. The market breadth was in favour of the bulls, with 22 advances and 8 declines.



The government has reduced the windfall profit tax levied on domestically-produced crude oil as well as on the export of diesel and ATF, in line with softening international oil prices, according to an official order.

The broader market fell marginally in Tuesday's trade, with the BSE smallcap gauge declining 0.13 per cent and midcap index falling by 0.06 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, utilities jumped 1.48 per cent, power climbed 1.42 per cent, FMCG (1.15 per cent), realty (1.10 per cent), energy (0.97 per cent), teck (0.87 per cent), oil & gas (0.85 per cent), IT (0.79 per cent) and financial services (0.27 per cent). World markets retreated after

China reported a GDP growth of just 3 per cent for 2022 - the lowest in over four decades, triggering fresh fears of a global recession.

In Asia, equity markets in Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower, while Tokyo settled in the green.

International oil benchmark Brent crude rose 0.67 per cent to USD 85.03 per barrel.

The rupee tumbled 19 paise to close at 81.77 (provisional) against the US dollar Tuesday, tracking a rebound in the greenback overseas and firm crude oil prices.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded shares worth a net ₹750.59 crore Monday, according to exchange data.

Green Hydrogen Mission to help India meet net-zero targets: Experts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 17: The National Green Hydrogen Mission is a 'significant step' towards achieving the country's net-zero targets and will help in reducing input costs of clean energy source, besides generating lakhs of job opportunities in the renewable energy sector, experts say.

The Union Cabinet January 4 approved the National Green Hydrogen Mission, which aims to make India a global manufacturing hub and a clean source of energy.

The objective of the Mission is also development of a production

capacity of at least 5 MMT (Million Metric Tonnes) per annum with an associated renewable energy capacity addition of about 125 GW in the country by 2030.

"I expect that the emphasis on demand creation, incentives and partnerships will kick-start the green hydrogen industry in the country and enable Indian companies to be on a level footing with the global energy suppliers. The industry is ready to support India's clean energy transition," Sumant Sinha, Chairman and CEO, ReNew Power.

Sinha, who is also the president of industry body ASSOCHAM, termed the launch of the mission 'a sig-



nificant step' towards helping India achieve net-zero targets. Ishver Dholakiya, MD of Goldi

Solar said the program will facilitate production, utilisation, and export, along with generation of lakhs

of job opportunities in the renewable energy sector.

The incentives will help bring down the cost of input materials like electrolyzers, which will help local players to become competitive at the global level, he said.

Girishkumar Kadam, Senior Vice President & Co-Group Head - Corporate Ratings, ICRA Ltd said the round-the-clock procurement of renewable energy at competitive rates remains extremely critical for an improvement in the utilisation of electrolyzers.

The timely implementation of the proposed PLI scheme to incentivise/promote the domestic man-

ufacturing of electrolyzers will be critical, he said.

Abhay Kumar Singh, ex-CMD of state-owned NHPC, said the cost of per kg hydrogen comes to around USD 3 at present. With the government's ambitious mission it will be less than half in the times to come.

"In April 2022, when I was CMD NHPC, the company had signed an agreement with the Himachal government to develop a pilot green hydrogen mobility project including hydrogen production," he said.

The mission will give a boost to investment sentiments of more and more interest players, Singh said.

India face plucky Black Caps

Belgium, Germany play out draw, Korea seal win



THE SQUADS

INDIA: Rohit Sharma (C), Shubman Gill, Ishan Kishan (wk), Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, KS Bharat (wk), Hardik Pandya (vc), Washington Sundar, Shahbaz Ahmed, Shardul Thakur, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj & Umran Malik.

NEW ZEALAND: Tom Latham (C), Finn Allen, Doug Bracewell, Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Jacob Duffy, Lockie Ferguson, Daryl Mitchell, Henry Nicholls, Glenn Phillips, Mitchell Santner, Henry Shiple, Ish Sodhi & Blair Tuckner.



Belgium and Germany players are in action during their match, Tuesday

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 17: Defending champions Belgium and two-time winners Germany produced an entertaining contest as their Pool B encounter of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup ended in a 2-2 stalemate at the Kalinga Stadium here, Tuesday. Earlier, Korea edged past their Asian rivals Japan 2-1 at the same venue.

Germany and Belgium are known for producing entertaining encounters and they handily delivered on that promise. Belgium gained the momentum from the word go as they created a few scoring opportunities.

Their efforts paid off in the ninth minute when Cedric Charlier dribbled his way through three German defenders and his powerful hit snuck into the bottom left corner of the goal. The first quarter remained 1-0 in favour of the Belgians.

Belgium began the second quarter where they left off in the first as they dominated possession. However, it was the Germans who found the equaliser. Niklas Wellen took a quick free hit smashing a powerful shot from the right that beat Belgium custodian Vincent Vanasch on the far post.

The second half remained equally competitive as both teams created plenty of chances but failed to take the lead with the scores re-

mained 1-1 at the end of the third quarter.

World No.4 Germany turned the tables on the World No.2 side finding the lead in the 52nd minute. Germany were awarded a penalty stroke following a push inside the Belgian circle and Tom Grambusch dispatched it with ease to put his side up front.

Belgium, however, recovered quickly and restored parity inside two minutes. Victor Wegnez, following a pass by his skipper Felix Denayer, sent his shot into the bottom left corner perfectly.

Earlier, Lee Jungjun struck twice to help Korea come from a goal down to beat Japan 2-1. Japan needed only 70 seconds to get on the board. They won an early penalty corner and Ken Nagayoshi powerfully deposited that into the right corner of the net.

It didn't take long for Korea to respond as Jungjun sent through on the goal by Jang Jonghyun and smartly lifted the ball over the keeper and into the goal. Jongjun then pounced on a loose ball in the circle in the second quarter to give Korea the lead. The second half remained goalless and Korea ended up with full points.

The results keep Pool B incredibly tight with Korea on 3 points trailing Germany and Belgium who sit on 4 points each, with Belgium on top of the table courtesy their superior goal difference.

skipper Rohit Sharma, made the most of the opportunities with scores of 70, 21 and 116 in the Sri Lanka series.

No changes are expected to the opening combination against the Black Caps. Kishan has batted in the middle-order thrice in the 10 ODIs he had played, and therefore, making adjustments should not be an issue.

KS Bharat, who is the second wicketkeeper in the squad, is likely to warm the bench as he is more of a cover in Rahul's absence.

In a World Cup year, every game is significant and India would aim to build on the gains from the Sri Lanka series even though the per-

formance of their opponents was underwhelming to say the least.

The big takeaways for India from the Sri Lanka series was the performance of the top three and Mohammed Siraj's ability to pick up wickets with the new ball.

Like Gill and Virat Kohli, Rohit also looked in sublime touch with scores of 83 and 42 but would like to get a big hundred which has also eluded him for some time now. Kohli though is back to scoring hundreds at will and looks hungrier for runs more than ever, which should set alarm bells ringing in the New Zealand camp.

Spin combination Besides Rahul, Axar Patel has

also been given a break for the series and his like-for-like replacement in the eleven could be Shahbaz Ahmed. It remains to be seen if the team management gives Shahbaz a go or bring in Washington Sundar, who could be handy against the left-handers in the New Zealand camp.

India have so far preferred to play a finger and a wrist spinner each in the playing eleven, leaving them to choose between Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav, who provided the much needed wickets in the middle overs in the two games against Sri Lanka.

Whether Kuldeep and Chahal could be played together like it

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, Jan 17: Having stirred a debate after being left out of the squad despite a world record double hundred, Ishan Kishan is set to play in the middle-order in the upcoming ODI series against New Zealand, beginning here Wednesday.

KL Rahul's unavailability due to personal reasons opened up a slot for Kishan. Kishan had to sit out of the Sri Lanka series despite scoring the fastest double hundred in the history of ODIs, against Bangladesh in the preceding rubber.

Shubman Gill, who was rewarded for his consistency and picked ahead of Kishan to open alongside

Rublev thrashes Thiem in Rd 1 at Australian Open

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Melbourne, Jan 17: Andrey Rublev beat wild-card entry Dominic Thiem 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 Tuesday to advance to the second round of the Australian Open.

Thiem, a runner-up at the Australian Open in 2020 and the US Open winner the same year, missed much of 2021 due to injuries but has recovered from outside the top 350 last year to a place just inside the top 100. He was given a wild-card entry by tournament organisers. Rublev will next play either the Australian qualifier Max Purcell or Emil Ruusuvuori of Finland.

Thiem had treatment to his abdominal muscles midway through the second set but said it was not serious and he was not disheartened by his performance.

Grigor Dimitrov, a semifinalist in Melbourne in 2017, beat Aslan Karatsev 7-6(7-3), 7-5, 6-2. He will take on Laslo Djere in the second round.

Caroline Garcia started her quest for a first Grand Slam singles title with a 6-3, 6-0 win over Katherine Sebov, a qualifier from Canada. The fourth-seeded player, who won the WTA Finals at the end of 2022, took just 65 minutes for victory and now plays another Canadian, former US Open runner-up Leylah Fernandez, who beat Alize Cornet 7-5, 6-2.

No.5 Aryna Sabalenka maintained her unbeaten start to the year with a 6-1, 6-4 win over Tereza Martincova. Sabalenka, who won the Adelaide International title in the first week of the year, hit 29 winners to her opponent's seven as she won her fifth consecutive match. Sabalenka hasn't made it past the fourth round at the Australian Open in five previous visits.

Garbine Muguruza, the runner-up in Melbourne in 2020, lost her fifth consecutive match to start the year when she was beaten 3-6, 6-7(3-7), 6-1 by Elise Mertens. Two-time Grand Slam champion Muguruza served for the match at 6-5 in the second set.

Former No.1 Karolina Pliskova eased past Wang Xyi of China 6-1, 6-3. Taylor Townsend won her first Grand Slam match since becoming a mother, beating Diane Parry, a wild-card entry from France, 6-1, 6-1. The American will next meet Ekaterina Alexandrova.

Andy Murray produced his biggest victory in years. Murray built a huge lead, let it disappear completely, then needed to save a match point against Matteo Berrettini before managing to pull out a 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 6-7(7), 7-6(10-6) triumph.

India Open: Sindhu loses, Lakshya trumps Prannoy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 17: PV Sindhu was knocked out but defending champion Lakshya Sen looked in fine fettle on way to a straight-game win over compatriot HS Prannoy in the India Open here Tuesday.

World No.7 Sindhu, a former champion, went down 12-21, 20-22 to Thailand's World No.30 Supanida Katethong. The Indian had lost to the same player in the semifinals of the last edition.

World No.12 Sen, seeded seventh, settled the score against World No.9 Prannoy after his opening round reversal at the Malaysia Open, with a 21-14, 21-15 win at the KD Jadhav Indoor hall in IG stadium.

Sindhu didn't look at her best as she struggled against the left-handed Supanida, who was precise in her returns and looked in more control in the rallies to take the opening game in the Super 750 badminton tournament.

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty stormed into the second round beating Scotland's Christopher Grimley and Matthew Grimley 21-13, 21-15.

Treesa Jolly and Gayatri



Gopichand also notched up a 22-20, 17-21, 21-18 win over France's Margot Lambert and Anne Tran in their opener. N Sikki Reddy and her new women's doubles partner Shruti Mishra went down fighting 17-21, 19-21 to Germany's Linda Efler and Isabel Lohau.

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 17: Wales skipper Rupert Shipperley considers India favourites against his team, but also feels that the home team will be under pressure when the two teams face each other in their Pool C match of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup at the Kalinga Stadium here, Thursday.

Wales are playing their first World Cup and it was dream-come-true moment for the players. Their maiden appearance hasn't been that smooth as they lost to their neighbours England 0-5 before suffering a 1-5 defeat against Spain.

Rupert, who has an experience of 95 games for Wales, shared his teammates' voice over their first WC campaign. "We were excited and nervous at the same time for our first ever WC. We didn't have a great start to the tournament (indicating consecutive defeats) but we will try our best to turn setback into motivation when we face India."

Rupert feels that India will be favourites against them, but concedes that home team would be under pressure. "It will be a David vs Goliath match for us as they are clear favourites. But they will be under more pressure than us con-



sidering they will be playing on their home turf in a packed stadium," asserted Rupert.

"We had played against India at the Commonwealth Games and had a close encounter against them so we are hoping to do well and win," he added.

Rupert said that Odisha as a host of HWC has done a marvelous job. "We had played our first two matches at the Birsas Munda International Hockey Stadium in Rourkela and it was a great experience. We are look-

ing forward to play our first match at the Kalinga stadium."

Rupert, who had represented Great Britain in the Tokyo Olympics, said that they will focus on attacking approach against India and for them India skipper Harmanpreet Singh will be the player to watch out for. "We will try to take some chances and go for an early goal. (Of course) we will also try to fend off their attack and take control of the game," he concluded.

Jack Pritchard, Rupert's teammate, said that their approach would be to get an early goal. "Despite India being the favourites, we believe that we can find an early goal if we can put pressure on them and create some chances," he asserted.

Jack heaped praise on Odisha for their support for the sport. "Odisha is doing a great job for hockey and its development. Other countries should take inspiration from them," he signed off.

Bamboo sticks to artificial turf: 'Hockey Village' set for transition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Saunamara (Odisha), Jan 17: In the small village that has given India some of its biggest hockey players, it all starts with sticks made from bamboo or kendu tree.

Every evening more than 100 children at Saunamara, a hamlet of little over 2000 tribal inhabitants in Odisha's Sundargarh district, play on a dusty ground, pursuing their dreams of becoming the next Dilip Tirkey, Amit Rohidas or Subhadra Pradhan.

Their fortunes, though, could change soon as an artificial turf will be ready by next month. That means the village, which is located just over 100km from Birsas Munda Stadium, the world's largest all-seater hockey-specific venue in Rourkela, could churn out more international players.

Saunamara is now known as the 'Hockey Village' of India as it has given the country former men's team captain and Hockey India president Tirkey, current national team player Amit Rohidas, India junior team vice-captain Dipsan Tirkey and ex-India women's skip-

per Subhadra, among others. This village is part of the Balisankara block of Sundargarh district, which is now considered the cradle of Indian hockey, having given more than 60 national team players, both male and female.

"There were no proper hockey ground in my village when I grow up. We had to play wherever we get some space. But now my village is going to have an artificial turf," Tirkey, one of the finest defenders of his time and most capped player for India with 421 matches, told this agency.

"I am very happy for the children of my village and, at the same time, feeling proud of the contribution of my village for Indian hockey," said the 45-year-old.

He said the artificial surface being laid out at his village is a sand-filled turf, which is most appropriate for schools and is a publicly accessible facility, because of its lower cost and multi-functionality.

The astro turf used for international matches costs at least Rs 4 crore but the price is lower for sand-filled artificial pitches. The



Odisha government has started laying synthetic turfs in all the 17 blocks of the Sundargarh district and some of them are already completed.

The laying of the artificial surface at the Saunamara village, with the accompanying field marking, is completed. Only the goal posts are to be erected. It will also have change rooms and other facilities at the front side which will have a proper entrance.

Construction started in December 2021 and was to be completed in one year. But there has been a slight delay and the facility will be completed next month.

from playing hockey. They rather support and tell me to go and play it," Sumitra, a class eight student of the same Government UG High School, said.

There is a problem for the children, though. All the children do not have modern hockey sticks and they have had to make their own from bamboo and kendu tree trunk. The base of the bamboo tree will be cut round to be used as the ball.

"We provide these modern hockey sticks to our students during games period. Moreover, we give away the old sticks to the students for free to take home," said Ishwarchandra Naik, head master of the Government UG High School.

"But all the children at this village cannot have proper modern sticks. For those children of poorer parents, they have to play with sticks made of bamboo or kendu tree. They will cut the base of the bamboo into a round and hard object and will use it as a ball," he said.

Rather than stopping children from playing hockey, the parents of the village encourage them to take up the sport at an early age.

"Our father Vincent Tirkey was in the CRPF and he was a hockey player. He would take Dilip to all places to play hockey. I am also a hockey player. In the village, parents encourage their children to play hockey," Tirkey's older brother Francis, said.

The same is the case with Rohidas who was initiated to the sport by his father who took him to the village playground from a young age.

Saunamara is a unique village, with hockey being the most attractive thing for the people here. The lone and dusty playground has the paintings of several past and present India hockey players of Sundargarh region - Tirkey, Rohidas, Prabhodh Tirkey Ignace Tirkey, Deep Grace Ekka and Subhadra - strewn along with 'Chak de India' and 'My National Game' written on bold.

There is also a painting of a hand holding a hockey stick with the caption 'It's my life', summing up the craze of the national game in this village. Surprisingly, there is also a painting of former India cricket captain MS Dhoni.