



**PC'S REVELATION**  
Actor Priyanka Chopra, justifying her surrogacy move, reveals that it was a necessary step as she had medical complications **LEISURE P2**



**SUNAK'S GOOF-UP**  
Police look into a social media video wherein UK PM Rishi Sunak was seen not wearing a seatbelt while travelling in a car **INTERNATIONAL P10**



**SECOND ODI TODAY**  
India look to seal three-match series against New Zealand when they take the field for the second ODI **SPORTS P12**

## ASKA PS AWARDED BEST IN COUNTRY

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah Friday awarded Aska police station in Ganjam district as the number one police station in the country in the annual ranking of police stations for 2022, an official release said.

The award was given during the DGs/IGs Conference - 2022 which began in National Agriculture Science Complex, New Delhi Friday.

Prashanta Kumar Sahoo, the IIC of Aska police station, received the prestigious award with the certificate of appreciation from Shah, the release said.

"A moment of great pride and honour for Odisha police," said Odisha's Director General of Police (DGP) SK Bansal, who is attending the conference.

The ranking of police stations across the country is an annual exercise by the MHA and the judgement is on the basis of 165 different parameters like crime rate, investigation and disposal of cases, infrastructure and delivery of public service, officials said.

About 20 per cent of the total points are also based on feedback about the police station from citizens, they said.

The main objective of the ranking is to improve the quality of policing and make the police stations friendly, the officials added.



**SWASHBUCKLING SHOW:** Dare Devils team of Indian Armed Forces during rehearsals for Republic Day Parade 2023 at Kartavya Path in New Delhi, Friday **PTI PHOTO**

## Three cops face music for nexus with smuggler

**Boudh, Jan 20:** Three police personnel were suspended in Boudh district Friday for allegedly letting a cannabis smuggler go scot-free and keeping in their possession the marijuana recovered from him, a police officer said.

The suspended police personnel were identified as Sanatan Pradhan, an officer at Baghiapada police outpost, and constables Sanjeev Pradhan and Keshab Pradhan, the officer said.

"The policemen have been suspended and a case has been registered against them", IG Police (Southern Range), Satyabrata Bhoi said.

The police personnel had intercepted a man who was transporting 13 kg of cannabis on his motorcycle, on the night of January 17, in Baghiapada area. They seized the contraband and took him to the police outpost.

They brokered a deal with the person and let him go, without taking any action against him. Instead of putting the contraband in the police seizure list and keeping it inside the police station store room, they took it with them and kept it in the official quarters, the officer said.

Officers close to the development said the erring policemen were hand in glove with drug smugglers of the area, used to collect money for allowing movement of the banned substance and used their official quarters as a storehouse for the contraband.

When Boudh Superintendent of Police, Prahlad Meena, came to know of the incident, he ordered an enquiry and directed the IIC of Boudh police station to probe it.

During search operations, the IIC found the contraband at the government quarters of Sanatan.

Investigations revealed that he was involved in peddling ganja while the two constables were also involved in the offence, the officer said.

# Pee-gate: DGCA slaps ₹30L fine on Air India

The aviation watchdog's enforcement actions come nearly two months after the incident wherein a man allegedly urinated on a female co-passenger in a New York-Delhi flight

**New Delhi, Jan 20:** The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Friday imposed a penalty of ₹30 lakh on Air India as well as suspended the licence of the pilot-in-command of the New York-Delhi flight in which a person allegedly urinated on a female co-passenger. In the incident, which happened November 26, 2022, the watchdog has also slapped a fine of ₹3 lakh on Air India's Director of in-flight services for failing to discharge her duties.

The enforcement actions for violation of applicable norms come nearly two months after the incident, which came to the notice of the DGCA only January 4.

This is also the first time that DGCA has penalised an airline for unruly passenger behaviour onboard a flight. In a statement, an Air India spokesperson said it is in receipt of the DGCA order and studying it.

"We respectfully acknowledge the gaps in our reporting and are taking relevant steps to ensure that the same are addressed. We are also strengthening our crews' awareness of and compliance with policies on the handling of incidents involving unruly passengers," the airline spokesperson said.

On Thursday, Air India had im-

### CLIPPING THE WINGS

The DGCA has slapped a fine of ₹3 lakh on Air India's Director of in-flight services for failing to discharge her duties

The aviation watchdog has suspended the licence of the pilot-in-command of the New York-Delhi flight

The Air India had January 19 imposed a four-month flying ban on accused Shankar Mishra, who is in jail now

posed a four-month flying ban on Mishra, who is in jail now. Earlier, the airline had barred him from flying for 30 days.

In its statement Friday, the DGCA said enforcement actions have been taken in the incident, which came to the notice of the regulator January 4.

The watchdog had issued show-cause notices to Air India's Accountable Manager, Director in-flight services, all the pilots and cabin crew members of that flight as to why enforcement action should not be taken against them for dereliction of their regulatory obligations.

DGCA examined the written replies of Air India and the personnel involved and decided on the enforcement actions.

"A financial penalty of ₹30,00,000 has been imposed on Air India for violation of applicable DGCA Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR)," the regulator said.

Further, the watchdog said the licence of the pilot-in-command of the said flight has been suspended for three months for failing to discharge his duties as per Rule 141 of the Aircraft Rules, 1937 and applicable DGCA CAR. **Continued on P4**

## EGYPTIAN PREZ SISI TO BE REPUBLIC DAY CHIEF GUEST

**New Delhi, Jan 20:** Around half a dozen agreements are expected to be inked between India and Egypt to ramp up cooperation in a range of areas including agriculture, IT and cyberspace during Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi's visit here next week.

Further expansion of defence and security cooperation is also expected to be a major area of focus of Sisi's trip with Egypt showing keen interest in procuring military platforms like Light Combat Aircraft Tejas, Aakash missile and some radars from India. Sisi will be the first Egyptian President and the fifth leader from the Middle-East to grace the Republic Day celebrations as the chief guest. He is scheduled to arrive in India January 24.

India is keen to expand ties with Egypt, a key player in the politics of both the Arab world as well as Africa. It is also seen as a major gateway to markets in Africa and Europe. New Delhi considers Sisi as a strong leader who has shown determination in tackling terrorism with an iron hand, people familiar with the upcoming visit said Friday. **Continued on P4**

**IRREGULAR** by MANJUL

Attend more summits, sir. We've spent more money on your publicity than the investments you got for the state

### MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	60621.77	↓ 236.66
NIFTY	18027.65	↓ 80.20
DOLLAR	81.45	↓ ₹0.22
EURO	87.81	↓ ₹0.14
GOLD	₹56,666	↑ ₹120
SILVER	₹68,701	↑ ₹342

### WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	29.4°C	28.5°C
TEMP MIN	18.2°C	17.4°C
Humidity	80%	78%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Foggy	weather mostly

# CM: Govt striving to make Odisha a global tourist hub

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday said his government is making concerted efforts to develop Odisha as a global hotspot of tourists.

The state government is making concerted efforts to develop Odisha as a global hotspot of tourists, provide livelihoods and employment opportunities, and make the state attractive for investors, Patnaik said while inaugurating the International Craft Summit in Jajpur through a virtual platform.

"We are developing mechanisms for a holistic development of our tourism, handloom and handicrafts other initiatives to promote tourism and culture. Stating that it is a historic occasion for Odisha, Patnaik said Jajpur was the ancient capital of Odisha. With its existing assets of religious tourism, urban tourism and Buddhist tourism, it has the potential to be a major tourist hub. The cultural heritage of Jajpur is reflected in its vibrant art forms, he added. Speaking on the cultural splendour of the state, the Chief Minister said Odisha is an illustrious land of immaculate art and crafts. Its civilizational journey is a journey of artistic culture. **Continued on P4**

## SHORT TAKES

**Two women killed in Ganjam bus mishap**

**Berhampur:** At least two women were killed and 15 others injured when a passenger bus overturned on a hilly road in Ganjam district Friday, police said. The accident took place near Turubudi in Jarada area. Berhampur SP Saravana Vivek M said the deceased were identified as Saraswati Bagsingh, 20, a resident of Sikulipadar in Gajapati district and Sumati Sabar, 36, from Arakhapada in Ganjam district. The mishap took place when the driver lost control over the vehicle. The injured were admitted to Patrapur CHC, and those seriously injured were shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Ganjam.

**ED quizzes Talcher legislator for 7 hrs**

**Bhubaneswar:** Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials Friday grilled Talcher MLA Brajakishore Pradhan over allegations of money laundering. Pradhan appeared before ED at its office in Nayapalli Friday afternoon. He was questioned by the central agency sleuths for more than seven hours. Sources claimed that ED grilled Pradhan over his alleged links with ex-MLA of Champua and miner Jitu Patnaik. However, sources close to Pradhan claimed that the ED questioned him about irregularities in investments by the MLA and his relatives in various industries and logistics companies in Angul.

# Stars fast disappearing from night sky: Study

**■ If people of a particular region are able to see 250 stars now, they will find only 100 stars after 18 years, the study says explaining the impact of 'skyglow' phenomenon**

**AGENCIES**

**London, Jan 20:** Of late, people around the world are seeing fewer and fewer stars in the night sky, owing to a phenomenon called 'skyglow' - brightness due to light pollution, according to a study.

The change in star visibility can be explained by an increase in the sky brightness of 7-10 per cent per year, the study said.

The rate of change is faster than satellite measurements of artificial light emissions on Earth would at first suggest, the study said.

The study analysed more than 50,000 naked-eye observations by citizen scientists around the world from 2011 to 2022 as part of the 'Globe at Night' Citizen Science Project. The results show that citizen science data are an important supplement to previous measurement methods. The findings of the study have been published in the journal Science.

Over a large part of the Earth's land surface, the sky continues to



glow with an artificial twilight long after sunset.

This 'skyglow' is a form of light pollution that has serious effects on the environment and should therefore be

**SKYGLOW HINDRANCE**

- The change in star visibility can be explained by an increase in the sky brightness of 7-10% per year
- In Europe, the researchers found a 6.5% increase in night sky brightness per annum while in North America it's 10.4%

phased. After all, many behaviours and physiological processes of living creatures are determined by daily and seasonal cycles - and thus influenced by light.

"Skyglow affects both diurnal and nocturnal animals and also destroys an important part of our cultural heritage," says Walker. The appearance of the night sky is changing, with negative effects on stargazing and astronomy, the study said.

The change in 'skyglow' over time has not previously been measured globally. While it could in principle be measured by satellites, the only current sensors that monitor the entire Earth do not have sufficient accuracy or sensitivity, the study said. **Continued on P4**

# leisure

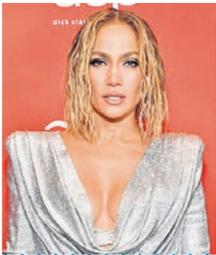


## ROBERT PATTINSON 'TERRIFIED' OF DEEP FAKE VIDEOS OF HIMSELF

Batman actor Robert Pattinson finds deep fake videos of himself 'terrifying' and joked they could put him out of a job one day. "I am unnerved by the weird dancing videos on TikTok that have used artificial intelligence to put my face onto someone else's body," he said.

## JENNIFER LOPEZ WAS RELUCTANT TO STAR IN SHOTGUN WEDDING

Hollywood star Jennifer Lopez, who leads the cast of Jason Moore's film *Shotgun Wedding*, was initially unsure about starring in the project after working on the movie *Marry Me* and was only convinced after reading Mark Hammer's script, media reports said.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Believe it, life is good sometimes; today is one such day. Things will not be hectic, even though you remain occupied, both at work and in your personal life. With no troubles brewing, what more can you ask for? Perhaps, Ganesha is trying to impart the crucial lesson of contentment.

**TAURUS**  
The three Es will rule your mood throughout the day: energy, exuberance and excitement. Such enthusiasm is always contagious and near and dear ones will be charmed by it. Things will get better as the day progresses. Take a break from work to relax and recharge if you feel weary, says Ganesha.

**GEMINI**  
There are strong indications that you will find it easy to assume a leadership role and set the agenda at work today, says Ganesha. In the afternoon, you will be busy looking for an expensive gift for someone very important to you. You may not be able to find the right gift, but that is only because you want it to be really special.

**CANCER**  
Today, you are likely to address all problems with a human touch, predicts Ganesha. You are likely to play Agony Aunt to one and all. But for that, you will have to learn to leave your problems at the workplace. In relationships, you need to open up to your near and dear ones.

**LEO**  
Something piques the demon within you today, says Ganesha, making you emotional and zealous. But then, we must all wage a war against our personal demons every time they rear their ugly heads. Ganesha foresees you emerging victorious in this battle today, and regaining your happy-go-lucky attitude in the latter part of the day.

**VIRGO**  
Helping your colleagues will bring loads of good will. Your superiors will be superiorly happy with your work. Interaction with friends will be special. Revel in the company of your loved one, says Ganesha.

**LIBRA**  
It's all about family today. In fact, the bigger the better since Ganesha foresees it is quite likely that both close and distant relatives will fill your heart with glee today. It might be some good news worthy of raising a toast to. However, you might be doubtful about getting along with your peers at work.

**SCORPIO**  
Today, you are likely to make a fine show of your knack of organising things, predicts Ganesha. At the workplace, you will develop a special liking for your job. Later in the day, you may find lasting solutions to pending problems.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Work while you work and play while you play, says Ganesha. On the professional front, you will outclass your rivals with sheer brilliance, leaving them flabbergasted and intimidated. On the personal front, you may spend quality time with loved ones or spend your evening being chased by the spotlight of a party.

**CAPRICORN**  
You will settle for nothing less than excellence in whatever work you choose to take up, says Ganesha. In fact, working extra hours may leave you a little exhausted in the afternoon. Here's the remedy: delegate work to those around you and see that they meet your high standards.

**AQUARIUS**  
The explorer that you are, today your restlessness will get the better of you! Your plans will finally take off, whether it is a new entrepreneurial or educational course or a trip to your home town. It's a promising day, says Ganesha, and you never know what you may find!

**PISCES**  
There is a lot of brain-racking in store for you today, as you try to conjure up ways to convert your extraordinary brilliance into exceptional performance. Keeping in mind that your family is the foundation of your success could provide some vital insights, says Ganesha.

## Priyanka condemns trolls on surrogacy

Los Angeles: *Quantico* actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas is addressing criticism of her use of a surrogate.

The news that their baby girl was born via surrogate was met with commentary and criticism that was hard for the new mom.

"I've developed a tough hide when people talk about me," she said. "But it's so painful when they talk about my daughter. I'm like, 'Keep her out of it.'"

"I know what it felt like to hold her little hands when they were trying to find her veins," she continued, referencing the fact that Malti was born three months premature. "So no, she's not going to be a gossip. I've been really protective of this chapter of my life with my daughter. Because it's not about my life only, it's hers too."

"I had medical complications," she explained and added that the move was a necessary step, and she is so grateful she was in a position where she could do this.

AGENCIES



## Netizens go crazy over Big B's meeting with Ronaldo, Messi

New Delhi: Legendary actor Amitabh Bachchan met the biggest stars of the football world before the start of an exhibition match between Lionel Messi's Paris St Germain and a Saudi All-star XI led by Cristiano Ronaldo in Riyadh Thursday night, with netizens going gaga on social media.

The legendary actor was invited to Riyadh as the chief guest for the star-studded football match. He was escorted to the field in the presence of PSG chairman Nasser Al-Khelaifi, where he met and shook hands with players from both teams, including Argentinian legend Messi, Portuguese icon Ronaldo, French sensation Kylian Mbappe, and Brazilian superstar Neymar. Later, the veteran actor posted a video of the memorable moment on Twitter, saying: "An evening in Riyadh... what an evening... Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, Mbappee, Neymar all playing together... and yours truly invited as guest to inaugurate the game... PSG vs Riyadh Seasons... Incredible!!!"

AGENCIES

In the video, the actor could be seen shaking hands with each player, and exchanging a few words with Ronaldo and Messi.

Mumbai: Kriti Sanon has had a great run at the box office and with critics alike. Her roles in *Mimi* and *Bhediya* were appreciated. After portraying some trailblazing characters, she will be seen in a glam role in *Shehzada* also starring Kartik Aaryan.

A friend says, "Kriti tries her best to be versatile and diverse with her roles. She will be now seen in a fresh, breezy role in her upcoming film."

The actress, it was learnt, is putting her best fashion foot forward. The Kriti-Kartik duo is much loved by the audience. After the grand success of *Luka Chuppi*, they are back with a bang to entertain the viewers.

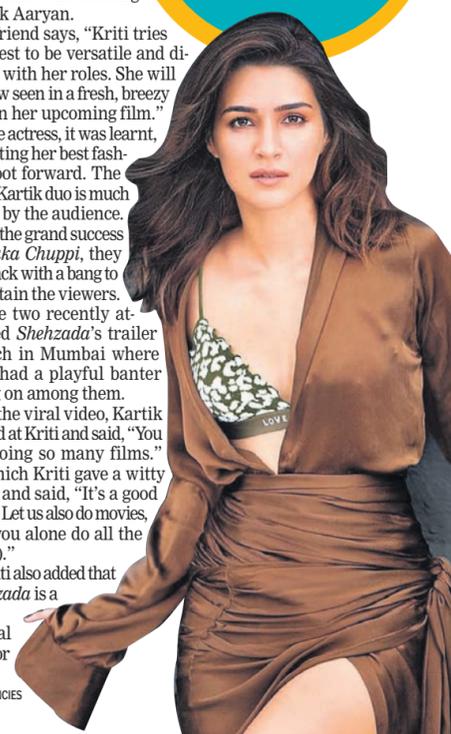
The two recently attended *Shehzada's* trailer launch in Mumbai where they had a playful banter going on among them.

In the viral video, Kartik looked at Kriti and said, "You are doing so many films." To which Kriti gave a witty reply and said, "It's a good thing. Let us also do movies, will you alone do all the films?"

Kriti also added that *Shehzada* is a very special film for her.

AGENCIES

## Kriti goes glam in Shehzada



## KLF Book Awards announced

Bhubaneswar: The organisers of Kalinga Literary Festival (KLF), an annual literary festival, have announced KLF Book Awards-2022 for the authors in various categories.

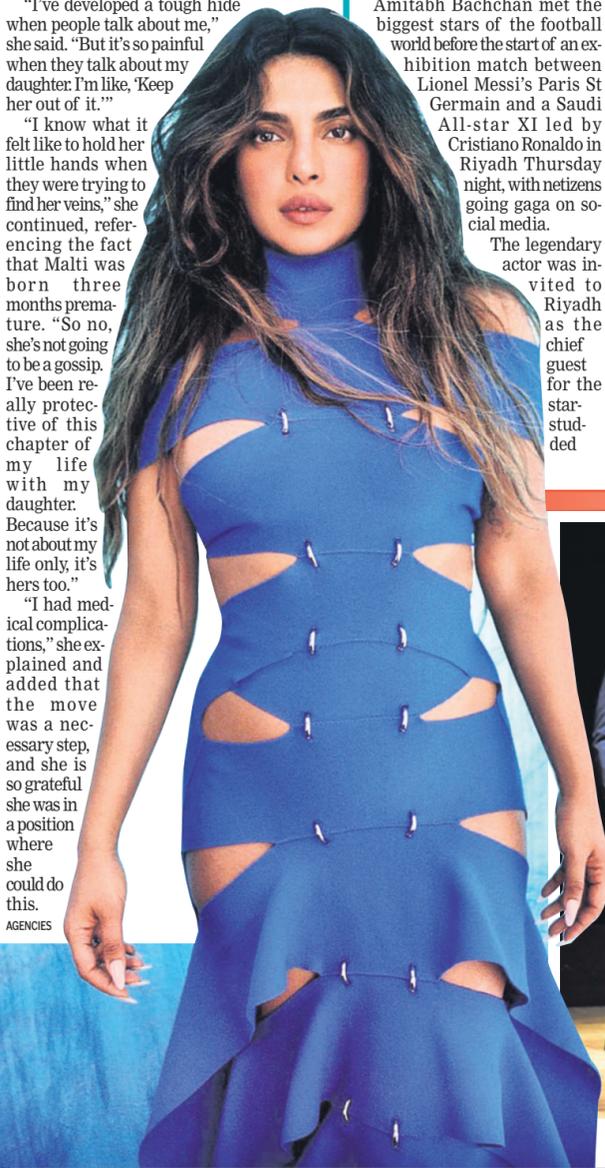
The genres include Non-fiction, Fiction Poetry Book, Book in Hindi language, Book in Translation, Bhasa First Book, Business Book, Environmental Book, Biography/Autobiography, Children Book, Sports Book, Lifestyle and Emerging Trend Books.

The winners will be honoured at KLF's upcoming edition scheduled to be held from February 24-26 in the city.

Acclaimed writers like Sanjeev Sanyal, Hindol Sengupta, Ranjit Hoskote, Akshaya Mukul, and Pravin Kumar are among those who will be felicitated.

Sanjeev Sanyal's book-*Revolutionaries: The Other Story of How India Won its Freedom*, Hindol Sengupta's *Sing, Dance and Pray: The Inspirational Story of Srila Prabhupada Founder-Acharya of ISKCON*, Ranjit Hoskote's *Hunchprose*, Pravin Kumar's *Amar Desva*, Akshaya Mukul's *Writer, Rebel, Soldier, Lover: The Many Lives of Agyeya* have featured in the award winning list, it was learnt.

PNN



A scene from the play staged at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar

OP PHOTO

## NATAKA PARIKRAMA : DAY 1

### Age old Guru-Shishya tradition highlight of *Shesha Adhyaya*

Bhubaneswar: Members of Uttar Purush, one of the oldest theatre troupes of this city, presented Odia play *Shesha Adhyaya* on the first day of their drama festival *Nataka Parikrama-2023* here at Rabindra Mandap, Friday.

Written by Sanjay Praharaaj, the drama was directed by Prasanna Kumar Mishra.

Highlighting the importance of guru-shishya tradition in Indian society, the play underscored the point that age is not a barrier in learning or imparting education. A true disciple can learn from a guru at any stage of his life.

Actors who performed on stage included Pabitra Kar, Laxmi Narayan, Raja, Amit, Sangram, Kaberi, Sukanti and Mithun.

Odisha Natya Sangha president Haren Sahoo, secretary Shubhakanta Padhi, troupe's vice-president Chittaranjan Swain and secretary Debadutta Pati were among the dignitaries present on the occasion.

PNN

## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

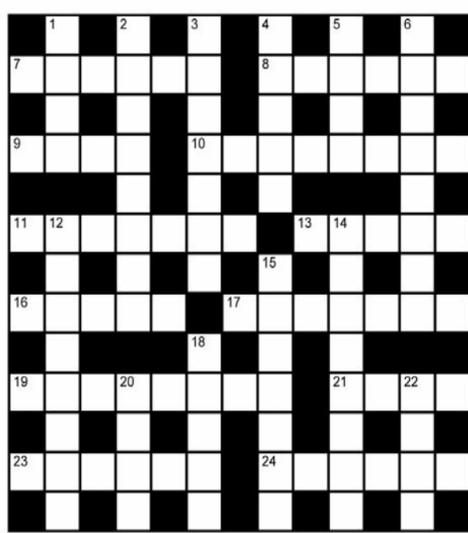


## BREVITY



## FUN post

## CROSSWORD

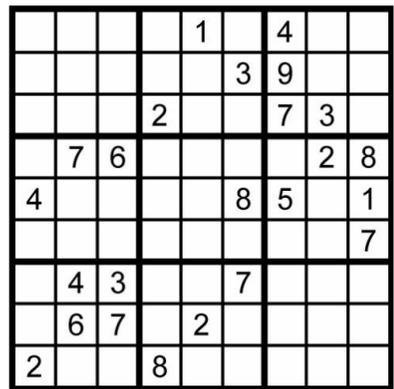


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- Across**
- 7 Fencing sword
  - 8 Limited in space
  - 9 Solemn promise
  - 10 Banished
  - 11 Extreme greed
  - 13 Rock
  - 16 Jester
  - 17 Merrymaking
  - 19 Aardvark
  - 21 Fortified wine
  - 23 Separate
  - 24 Position
  - 4 Clips
  - 5 Spoken
  - 6 Politician
  - 12 City in eastern Spain
  - 14 Theatrical performer
  - 15 Inheritor
  - 18 Warhorse
  - 20 Wicked
  - 22 Overwhelming defeat
- Down**
- 1 Malay island
  - 2 Highly cultured person
  - 3 Importunity

## SUDOKU

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

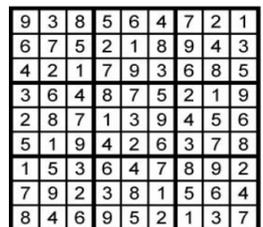


## SOLUTIONS

### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU

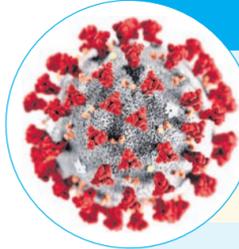


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	67,26,83,987	64,41,45,888	67,40,503
India	4,46,81,650	4,41,48,976	5,30,728
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

**PREPARATORY MEET**

A preparatory meet for Chandrabhaga Mela was held at Puri Circuit House, Friday



# CoE on cyber security in Bhub on the cards

**BOOST TO INVESTIGATION**

The centre of excellence (CoE), which will be set up by the Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC), will act as a nodal point of contact and advisory agency for the state in cybercrime investigation and enablement.

The CoE will also train and educate the citizens, police officials of the cybercrime department and create a cybersecurity workforce with necessary capacity and capability for cyber resilience.

The CoE will have advanced forensics tools, in addition to those installed at the forensic lab, to handle cases that require advanced digital investigative capabilities beyond those available at forensic lab

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** In a bid to curb cybercrimes, the state government has decided to set up a centre of excellence (CoE) on cyber security enabled with tools, technologies, process and trained manpower in the Capital city here, an official said Friday.

The CoE, which will be set up by the Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC), will act as a nodal point of contact and advisory agency for the state in cybercrime

investigation and enablement, source said.

The prime objective of the CoE is to strengthen the future cyber security environment by expanding cyber education, coordinating and redirecting research and development efforts across the government and working to define and develop strategies to deter hostile or malicious activity in cyberspace.

The CoE will also help plan, design and analyse cyber security capacity building programs for

the state government.

"The CoE will also organise awareness, training and education programs as depicted in the standards like National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)," said the official.

The centre will also train and educate the citizens, police officials of cybercrime department and create a cybersecurity workforce with necessary capacity and capability for cyber resilience.

It will develop necessary workforce within government and law enforcement agencies, public prosecutors, judicial officials in digital forensics and technology assisted investigation techniques.

The CoE will have advanced forensics tools, in addition to those installed at the forensic lab, to handle cases that require advanced digital investigative capabilities beyond those available at forensic lab, the sources said.

The CoE will address advanced functional requirements using tools and technology.

"This digital forensic capability at CoE will help empower the investigative officer, reducing investigation timelines, and improving operational efficiency of the overall criminal investigation process," they said.



**R-DAY IN MIND:** NCC cadets rehearse for Republic Day parade at Barabati Stadium in Cuttack, Friday

## STF nabs 4 for illegal storage of chromite

**Bhubaneswar:** Special Task Force (STF) sleuths have arrested four persons from Bhadrak on charges of cargo theft and illegal storage of coal and chromite, an official said Friday. A raid was conducted on the stockyard run by Bijay Shankar Mohanty, one of the accused, in the wee hours of January 19 at Puripada under Bhandaripokhari police limits in Bhadrak and the accused were arrested.

## 'Youths recruited in govt jobs should work like soldiers'

*Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan distributes 128 appointment letters to newly-inducted recruits as a part of the Rozgar Mela in Bhubaneswar*



**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Friday said the youths of the present time have more responsibility than their counterparts in pre-Independence days as the entire nation now progresses based on their abilities.

Pradhan, who is also the Union Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister, said this after distributing 128 appointment letters to newly-inducted recruits as a part of the Rozgar Mela in the Odisha capital.

"The newly-recruited youths should work like soldiers as the country's progress is linked to their hard work," he said.

Pradhan distributed appointment letters to people recruited to serve in Indian Railways, Assam

Rifles, Income Tax Department, IIT-Bhubaneswar, EPFO, India Post, NALCO, ESIC, BSF, SAIL, and other government departments and organisations.

Noting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the day distributed 71,000 appointment letters in the third phase of the Rozgar Mela, Pradhan said, "I am happy to distribute appointment letters to newly-appointed young men and women. With this, about 2 lakh youths have been recently recruited in different central government departments."

He said that the second phase of the Mela was conducted in November 2021 when the PM distributed 71,000 appointment letters, followed by 75,000 such letters in

October last year.

The Rozgar Mela is being held as part of the Prime Minister's announcement to induct youths to government jobs, he said.

He said that the entire country is now dependent on the abilities of the youths and therefore, they have a major role to play during this ongoing 'Amrit Kaal'.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had used the word 'Amrit Kaal' to describe the 25 years - from the 75th year of India's independence to the 100th year of the country's freedom.

They will take the nation to the top while the youths of pre-Independence days had ensured freedom of the country, Pradhan said.

## State collects ₹28,973 crore mining revenue in current FY

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** The state government has collected ₹28,973 crore as mining revenue during the current financial year, said Steel and Mines Minister Prafulla Kumar Mallik here Friday.

Speaking at the Minerals, Mining and Metals Conclave organised by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCC&I) here, Mallik said the collection of mining revenue during the current year (2022-23) up to January 17, 2023 stands at ₹28,973.43 crore.

As against ₹11,020 crore and ₹13,791 crore of mining revenue collected during 2019-20 and 2020-21 respectively, the state has been able to collect ₹49,858 crore of mining revenue during 2021-22,

he informed.

Mallik said a successful auction of mineral blocks, timely operationalisation of mining leases, implementation of an effective online system - Integrated Mineral and Mines Management System (i3MS) since 2011-12 have resulted in constant growth of mining revenue for the state.

The Steel Minister said during 2020-21, the total production of minerals was 293.648 million tonne with despatch of 325.495 million tonne, which has increased to 362.40 million tonne and 358.88 million tonne respectively during 2021-22.

During the current year, the

total production and despatch of minerals up to January 17, 2023 stand at 302.06 million tonne and 295.07 million tonne respectively, added Mallik.

From an installed capacity of about 4 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) of crude steel in 1999-2000, the Odisha has progressed to have, as of now, 47 steel industries with a total capacity of over 33 MTPA which is about one-fourth of the country's total installed capacity.

Steps are also being taken for intensifying the mineral exploration in the state so that more and more mineral blocks can be

brought to readiness for auction, the Steel Minister pointed out.

He expressed concern over poor utilisation of lower grade minerals which are never put to use due to lack of technology. "By utilising these lower grade minerals, we can protect the environment and prevent misuse and non-use of these minerals," he said.

According to Union Mines Secretary Vivek Bharadwaj, Odisha is a good example of cooperative-federalism structure and mining-led growth. "Only seven to eight years ago, Odisha used to get approximately ₹5,000 crore revenue from the mining sector but last year it became ₹50,000 crore which in returned to quality education, health-care and better infrastructure," Bharadwaj said.

## NHRC seeks report from Centre on dignity to homeless

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought an Action Taken Report (ATR) within six weeks from the Secretary of Department of Social Justice and Empowerment on initiatives taken to provide basic human dignity to homeless in the country, including in Odisha.

The NHRC gave the direction while adjudicating a petition filed by rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy. Citing example of two homeless from Arnajal panchayat of Bhadrak, Tripathy said that these helpless people are suffering silently without bare necessities of life due to negligence, inaction and failure of the authorities across states and Union Territories.

As per the 2011 Census, there are around 1.77 million homeless people in India consisting of single men, women, elderly and disabled of which around 9,38,384 live in urban areas, the petition contended.

Tripathy requested the NHRC for a direction for an integrated comprehensive holistic provisions for homeless people and street children their rehabilitation with basic dignity including night-shelters, health services and basic hygiene.

He said more than 40 per cent of the houses have just a single room which is shared by about five persons. Tripathy alleged that the houses allotted under the Central or state schemes do not adhere to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Tripathy pointed out that homeless families and families living in inadequate space are denied and deprived of sex as the couples live with their family members.

## EXHIBITION, RALLIES MARK NETAJI'S 126TH BIRTH ANNIV



AGENCIES

**Cuttack, Jan 20:** Central police forces along with the state government Friday organised various activities here, including an

exhibition of arms, to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav) and the 126th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Automatic Grenade Launcher, 81 mm Mortar, 7.62 mm assault rifle, and wireless communication systems were among the items on display at Sahid Bhawan here.

Netaji, born January 23 in 1897, spent his early years in Cuttack, then a part of Bengal presidency.

A grand march, commencing from Anand Bhawan, the birth-place of the freedom fighter, was also taken out by Odisha Police personnel and the jawans of the CRPF and the ITBP.

Students and teachers of nearby schools participated in the rally.

Besides, a cycle rally, a philatelic exhibition on the life and works of Netaji, and a plantation drive were also arranged on the occasion.

Information Bureau (PIB) and Central Bureau of Communication here and held review meetings with the officers.

Later in the day, Chandra visited All India Radio (AIR) in Cuttack and reviewed its functioning. He also planted saplings on the premises of DD, NABM and AIR.

## I&B Secretary reviews functioning of depts



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Secretary Apurva Chandra, who is on a three-day visit to Odisha, Friday visited Doordarshan (DD), National Academy of Broadcasting and Multimedia (NABM), Press

## 4 held for WC ticket black marketing

**Bhubaneswar:** The Commissionerate Police Friday arrested four more persons on charges of black marketing Hockey Men's World Cup (WC) tickets, an official said. The arrested were identified as Deepak Kumar Behera, 32, of Keonjhar Town in Keonjhar, Sayed Amirul Kalam, 22, and Saiyed Ehtesham Uddin, 30, of Salipur in Cuttack district, Mahsen Laskar, 45, of South 24 Parganas in West Bengal, an official of Nayapalli police said. Nayapalli police nabbed the accused while they were illegally selling tickets for the match between India and Wales which took place at Kalinga Stadium here Thursday. Earlier, five persons were arrested by the Saheed Nagar police for black marketing hockey WC tickets.

## In a 1st, SSC to conduct MTS exams in 13 regional languages including Odia

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jan 20:** The Staff Selection Commission (SSC) will conduct the multi-tasking staff (MTS) (non-technical) examination, 2022, in 13 regional languages in addition to Hindi and English for the first time, an official statement issued Friday said.

The 13 regional languages are Urdu, Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Konkani, Manipuri (also Meiti), Marathi, Odia and Punjabi, it said.

The SSC is one of the largest recruiting agencies of the government with its main mandate being recruitment to all Group B (non-gazetted) and Group C (non-technical) posts in various central ministries/departments.



The medium of examinations conducted by the commission is normally Hindi and English.

Union Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh said the

move is in tune with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of providing a level playing field to all job aspirants and to ensure that no one is denied an opportunity or being at disadvantaged due to language barrier.

He said the move will fulfil the long pending demand of candidates from different states, and particularly from south India, for the exams being conducted ear-

lier in English and Hindi.

"This is likely to benefit a very large number of candidates from all over the country," the minister added.

Singh asserted that after this historic move, efforts are on to gradually include all the languages mentioned in Eighth schedule to the Constitution.

He said, "PM Modi during the inauguration of the 'Kashi Tamil Sangamam' in Varanasi in November last year had pointed out that 'despite having one of the world's oldest living languages, i.e., Tamil, we lack in honouring it fully'."

Singh said it is the continuous endeavour of SSC to provide level playing field to different sections of the population so as to bridge the regional disparities and attain the ideals of the Constitution while at the same time celebrating the lin-

guistic diversity of our country.

The minister said in order to review the scheme and syllabus of examinations conducted by the commission, including the medium in which the examinations are conducted, the Department of Personnel and Training had constituted an expert committee.

It, has, inter-alia, recommended that it would be in fitness of things to conduct the examinations for lower-level posts in multiple languages, which to begin with, can start with a few languages and then gradually increase to include all the languages mentioned in Eighth schedule to the Constitution, said the statement issued by the Personnel Ministry.

The government has accepted the recommendations of the committee, it added.

# Govt asks engineers to expedite RIDF spending

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** The state government has asked the field-level engineers of Rural Works Organisation under the Rural Development department to expedite spending under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF).

The chief engineer (plan roads) recently wrote a letter to all superintending engineers (SEs) and executive engineers (EEs) under the Rural Works Organisation to expedite completion of all ongoing works and submit balance reimbursement claims accordingly.

According to the letter, the expenditure was ₹384.41 crore by the end of December 2022 against the budgetary provision of ₹758.09 crore in RIDF funded road projects including Mukhya Mantri Sadak Yojana (MMSY) in this financial year. And, reimbursement claim of ₹219.09 crore was filed upto December 2022.



► In RIDF funded road projects, the expenditure by end of December 2022 was ₹384.41 crore against the budgetary provision of ₹758.09 crore

► Out of the budgetary provision of ₹735.16 crore under RIDF for bridge projects, only ₹251.94 crore was spent

► The chief engineer asked the field engineers to give special focus on the on-going works, whose date of completion has already been over

Similarly, out of the budgetary provision of Rs 735.16 crore under

RIDF for bridge projects, only ₹251.94 crore was spent and reimbursement claim of only ₹193.94 crore was made till December.

"As the expenditure in the RIDF is only 50 per cent, it is apprehended that we may not achieve the desired financial target during the current financial year and loose RIDF grant in the coming financial years as the balance drawable gap is being enhanced due to poor expenditure," the chief engineer said in his letter.

He asked the field engineers to give special focus on the ongoing works, whose date of completion has already been over. All out efforts should be made to expedite the progress of all ongoing works under RIDF and to submit authorization accordingly, he instructed.

Further, he has asked to submit reimbursement claims for the projects under Tr-XXVII (Tranche-27) as per the expenditure done in this financial year.



**CELEBRATING 6 DECADES:** Mahanga MLA Pratap Jena, in presence of BJD leader Debashish Samantaray and other dignitaries, inaugurates the diamond jubilee celebration of Institute of Management and Information Technology at Sarala Bhawan in Cuttack, Friday

## MPS ropes in Ehsaan for music classes



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** The students at the Mother's Public School got another reason to celebrate as the school collaborated with noted music composer Ehsaan Noorani's musical company Torrins. Ehsaan and his band also performed at school campuses here at Pahala and Unit 1 along with the students.

The mesmerizing performance enchanted the audience who soaked up the magical moments as they swayed to the music. As the icing on the cake the students got to interact with the musician one on one. The festivities lasted throughout the day and created lifelong memories for the youngsters.

Speaking on the occasion, Noorani said, "I feel happy to be here in Odisha. I am enthralled to see, the way the young talents are performing so well. It is a very good thing to promote art and music in the schools."

"It is our privilege to have such a legend joining hand with us and performing in our school," said MPS principal Poly Patnaik. An artist herself, she has always sought to celebrate arts and has tried to make it a part of the lives of those under her care.

MPS director Sreejeet Patnaik said that he would leave no stone unturned to give the Mother's family the best facilities to have an all round development for becoming successful in any career they choose.

# BMC launches 'Bhubaneswar First'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** In an effort to make Bhubaneswar a modern and model city with world-class infrastructure and amenities, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Friday launched an initiative 'Bhubaneswar First' at an event organised here at the Bhanja Kala Niketan.

Bhubaneswar central MLA Ananta Narayan Jena, BMC Mayor Sulochana Das, BMC commissioner Vijaya Amruta Kulange and other dignitaries present at the event unveiled the logo of Bhubaneswar First.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, wishing luck to the venture through a video message said,



"Bhubaneswar is our pride. We all collectively wish it to be clean and tidy. Let's all come together under this initiative and make the city an ideal example for all."

Speaking to the gathering, Das said, "There was an air of uncer-

**"Team Bhubaneswar will leave no stone unturned to make the City best in class."**

SULOCHANA DAS | BMC MAYOR

tainty regarding the longevity of the cleanliness and beautification done in the City for the Men's Hockey World Cup and I often encountered such questions. This initiative sends a loud and clear message that team Bhubaneswar will leave no stone un-

turned to make the City best in class. But it won't be possible without public involvement. General public, the true owner of the city must join hands with the authorities in making Bhubaneswar first in every aspect."

Bhubaneswar First initiative is targeted at making the city finest on grounds of sanitation, beautification, dust free, pollution free, eco-friendly livable habitat through active community participation.

## Tribal library, research centre soon at CUO

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** The Central University of Odisha, located in Koraput, is optimistic to set up a world-class tribal library, archaeological museum and research institute in its premises.

CUO vice-chancellor Chakradhar Tripathy felt optimistic about this after he met President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan Thursday.

The varsity has proposed to open a world-class tribal library, archaeological museum and research institute in Koraput.

"There was a positive discussion with the President of India in this regard and she appreciated the academic initiative of the vice chancellor," an official note said.

Tripathy is quite optimistic that the centre will be set up in the university as soon as possible and it will help in conservation of and research on the language, culture



and knowledge of the tribal people of the region and from across the country.

The university is also trying to engage international researchers to conduct research on indigenous cow milk, which has the potential to kill cancer cells as described in the Veda, the official note said.

The varsity sources said that in a bid to promote sports in the university, a permanent sports pro-

fessor is being appointed. It is pertinent to mention here that most of the posts of permanent teachers and staff in the university have not been filled up. The lack of senior teachers has affected a lot in the teaching and learning process.

In view of all this, the university is in the process of appointing senior visiting professors in various departments in an effort to make qualitative academic teaching and learning. The university is going to publish an advertisement very soon to fill up the posts of permanent teachers and staff.

## TN Minister, officials visit City slums

**Bhubaneswar:** As part of their official visit to Odisha, Tamil Nadu Youth Welfare and Sports Development Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin along with senior officials from Tamil Nadu government visited slum areas of Bhubaneswar Friday to witness how the state's flagship development initiatives are transforming the lives of City slum residents. Stalin commended the state while he visited Ishaneswar Biju Adarsh Colony and witnessed improvement work taken up under Jaga Mission while interacting with the Slum Dwellers Association and the Mission Shakti SHGs. "He appreciated the state's efforts to empower the marginalised and the poor living in slums by adopting 'governance by community' approach and he was delighted to see the huge impact people centric programs such as 'Drink from Tap', Jaga Mission and urban wage employment scheme (MUKTA) have made," said an official accompanying them.

Continued from P1

## Pee-gate: DGCA slaps ₹30L fine ...

A financial penalty of Rs 3 lakh has been imposed on the Director-in-flight services of M/s Air India for failing to discharge her duties as per applicable DGCA CAR, it added.

The incident of passenger misbehaviour occurred on the AI-102 flight from New York to

Delhi November 26 last year, wherein a male passenger conducted himself in a disorderly manner and allegedly relieved himself on a female passenger, DGCA said.

The CAR related to the handling of unruly passengers was issued by DGCA in September 2017.

## CM: Govt striving to...

"The artistic skills of our craftsmen are reflected in numerous ways. You can find it in our temples, our sculptures, Buddhist shrines, hand-woven clothes, patta paintings, wood works, metal works...everywhere. Every village, every lane of Odisha exhibits some form of art or craft. The soul of Odisha lives in our art, craft,

music and culture," he stated. International delegates from 15 countries have arrived in Jajpur to engage with local artisans and other stakeholders. Four UN agencies and five UNESCO creative cities have partnered with Jajpur district to realize this ambitious and forward-looking event on behalf of the state government.

## Egyptian Prez Sisi to be Republic Day...

India also considers Egypt as a moderate voice in the Arab World as it has been taking a "very balanced" stand vis-a-vis India and issues concerning India such as Kashmir at the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The two sides are expected to sign about half a dozen agreements to expand cooperation in areas of agriculture, IT, cyber-security and culture after wide-ranging talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sisi

January 25. Sisi will also interact with the business leaders at an event. At the Republic Day celebrations January 26, an Egyptian military contingent comprising more than 100 personnel will participate in the parade. The Egyptian President will also interact with the business leaders at an event. At the Republic Day celebrations, an Egyptian military contingent comprising more than 100 personnel will participate in the parade.

## Stars fast disappearing from...

A promising approach is therefore to use the observational power of people using the human eye as a sensor; and in doing so - within the framework of Citizen Science experiments - to rely on the power of the crowd.

The "Globe at Night" project, initiated by the US National Science Foundation's NOIRLab, has been running since 2006. People all over the world can participate in this project. Participants look at their night sky, and then report which of a set of eight star charts best matches what they see using an online form. Each chart shows the sky under different levels of light pollution, the study said.

"The contributions of individual people work together as if they were a global sensor network, making new science possible," said Christopher Kyba from the GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences in Potsdam and the Ruhr University Bochum.

Kyba's team has analyzed data from 51,351 participants around the world taken on cloud-free and moon-free nights between 2011 and 2022. They were obtained from 19,262 locations worldwide, including 3,699 locations in Europe and 9,488 locations in North America.

In order to calculate a rate of change in sky brightness from this data and to take into account that

the observers were also at different locations over the years, they made use of a global model for sky brightness based on satellite data from 2014. "The rate at which stars are becoming invisible to people in urban environments is dramatic," summed up Christopher Kyba, lead author of the study.

The researchers found that the change in the number of visible stars can be explained by increases in night sky brightness. In Europe, they found a 6.5 per cent increase in brightness per year matched the data; in North America, it's 10.4 per cent.

To put these numbers into a more understandable context, Kyba explains the consequences for seeing stars in a place with a 9.6 per cent per year increase, which was the average over all locations worldwide.

"If the development were to continue at that rate, a child born in a place where 250 stars are visible will only be able to see 100 stars there on his 18th birthday," said Kyba.

Based on the slower growth in upward emissions seen in satellite data, the researchers were surprised by the speed of this development in 'skyglow'.

In fact, for the locations of the observers, the artificial brightness measured by satellite had slightly decreased - by 0.3 per cent per year in Europe, by 0.8 per cent in North America.

# 'Early vaccination can prevent cervical cancer'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** Cervical cancer, one of the most common forms of cancers found in women in India, is the second most prevalent cancer in the country. But the disease is largely preventable if awareness is created from an early age, say experts at the Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) here in City.

The mitigation lies in early immunisation, said Sudhanshu Kumar Rath senior professor of department of obstetrics and gynaecology at Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) Bhubaneswar, a constituent of KIIT-deemed-to-be-university.

"Vaccine should be taken before sexual debut. However, an early age of 9-10 years is recommended as at that age the immune response

**+ CERVICAL CANCER Awareness Month January**

According to estimates, every year in India approximately 1.25 lakh women are diagnosed with cervical cancer, and over 75 thousand die from the disease

LAST YEAR, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED INDIA'S FIRST INDIGENOUSLY DEVELOPED VACCINE, 'CERVAVAC' FOR CERVICAL CANCER PREVENTION

is excellent," he said, adding that a broader consensus is also developing among policymakers for early immunisation.

His observation comes against the backdrop of January being dedicated to raising awareness about cervical cancer and HPV

vaccination. The World Health Organisation (WHO) is focusing on ending cervical cancer within a few generations and has picked immunisation as the theme for this month.

Cervical cancer is linked to a form of virus called Human

Papilloma Virus (HPV) that is transmitted through sexual contact. The infections can regress spontaneously, but persistence could be a cause of concern.

According to a government estimate, every year in India approximately 1.25 lakh women are diagnosed with cervical cancer, and over 75 thousand die from the disease. KIMS receives about 10 to 12 cases every year.

The symptoms associated with the disease could be irregular bleeding, post-coital bleeding and foul-smelling discharge. But the remedies in our hands if the level of awareness remains high, Rath, considered an expert in his field, said.

"Not all cells, however, become cancerous. Some will reverse as well. We need to address them there itself," he said. He stressed undergoing tests at the interval of

three to five years. "The standard form of diagnosis is done through the 'pap smear' test. HPV test is also done in selected centres," he added.

He underlined that KIMS offers the best treatment available in any healthcare facility in the country, from preventive to curative treatment.

What can come as a big relief for vaccine seekers is the indigenous production of the vaccine in India, which brings down the cost of doses. In September last year, the central government announced India's first indigenous developed vaccine, 'CERVAVAC' for the prevention of cervical cancer. It has been developed by the Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) in collaboration with the department of Biotechnology (DBT), the Science and Technology Ministry.

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## Tusker tramples quinquagenarian

**Rupra:** In a tragic incident, a woman identified as Champa Gouda (52) was killed by a wild tusker in Bagpur village under Narla police limits of Kalahandi district. As per reports, Champa was attacked by the tusker while going to the farmland to pluck cotton bolls. She died on the spot. Informed, police and forest officials reached the spot and launched an investigation. On the other hand, the atmosphere has remained tense at the spot. Irrate locals blocked the M Rampur-Bhawanipatna road demanding compensation for the next of kin of the deceased, and action by the Forest department over frequent elephant attacks in the area.

## 25 passengers hurt as bus turns turtle

**Kendrapara:** At least 25 persons were injured, six of them critically, in a road accident when a speeding bus in which they were travelling turned turtle in Kendrapara district Thursday, police said. The accident took place near Ganja chowk on the Cuttack-Chandbali state highway as the driver reportedly lost control over the vehicle, the police said. The bus was heading towards Pattamundai from Chandbali, the police said. The critically injured were rushed to SCB Medical College and Hospital at Cuttack, while those who sustained minor injuries were undergoing treatment in the community health center at Rajkanika, said the inspector of Rajkanika police station.



**HOCKEY FEVER:** An artist draws a mural on the pillar of a flyover in Sambalpur as part of the beautification drive for FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2023 being hosted by the state, Friday  
OP PHOTO

# Road accidents take 4,681 lives in 2 years

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nayagarh, Jan 20:** Road accident related deaths are on a rise in the state with 4,681 persons losing their lives during last two years.

Sundargarh district topped the chart with most road accidents in 2021-2022 while Deogarh district was placed at the bottom of the list.

Reports said that 349 people in Sundargarh district died due to road mishaps in between January to October, 2022. Similarly, 334 in Ganjam, 304 in Keonjhar, 265 in Khurda, 175 in Koraput, 174 in Sambalpur, 171 in Dhenkanal, 151 in Bhadrak, 148 in Bolangir, 122 in Puri, 105 in Jharsuguda, 81 in Nayagarh, 74 in Subarnapur, 71 in Malkangiri and 45 in Deogarh district died in road accidents during the same period.

As many as 2,112 persons died in road mishaps in between January to October 2021. Among them, Sundargarh district topped the chart with the death of 312 persons during the period.

Similarly, 294 in Ganjam, 277 in Keonjhar, 217 in Khurda, 155 in Koraput, 152 in Sambalpur, 130 in Dhenkanal, 120 in Bolangir, 100 in Bhadrak, 97 in Puri, 90 in Jharsuguda, 70 in Nayagarh, 58 in



**Sundargarh district topped the chart with most road accidents in 2021-2022 while Deogarh district was placed at the bottom of the list**

Malkangiri, 44 in Subarnapur, and 40 people in Deogarh districts died in the same period.

In a small district like Nayagarh, 151 persons have died during last two years. While 182 persons died in 2021, it was 195 in 2022.

As per a private estimate, the number of mishaps is way more than reported. However, not all accidents find place in the government reports as in case of many accidents, complaints are not

lodged at the police station. Nayagarh district has topped the chart in cases of helmet-less riding. The regional transport office (RTO) in Nayagarh has given the highest revenue to the state exchequer in 2022. The RTO had a target of ₹9.67 crore but it surpassed its target and collected ₹11.13 crore.

When contacted, RTO Prashant Parida said that challans have been issued to 7,597 persons in between April to December, 2022. Among them, licenses of 1,003 have been scrapped. The challans were issued to 150 persons for drunk driving, 1,471 for speeding, 79 for overloading, 24 for ferrying passengers in goods vehicles, 182 for using mobile phones during driving, 5,503 for helmet-less riding and 187 for not using seat belts in their cars during driving.

## Underage girl married off again hours after her rescue

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nayagarh, Jan 20:** The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act seems to have gone haywire in Nayagarh district as a 15-year-old girl was allegedly married off twice to the same groom. Reportedly, after the minor's rescue from the marriage pandal, she was handed over to her parents, who married her off again just hours later at Sipahi Asuradhipa area under Sadar police limits in Nayagarh district, late Wednesday night.

Reports said that the Childline officials over a tip-off rescued the minor with the help of Sadar police officials during her marriage to a youth, Wednesday. The marriage was foiled and the guests from the bride and groom's side returned. Later, the Childline officials produced her before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) Wednesday evening.

However, the CWC took light of the matter and handed her over to her parents the same evening. When questioned, CWC officials claimed that she was handed over to her parents as she fell unconscious. However, locals raised doubts on the claim and questioned that why the girl was not admitted to a hospital if at all she



Childline officials, after foiling the minor's marriage to a youth, rescued her with the help of Sadar police officials and produced her before CWC  
Allegedly, CWC took light of the matter and handed the rescued girl over to her parents the same evening, who then got her married again late in the night

fell unconscious. The Childline officials and police did not intervene despite being aware of the development. The parents then took her back home and married her off again to the same groom late Wednesday night. This has raised doubts on the functioning of the CWC in Nayagarh. It is alleged that the CWC president handed over the girl to her parents in exchange of ₹15,000 bribe.

The development has drawn strong responses from the local residents as they demanded the district administration and the state government to intervene in the matter. They alleged that the incident, if not acted upon, will boost child marriages in the district and encourage middlemen to lure the poor and gullible people to marry off their minor daughters below the permissible age for their own monetary gains.

Advocate Ranjit Dash said that it was not correct on the part of the CWC to handover the minor girl to her parents. He said that releasing the girl in alleged exchange of ₹15,000 bribe is giving a different message. The girl's remarriage has made a mockery of the Act, he said demanding stringent action against those involved in this incident.

When contacted, CWC President Santosh Kumar Sahu rejected the charges of bribery and termed it as baseless. He said that the girl was handed over to her parents as she fell unconscious but it would have been wise to get her admitted in a hospital. He said that her parents have given an undertaking that they will not marry her off till she attains maturity and legal age. He also ruled out that the girl was married off to the groom late Wednesday night.

## NIA posters seek info on 4 wanted Maoists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Koraput, Jan 20:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has put up posters at the district headquarters town of Koraput here seeking information on four wanted Maoists, a senior police officer said.

The posters carrying pictures of the Maoists were found pasted in at least four places of the town.

DIG (south-western range) Rajesh Pandit said that an NIA team that recently visited the district to take



The agency has promised to keep the informer's identity a secret

stock of the prevailing situation in the Red corridor made a list of wanted Maoists and put up the posters declaring a cash reward between ₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh for any person who provides information about them, leading to their arrest. The agency has promised to keep the informer's identity a secret.

Local police officers identified the four as Jalumuri Srinu Babu alias Rhino of Dabbapalem village in Andhra Pradesh, Metturu Joga Rao alias Babu of Bathupura village in Andhra Pradesh, Gajarla Ravi alias Ganesh of Velishala in Telangana and Khillo Ranju alias Chanti of Kadaguma village in Odisha.

## Kendrapara man raises passion fruit in backyard

Successful cultivation of the fruit in the warm climate has surprised many



Argentina in South America. It grows in cold climate and is cultivated in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Kashmir and Kerala.

However, the successful cultivation of the fruit in Odisha, where the climate is warm, has surprised many. The fruit is consumed mostly for its nutritional value and it helps in curing skin disease, hair fall, and diabetes apart from reducing fat.

Its juice, rich in vitamins, can be used as a drink by adding some salt and sugar. The fruit having very good aroma and delicious in taste grows mostly from winter till summer season.

In Odisha, passion fruit is grown in the western parts and is available for sale in all the small and big malls as well as the super markets in Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Mumbai and other cities. The fruit is also available in online shopping platforms.

When contacted, Ray said he has grown the fruit by organic manure only instead of applying any chemical fertilizer. It is available in two colour variants of orange and green, he added.

in Kolkata and has successfully grown the fruits in his backyard. The feat of successfully raising the fruits has made him a role model and an example for others to emulate. People and traders are rushing to him to buy the fruits cultivated under this block in Kendrapara district.

Reports said passion fruit is known as 'Krishna Phal' in India and it is native to South Brazil, Paraguay and

**M/S OM SARALA SECURITY SERVICES PVT. LTD.**  
H.O.- Ganesh Market, S.T.I. Chowk, Rourkela-769012  
B.O.- Fatak, Mishra Colony, Budharaja, Sambalpur - 768004  
Memo No. OSPL/1262/22-23 Dated: 20/01/2023

**APPOINTMENT**

Applications are invited from interested candidates for engagement of WDT (Livelihood, Engineering, Social and Micro Enterprises) for Sambalpur District in REWARD clusters. Monthly remuneration ₹20,000.00 inclusive of all (as applicable). For details regarding posts, age, requisite qualification as well as for application form please visit website (<https://www.saralasecurity.com>). Eligible candidates may submit their applications in the prescribed proforma with copies of requisite qualifications (self-attested) by Registered Post / Speed Post / super scribing "Application for engagement as WDT" to above address within 15 (fifteen) days from the date of advertisement.

Application may be submitted by hand only at Fatak, Mishra Colony, Budharaja, Sambalpur (Mob: 7008663132).  
Sd/-, Director

Government of Odisha No.B-1165:  
"E" Procurement Tender Notice  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RAYAGADA (R&B) DIVISION NO.-II**  
E-mail ID: eepwd765017@gmail.com, Phone: (06856) 233066  
Bid Identification No./RC(RANDB) RGID No-II 28/2022-23 (Online tender) No.547 Dated. 18.01.2023

- Total No. of the Works : 01 No. Building Work
- Approximate estimated cost : Rs.14.71 Lakh
- Period of Completion : 03 (Three) calendar months for building works
- Date & Time of availability : 11.00 Hrs. of Dtd. 31.01.2023 to 17.00 Hrs. of Dtd. 10.02.2023 for of bid document in the portal online bidding.
- Last date/time for receipt of : Upto 17.00 Hrs. of bids in the portal Dt. 10.02.2023
- Name and address of the : Executive Engineer, Rayagada Officer Inviting Bid (R&B) Division No-II
- Date of opening of Bid at 11.00 hours on Dt.13.02.2023.
- Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal: [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in).
- Further Addendum/ Corrigendum if any will be hosted in the above website only.

Sd/- Executive Engineer  
Rayagada (R&B) Division No-II  
OIPR-34139/11/0013/2223

**यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India**  
MADHUSUDAN NAGAR BRANCH,  
Plot No.: 269, Sachivalaya Marg, Madhusudan Nagar, Unit-4, Bhubaneswar-751022, Odisha (For Immovable Property)

**POSSESSION NOTICE**  
(For Immovable Property)

[RULE 8(1) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES - 2002]

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Union Bank of India, Madhusudan Nagar Branch under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices to the following borrower(s)/guarantor(s) calling upon them to repay the amount mentioned in the notice plus interest and expenses thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s)/guarantor(s) in particular and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Possession of the property/ies described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 9 of the said Rules on the date mentioned hereunder. The borrower(s)/guarantor(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies & any dealings with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of Union Bank of India, Madhusudan Nagar Branch for an amount mentioned below with interest, incidental expenses, costs & charges thereon. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of the Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Name and Address of the Borrower(s)	Liabilities due as per Notice (in ₹)	Demand Notice Date / Date of Possession	Description of Immovable properties
Borrower: Mr. Satyajit Panda, Plot No.: 2169 (Part), Kedar Gouri Road, Bhubaneswar-751002, Odisha, India	₹47,46,865.04 + interest & other charges thereon	19.04.2022 / 18.01.2023	All that piece and parcel belonging to Satyajit Panda situated at Residential Flat bearing Flat No.: 32, Royal Residency, over Plot No.: 877/2619, Khata No.: 1427 (GA), Mouza: Jaydev Vihar, Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurda, Flat Bounded by: North: Flat No.: 31, South: Open Passage, East: Open Passage

Date: 20.01.2023, Place: Bhubaneswar Sd/- AUTHORISED OFFICER, Union Bank of India

**यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India**  
SAMANTAPUR BRANCH  
C-2, Prajna Pitha, Samantapur, Bhubaneswar- 751013 (For Immovable Property)

**POSSESSION NOTICE**  
(For Immovable Property)

[Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002 under Rule 8(1)]

Whereas the Authorised Officer of the Union Bank of India under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 under section 13(12) read with rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice calling upon the following Borrower(s)/Co-applicant(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) in the loan Account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest within 60 days from the date of said Notice. The Borrower(s)/Co-applicant(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s)/Co-applicant(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) and the Public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

The Borrower(s)/Co-applicant(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Union Bank of India, Samantapur Branch for the amount mentioned below with further interest & other applicable charges thereon.

The Borrower(s)/Co-applicant(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the Secured Assets.

Name & Address of Borrower(s)/Co-applicant(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s)	Outstanding Amount	Date of Demand / Possession Notice	Description of the Immovable Property
Borrower(s)/Co-applicant(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s): (1) Mrs Sakuntala Lenka, W/o: Mr Khetramohan Lenka, (2) Mr Niranjan Lenka, both are resident of Village: Sahanajpur, P.O: Jalharpur, P.S: Niali, Dist: Cuttack, Odisha- 754004.	Rs.15,94,725/- as on 31.12.2021 with further interest cost & expenses thereon	03.01.2022 / 17.01.2023	All that piece and parcel of land measuring Ac.0.290 decimal along with single storied RCC Building thereon measuring builtup area of 1165 sq.ft., carpet area 932.16 sq.ft., at Khata No.194/25, Plot No.379/799, having Area of Ac.0.050 decimal, Plot No.381/800, having Area of Ac.0.120 decimal, Plot No.382/801 having Area of Ac.0.120 decimal, being total land Area: Ac.0.290 decimal in Mouza: Sahanajpur, P.S.: Niali, Dist: Cuttack, Odisha, Pin- 754004 standing in the name of Mrs Sakuntala Lenka, Property is bounded by: North- Canal, South- Road, East- Land & Building of Narayan Patra, West- Land & Building of Basudev Patra.

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 20.01.2023 Sd/- Authorized Officer, Union Bank of India

FOCUS POLITICS

# IS CHINA BACK?



Over the past two months, China's leadership has announced major policy reversals that have left global investors and other observers bullish about its economic future

When President Joe Biden took office in 2021, his first message to the rest of the world was: "America is back." Having assumed his third term as general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in October, President Xi Jinping appears to be issuing a similar proclamation.

Over the past two months, China's leadership has announced or signaled a series of major policy reversals, abruptly ending nearly three years of severe zero-COVID restrictions, easing the crackdown on tech companies and the real-estate sector, reaffirming its commitment to economic growth, and extending an olive branch to the United States at the G20. With the world's second-largest economy apparently re-opening its doors for business, investors are reacting with enthusiasm.

But, while China's pro-business reset certainly bodes well for international trade and global peace and stability, putting the Chinese economy on the right track will require more than just a reversal of recent policies. What is really needed is bringing pragmatism and honest feedback back into the political system. As I showed in my book *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap*, these attributes defined China's famously adaptive governance during the Deng Xiaoping era.

There is a common misperception that the "China model" means top-down control by a strong, authoritarian government, flanked by muscular state enterprises. In fact, 30 years of poverty and suffering under Mao Zedong proved that the combination of top-down planning, state ownership, and political repression was a recipe for failure. That is why Deng quietly introduced a hybrid system that I call "directed improvisation." The CPC remained firmly in power, but the central government delegated authority to numerous local authorities across China, and, at the same time, liberated private entrepreneurs from state controls.

Playing the part of a director rather than a dictator, the government in Beijing defined na-

tional goals and established appropriate incentives and rules, while lower-level authorities and private-sector players improvised local solutions to local problems. In practice, a wide variety of local "China models" emerged, delivering transformative innovations from the bottom up, often in ways that surprised central authorities. The rise of the digital economy is one example.

Since ideas must come before action, Deng made sure that he first changed the CPC's own mindset and norms. In his historic December 1978 speech launching China's era of "reform and opening up," he made "emancipating the mind" a top priority for the party. Under Mao, people dared not speak the truth, for fear of severe punishment, creating a chilling political climate that gave rise to disastrous policies like the Great Leap Forward. But under Deng, the new imperative was to "seek truth from facts." Policies should be chosen because they improved people's welfare, not because they were politically correct.

Deng's hybrid system - top-down direction combined with bottom-up autonomy - has been overlooked both by Western China hawks and by Xi's own leadership. When Xi came to power, he favoured a different story about China's success, celebrating the "institutional advantage" that a top-

down command system supposedly has over Western democratic capitalism.

To be sure, a top-down approach yielded impressive results during the initial COVID-19 outbreak. Through mass testing, strict containment, and other measures that could be maintained only under a strong, authoritarian government, China achieved near-zero infections and deaths from 2020 through 2022. Xi embraced zero-COVID as one of his signature achievements, declaring as recently as the October National Congress that China would stick to the policy "without wavering."

But then events took a rapid, unexpected turn. Exasperated with endless lockdowns, Chinese citizens from various walks of life poured into the streets in protest, forcing Xi to change his position. But the sudden reversal of the zero-COVID policy has led to a massive surge of cases and hospitalisations with which China will continue to struggle for some time.

Xi and his team are eager to put the pandemic behind them and restore business confidence. Relaxing economic regulations and ending pandemic controls have indeed buoyed capital markets. Moreover, after COVID-19 infections peak, domestic consumption is likely to come back with a vengeance (flight bookings already jumped several-fold im-

mediately after quarantine requirements for travelers were lifted), and manufacturing and logistics will return to normal. The central government has also pledged additional infrastructure spending to boost growth.

But for the new economic terrain to bear fruit over the longer term, Xi needs to reopen the political system's feedback channels. That means setting a personal example and making clear to party-state officials that he genuinely wants them to report the realities on the ground. That will not happen if, in practice, truth-tellers are silenced and propagandists are elevated.

The government also needs to give civil society and the media more space. It is short-sighted and ultimately self-defeating to think that quashing free speech will strengthen the CPC's hold on power. Without a regularised system of policy feedback, governance suffers, leading to the kinds of mass protests that exploded in November and eroding the CPC's performance-based legitimacy.

Yet another problem with Xi's top-down approach is that it will leave investors wondering when China might pivot again. Over the past decade, Xi has repeatedly proclaimed a devotion to various "reforms," only to do the opposite. Empowering officials with track records of pragmatism and candor would go a long way toward reassuring markets.

Finally China's leadership should recognise that the overarching goal of tackling the country's "Gilded Age" problems, such as curbing speculative investment in real estate and protecting the rights of delivery workers in e-commerce, was not wrong. Previous policies backfired because they were implemented arbitrarily, leaving businesses nervous that the party could change them at any time. Xi and his circle must practice transparency and consultation in their policy-making, rather than simply abandoning the pursuit of inclusive development.

The writer is a Professor of Political Economy at Johns Hopkins University.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

**THIRTY YEARS OF POVERTY AND SUFFERING UNDER MAO ZEDONG PROVED THAT THE COMBINATION OF TOP-DOWN PLANNING, STATE OWNERSHIP, AND POLITICAL REPRESSION WAS A RECIPE FOR FAILURE**



Yuen Yuen Ang

## Proxy Attack

Intuition is the power which distinguishes the truth and suggests at once the right reasons for its being the truth

SRI AUROBINDO



The recent registration of a case by the CBI against former finance secretary Arvind Mayaram and a few other officials of the Finance Ministry for alleged "irregularities" in the supply of the security thread for currency notes has caused some disquiet in babu circles.

Is it a coincidence that the CBI chose to move against Mayaram only days after the babu and his wife joined the Congress' Bharat Jodo Yatra last month? After all, those in the know say that the case is five years old, stemming from a complaint filed in 2017 by the ministry. Why rake it up now, some people are asking.

But sources have informed DKB that the investigation was underway since then, ultimately leading to raids on Mayaram's residences in Delhi and Jaipur. The babu is currently the principal economic advisor to Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. Some observers suggest that the intended target of the CBI is a minister in the previous government, and this is a proxy attack. Whatever one thinks, this may just be the beginning of a long winding legal tussle.

### IAS training gets a corporate fillip

Nearly everyone agrees that the civil service needs serious reforms if it has to be more effective in delivering good governance. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has frequently harped on the need for the babus to reform, perform and transform! Some steps have been taken in this direction, but now the attempt is to catch the babus when they are still training at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration in Mussoorie. Not surprisingly, the Modi sarkar has taken a cue from the corporate sector to change the status quo and sought global experts to train young officers.

Sources have informed DKB that the academy has roped in domain experts from the World Bank, IMF, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and Carnegie Mellon University, among others, to coach the trainees. Alongside, the existing study modules have been revamped to instill "nationalism" in the officers and also focus on the "de-siloisation" of the system. The academy director Srinivas Katikithala believes that the aim is to bring efficiency and build a "performance-oriented competitive frame of work".

The new initiative however has not been welcomed by all. Some senior officers are said to believe that officers need to learn from actual experience in the field and not from international policy experts. Bringing in experts from the corporate world, some feel, may bring in some analytical skills or technical knowledge, but it cannot replace the learnings from working in rural India and our unique and complex social structure. Do you agree? We'll wait and see the results of the new experiment.



**BABUDOM BYTES**

Dilip Cherian

### Khemka 'archived' again

Is it the 55th or 56th transfer? Who's counting? Haryana IAS officer Ashok Khemka's notoriously peripatetic career is a cautionary tale for public administrators, especially those who play strictly by the rulebook.

Few babus have had a civil service career like Khemka, who in over three decades of babugiri, has had an average stint of six months in every posting. As additional chief secretary of the government's Archives Department, his latest transfer comes on the heels of his letter to the state government saying that he didn't have enough work after the merger of the Science and Technology and Higher Education departments. The response was a transfer, as he later described in a tweet, he was 'archived'.

Over the past decade or so, Khemka has clearly toted up more transfers than any other IAS officer. This is his third posting in the Archives Department, an inconsequential position for someone described just three months ago by none other than the state Home Minister Anil Vij as "a gem" and a "rare breed officer" and is an additional chief secretary in rank.

But Khemka, being Khemka, is plodding on regardless of the government's efforts to sideline him. The whistleblower is currently in a "feud" with Rohak Division commissioner Sanjeev Verma, a state civil service officer promoted to the IAS over an alleged corruption case. There is never a dull moment. Watch this space for updates.

Share a babu experience! Follow [@diliptheherian](https://twitter.com/diliptheherian). Let's multiply the effect

### WISDOM CORNER

Falling down is not a failure. Failure comes when you stay where you have fallen. **SOCRATES**

We don't have the time to completely be ourselves. We only have the room to be happy. **ALBERT CAMUS**

One is never afraid of the unknown; one is afraid of the known coming to an end. **JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI**

### WORDSWORTH

#### Anfractuosity

This refers to a channel, crevice or passage full of windings and turnings, not quite a maze, though some mazes certainly take on an anfractuosity appearance, one that is sinuous or winding.

Anfractuosity and anfractuosity are also used in the sense of the sulci, the grooves between the convolutions of the surface of the brain. The term is used in modern times to refer to a kind of opaque and circuitous legal prose, full of twists and turns, seemingly designed more to confuse than to clarify; this is sometimes called syntactic anfractuosity, a suitably ponderous term with which to describe its subject. The word comes from Latin anfractus, a bending around, from the verb frangere, to break. So it is a close cousin of the much more recent fractal, as well as fracture, fragile, refraction, and, rather less obviously, infringe and osprey (this last word comes from ossifraga, bone breaker, originally applied to the lammergeier).

#### Whilom

This adjective is one of four - the others being erstwhile, quondam and umquihle - with the same meaning: formerly, in the past. All are unfamiliar and un-English in appearance, though whilom is not the least odd. None is common but whilom is rare enough today to the extent that current dictionaries mark it as archaic. This may not be a surprise to the writer of this letter, an expatriate professor of English and Irish Literature in a German university: It was once part of the vocabulary of literate English speakers, such as J M Barrie, who wrote in *The Little White Bird* of 1903: "Whom did I see but the whilom nursery governess sitting on a chair in one of these gardens". He meant that the lady had once been a governess, but was one no longer. Barrie wrote that at what proved to be the peak of the word's popularity. By the time of this next appearance, it had been rapidly falling away from favour for a couple of decades: The word dates to Old English, at a time when the language was heavily inflected - adjectives, nouns, and verbs taking different endings depending on the job they were doing. Whilom - then spelt whilom - was the dative plural of whil, the same word as our modern while. As English progressively lost its inflections, the word became a fossil, with its ending stuck to it permanently; at the same time the meaning shifted to mean something of a former time, a change that was complete by the fifteenth century.

### SPECTRUM GLOBAL SOUTH MEET

# Strategic shift in India's foreign policy

India hosted the virtual Global South meeting on January 12 and 13 as a part of G-20 activities, which it is organising as its current President. The meeting has raised eyebrows of many observers across the world. There are two interpretations going around. One, India feels the necessity of the voice of the South being heard in the global economic and political platforms. Second, New Delhi is reclaiming the space and leadership of what was once a credible and assertive group called Non-Alignment Movement (NAM).

The second version of the event is reinforced by the invitation extended to the President of Egypt to be the Chief Guest at this year's Republic Day parade. Remember that Egypt was a co-founder of NAM along with former Yugoslavia and India. Let us examine the viability of such a strategic shift in India's foreign policy.

What is Global South? Can it be defined as a bloc? Global South draws its nomenclature from what was once called the Third World. These countries are defined by certain common characteristics like income inequality, democracy deprived or fragile democracies, and

freedom indices.

The group came into existence first in 1955 in Bandung Conference, which became NAM and then on June 15, 1964 when 77 countries were grouped into G-77 by the United Nations. Notably, India had shunned the latter.

The status and equations of the countries belonging to the so-called South have radically changed. China, which used to be regarded as an Eastern/Third World country, is now perceived as a superpower, replacing the former Soviet Union; India, Brazil and South Africa are middle-income countries, India overtaking Britain and becoming the fifth largest economy in GDP terms.

In the ongoing rivalry between China and America, security imperatives which, along with the economy, currently guide foreign policies, are prompting further changes in equations and partnerships among countries. So again, the national and ideological divide between North and South is not constant.

However, the issues flagged by India, especially by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 14 in the conference are worthy of global

deliberations. He declared, "We, the Global South have the largest stakes in the future. Three-fourth of humanity lives in our countries. We should have an equal voice as the eight-decade-old model of global governance slowly changes".

Modi laid out a global agenda on behalf of Global South as 4Rs - Respond, Recognise, Respect and Reform. He called upon the world powers to respond to the priorities of the Global South by framing an inclusive and comprehensive international agenda, recognise that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities applied to all global challenges, respect the sovereignty of all nations, rule of law and resolution of differences and disputes in a peaceful manner, and reform international institutions to make them more representative and relevant.

The virtual Global South meeting comprising over 100 countries was a good initiative. But if the Global South conclave was aimed at initiating a strategic shift in India's foreign policy in reviving the old groups such as NAM and carving out a leadership role for India, it is a strategic miscalculation.

Even though South-South co-

operation may expand the opportunities for countries for trade, commerce and other bilateral exchanges that may not be adequate to solve their problems. Inter-country interactions in an interdependent world are indispensable across the 'South-South unity' or 'South-North' divide. The United Nations also has contributed to diminishing the divide between North and South through the Millennium Development Goals for shaping the 21st century which are to be achieved together by all countries in the world.

Reviving NAM or maintaining the strategic autonomy is a subject that should be rigorously debated. Some would argue that strategic neutrality has served India well for the last 30 years or so. But I am afraid the issue is larger than that. I have maintained in this column repeatedly that NAM did not work, and strategic autonomy is unworkable. Making genuine partnerships and necessary alliances is the need of the hour in the spirit of mutual help and solidarity for the shared values.

The writer is a Professor in International Relations, JIMMC INFA



DK Giri

**MAKING GENUINE PARTNERSHIPS AND NECESSARY ALLIANCES IS THE NEED OF THE HOUR IN THE SPIRIT OF MUTUAL HELP AND SOLIDARITY FOR THE SHARED VALUES**

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

**OrissaPOST**  
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

#### Surprising move

Sir, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has stumped the world by announcing she would resign in less than three weeks. Ardern, who steered the country through the White Island volcanic eruption, the Covid pandemic and the 2019 Christchurch mosque massacre, in which 51 Muslim worshippers perished, admitted she no longer has 'enough in the tank' to do the job. The Kiwi PM became the world's youngest female head of government when she was elected PM in 2017 at 37. But her popularity has gone south thanks to soaring inflation and a resurgent conservative opposition. Her decision to step down leaves a void at the top of the Labour party and could be a game-changer in the October election.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

#### Pongal perils

Sir, It pains a lot to note that some youths have lost their lives in the jallikattu event held in different parts of Tamil Nadu during the recent Pongal festival like it happens every year. This is a harsh reality of the perils attached with this maddening rural sport. By nature Tamilians are more sentimental and are emotionally attached to things. But they must know that mawkishness, in any affair, cannot prevail over wisdom and truth. The pride and culture of Tamil Nadu largely lie in the classical and rich Tamil language, dating back to thousands of years, and definitely not in an uncouthly rural sport that invites deaths and injuries. If the rural youth of TN wish to display their valour, they can always join the Army and serve the nation with pride and distinction, rather than taking part in a brash sport like jallikattu.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

#### Dragging to death danger

Sir, Delhi Commission of Women (DCW) chief Swati Maliwal was allegedly dragged by a car in the early hours near AIIMS Hospital in South Delhi. Maliwal was out inspecting the state of women's safety in the city at night. The DCW chief told the police that a drunken man drove up to her twice and asked her to sit in his car. He rolled up the window when she moved close to reprimand him, and her hand got stuck in the window. She was dragged for 10-15 metres. Though the car was intercepted and the accused arrested, the incident is a reminder of how unsafe the national capital has turned for the denizens. A few days ago a car hit a woman named Anjali Kumari and dragged her to death.

Jayanthi Subramaniam, EAST MUMBAI

# national

## of the day quote

When Jyotiraditya Scindia was there, why did they (Bharatiya Janata Party) lose the mayoral elections in Gwalior and its adjoining city Morena to the Congress last year?

KAMAL NATH | MP CONGRESS CHIEF

The Assam government is committed to preserve the cultural heritage of all indigenous groups of the state

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

Despite being a power centre, Patiala lagged behind in process of development due to "vested interests" and "greed" of the successive rulers, who "decorated their own palaces at the cost of dilapidation of the city

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

## SHORT TAKES

### Dhoot gets interim bail

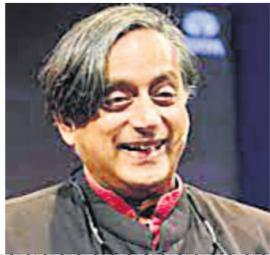
Mumbai: Videocon Group founder Venugopal Dhoot walked out of Mumbai's Arthur Road Jail on Friday evening, hours after he was granted interim bail by the Bombay High Court in a loan fraud case. Dhoot was arrested on December 26 last year in the case, in which former ICICI Bank managing director and chief executive officer Chanda Kochhar and her husband Deepak Kochhar have also been named as accused. After getting interim bail from the court, his lawyers submitted the release order to the Arthur Road prison authorities, following which Dhoot was released, an official said.

### Two arrested near India-Nepal border

New Delhi: The Delhi Police's Crime Branch arrested two men while trying to flee to Nepal after allegedly killing a gym owner in the Preet Vihar area of the national capital, said an official Friday. The accused have been identified as Inder Wardhan Sharma (36), a resident of Begamabad, Modi Nagar in Uttar Pradesh and Ravi Kumar (30), a resident of district Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh. On December 31, 2022, Gym owner Mahender Aggarwal was shot multiple times by two armed assailants in his office.

### Ram Rahim gets 40-day parole

Chandigarh: Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh was Friday again granted a 40-day parole, officials said. The latest parole to the Dera chief, who is serving a 20-year jail term for raping his two disciples, comes three months after he was granted a similar parole. "The parole has been granted for 40 days. It has been granted as per rules," Rohtak's Divisional Commissioner Sanjeev Verma said.



The BJP government has successfully reduced Parliament to a notice board and a rubber stamp

SHASHI THAROOR | CONGRESS LEADER

### 'GANGA DRIVE' SOON

The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh plans to develop a 'Ganga Drive', on the lines of Mumbai's famous Marine Drive, on both sides of the Ganga in Prayagraj



## Tussle between Saxena, Kejriwal intensifies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: In the ongoing power tussle involving two constitutional functionaries of Delhi, L-G V K Saxena on Friday wrote to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal accusing him of making "misleading and derogatory remarks" and resorting to a "low level of discourse".

Referring to Kejriwal's recent "sarcastic" remark, Saxena asserted that he was not acting like a "headmaster" but working as a "benign yet conscientious voice" of the people derived from the Constitution of India.

The LG also accused Kejriwal of "political posturing" during his march to Raj Niwas on January 16 along with his deputy Manish Sisodia and AAP MLAs. Saxena said he invited Kejriwal and Sisodia for a meeting but the chief minister chose not to come on the pretext of wanting to meet him with all his MLAs.

Given the short notice and sudden demand on Kejriwal's part, it would not have been possible to hold a meeting with 70 to 80 people at once, nor would it have served any concrete purpose, he said. "Unfortunately, you went ahead to make a convenient political posture that 'the LG refused to meet me'," Saxena said.

"I must mention here that I was rather astounded at the fact that even as the city is grappling with several serious developmental issues, you found time to walk for long

and stage a protest meant solely for posturing, rather than taking the issue to a logical conclusion by meeting me," the L-G wrote in his letter to Kejriwal.

Referring to Kejriwal's attack on him in the Delhi Assembly two days back, Saxena said, "As to 'who is LG' and 'where did he come from', can be answered, if you were to even cursorily refer to the Constitution of India, others do not deserve a reply, since they obviously cater to a very low level of discourse."

The L-G also said he was not acting as a "headmaster" but was working as a "benign yet conscientious voice" of the people derived from the Constitution of India. The chief minister in his address in the recent assembly session, had challenged Saxena's authority, saying he checked files like he were his headmaster.

Citing media reports, the LG said, "...You have made many statements in and out of the state assembly over the past few days, which have been severally and substantively misleading, untrue and derogatory."

Saxena took a dig at Kejriwal and his party legislators over their statements and protests, saying he was "glad" in the past few days they were "raising and escalating" the issue of education, teachers and training in the assembly as well as public domain through social and mainstream media.



## Man dragged on car bonnet for 1 km

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Jan 20: A man involved in an incident of road rage was dragged by a car driven by a woman with him clinging on to the bonnet of the vehicle for a distance of one km in the city on Friday, police said.

CCTV footage of the incident went viral on social media showing Darshan struggling to stay put on the bonnet of the car allegedly driven by Priyanka. According to the police, Darshan's car and Priyanka's vehicle collided on Jnanabharathi Main Road this morning.

As Priyanka's car reportedly crashed into his, Darshan got out of his vehicle, and tried to talk to her and the other occupants. This made Priyanka angry and she allegedly accelerated. He quickly jumped and climbed onto the bonnet of her car.

She continued to speed with Darshan on the bonnet.

The woman, her husband Pramod and one more person have been booked on charges of attempt to murder and conspiracy. Pramod lodged a counter-complaint against Darshan and his three friends accusing them of beating him up and molesting his wife, the police said adding that five people were arrested in this connection.

In a similar incident three days ago, Sahil dragged 71-year old Muthappa Shivayogi Thontapur for ramming his bike into the former's car. Then, Sahil tried to flee and Thontapur in a bid to stop him from escaping held on to his scooter. Yet, Sahil dragged him for a kilometre thinking that he would leave the vehicle. Passersby intercepted Sahil and handed him over to the police.



National Service Scheme volunteers march past during rehearsals for the Republic Day parade at Kartavya Path in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

## Pilot takes a veiled dig at Gehlot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur/Hanumangarh, Jan 20: Taking a veiled dig at Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, his former deputy Sachin Pilot Friday said elders should think about the younger generation and young people should get justice.

Referring to the resignation of New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, Pilot said Ardern was appointed to the top post eight years ago but stepped down because of her low public ranking and decided to work for her party instead.

He also praised former Congress president Sonia Gandhi, saying in 2004, she had called 15-20 young leaders, including him, to discuss their aspirations to be included in the party's election manifesto. In an apparent attack on Gehlot, Pilot said one's upbringing should be such that he gives respect to others, adding that respect comes



In an apparent attack on Gehlot, Pilot said one's upbringing should be such that he gives respect to others, adding that respect comes back when it is given.

The Congress leader was interacting with youngsters at Jaipur's Maharaja College after inaugurating the students' union office at the college. Without naming Gehlot, Pilot targeted him for the language the veteran leader had used for him in the past.

The Congress leader was interacting with youngsters at Jaipur's Maharaja College after inaugurating the students' union office at the college. Without naming Gehlot, Pilot targeted him for the language the veteran leader had used for him in the past.

"You all know what was spoken about me. I have come among you. I am elder than you, it is my duty to say the right things and

evoke good values in you. Your upbringing should be such that you give respect to others. If you give respect, you will get respect," he said.

Pilot said one should always have control over his tongue and such words or language should not be spoken for others that cannot be tolerated for self. He said elders should think about the younger generation, young people should get a chance and justice should be done with them. Language, thoughts and actions should be such that the future generation can be proud of, the former Union minister added.

Pilot said he struggled for five years from 2013 to 2018 and that was one of the reasons why the Congress succeeded in forming the government in Rajasthan. He asked the youngsters whether he was lacking in "ragdai" (struggle). "Ragdai" was one of the terms Gehlot had used for Pilot in the context of grooming.

### BIHAR CASTE SURVEY

## SC refuses to admit pleas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: The Supreme Court Friday refused to entertain a batch of pleas challenging the Bihar government's decision to conduct a caste survey in the state.

A bench of justices BR Gavai and Vikram Nath said there is no merit in the petitions and dismissed them with liberty to the petitioners to approach the high court concerned. "So this is publicity interest litigation. How can we issue directions on how much reservation should be granted to such and such caste? How will they (state) determine how much reservation is to be granted to whom? Sorry, we can't issue such directions and can't entertain these petitions," the bench told the counsel for the petitioners.

The top court, which was hearing three petitions on the issue including one filed by an NGO, said the petitioners can approach the



Patna High Court for an appropriate remedy. "All the petitions are dismissed as withdrawn with liberty to seek appropriate remedies in law," the bench ordered.

On January 11, the top court had said that it would take up the matter on January 20, after one of the petitioners mentioned an urgent listing of the matter.

## Attack on Tripura Cong in-charge: EC orders action

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: Taking note of the alleged attack on Congress state-in-charge Ajoy Kumar in West Tripura, the Election Commission (EC) on Friday asked the state government to suspend a Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) and remove two Officer-in-Charge (OCs) of two police stations.

Moreover, the EC deputed three Special Observers to ensure proper deployment of CAPF and to intensify enforcement measures.

The Special Observers include Yogendra Tripathy (retired IAS officer), Vivek Johri (former DGP of Madhya Pradesh) and B. Murali Kumar (IRS officer of 1983 batch).

The EC, in a notification, asked the Tripura government to suspend SDPO, Jirania and OCs of Ranir Bazar and Jirania police stations in West Tripura district.

The EC also asked the Chief Secretary J.K. Sinha and DGP Amitabh Ranjan to explain as to "why Wednesday's (the day of the incident) situation escalated despite a sufficient number of CAPF personnel deployed in the state".

The Commission conveyed its displeasure in on the violent incident despite its strict directions during visit to the state and thereafter.

The Chief Secretary and DGP were directed to ensure level playing field for all political parties on first-cum-first basis and popularise the SUIVADHA App for disposing off applications of political parties for meetings, rally, roadshow. The incident occurred on Wednesday after a Congress bike rally was attacked in West Tripura's Majlishpur.

## AGRA TOURISM INDUSTRY UPBEAT AS SC LIFTS BAN

INDUSTRY LEADERS SAY THAT THE NUMBER OF TOURISTS ARRIVING DIRECTLY TO AGRA FROM MAJOR CITIES IN INDIA AND INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS IS SET TO SEE A BIG BOOM IN THE COMING MONTHS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agra, Jan 20: The lifting of the ban on the number of flights to Agra and the construction of a new air terminal building has brought cheer to the Agra tourism industry.

Industry leaders say that the number of tourists arriving directly to Agra from major cities in India and international flights is set to see a big boom in the coming months. Presently Agra has Indigo flights to Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Lucknow, and Mumbai.

"Once the new terminal building coming up near Dhanuali becomes operational, tourists' footfall will see



a huge upturn. The hospitality industry which has been badly hit since 2020 due to the pandemic, could see a big boost," says senior

hotelier Sandeep Arora.

The apex court has now modified its earlier order which put restrictions on the new air ter-

minal and the number of flights, till surveys for air pollution safety were conducted. The Kheria airport in Agra has limited operations as it is an air force base. Civilian mobility is restricted. This causes a lot of inconvenience and hassles for incoming tourists. "But now the scenario is likely to change for the better," says tourist guide Ved Gautam.

Ahead of the G20 meet in Agra, from February 10 to 12, the whole city is being dressed up and spruced for more than 300 visiting dignitaries. The airport will see a lot of activity, for which arrangements are being made.

The 10 km stretch from the

airport to the Taj Mahal and from the hotels on Fatehabad road to the Etmauddaula tomb across the river Yamuna, hundreds of workers are busy painting, cleaning and carrying out repair and civil work on both sides of the roads.

The Yogi Adityanath government is leaving no stone unturned to present the best possible profile of the state, for which additional funds have been provided to the Agra Municipal Corporation. "The dry and polluted Yamuna remains a huge worry but steps are being taken to release fresh water from the upstream barrages," an official said.

# Shiva temple gets crabs as offerings for wish fulfilment

**Surat, Jan 20:** Devotees have thronged a Shiva temple in Surat in Gujarat with live crabs as offerings because it is believed such an act would fulfil wishes and also relieve pain, especially from ear ailments.

The offerings were made Wednesday which as per the Hindu calendar is an auspicious date of 'paush' month coming just after Makar Sankranti, also called 'Uttarayan' here, a temple functionary explained.

Crabs were offered to the 'shivling' in Ramnath Ghela Mahadev

Temple situated along the banks of the Tapi river in Umra here, he added. "People believe their wish will be fulfilled if they offer live crabs to the shivling. It is also believed such an act will relieve ear pain. While most devotees offer flowers, leaves and milk, many wait for this day to offer live crabs," temple priest Manoj Goswami said.

"The crabs are collected by the temple management from fishermen after permission is ob-

tained from relevant authorities. They are then released in the river," he added. As per popular belief in these parts, a crab touched the feet of Lord Ram when he was near the Tapi river. Lord Ram blessed the crab and since then it is believed those offering live crabs at this temple would see wishes granted and relief from pain.

**The offerings were made Wednesday, which as per the Hindu calendar is an auspicious date of 'paush' month coming just after Makar Sankranti**



Devotee Trupti Lashkari expressed joy that she was able to offer a live crab at the temple Wednesday.

# Bridge collapse: Morbi civic body show-caused

**Morbi, Jan 20:** The Urban Development Department in Gujarat has issued a show-cause notice to Morbi Nagar Palika asking for an explanation as to why it should not be superseded.

The show cause notice was issued Wednesday as a follow up action by the state, which has stated before the Gujarat High Court that it will supersede the Nagar Palika for dereliction of duty in approving the repair work of Morbi suspension bridge and allowing it to open for public.

On October 30 evening, the suspension bridge over the Machchu river, which was repaired by the Orevra group had collapsed claiming 135 lives.

The State government's affidavit before the court was opposed by 49 members of the Nagar Palika led by BJP leader Kamlesh Desai, saying they were not involved in giving bridge repair contract, and if the government supersedes the palika, it will be injustice to rest members.

"Only three members, president K. K. Parmar, vice president Jayendrasinh Jadeja and standing committee chairman, are responsible," other member of the Nagar Palika said. In this regard, they had met the Chief Minister in November. Parmar told media that his office had received the show-cause notice, but he is out of station, so he has not read it personally.

Parmar said that he will summon the general board meeting, in which it will be unanimously decided, what and how the Palika should reply to the notice.

**On October 30 evening, the suspension bridge over the Machchu river, which was repaired by the Orevra group had collapsed claiming 135 lives**



FILE PHOTO

# J&K leg of Cong's BJY begins

**SEVERAL CONGRESS LEADERS, INCLUDING THE PARTY'S JAMMU AND KASHMIR UNIT PRESIDENT VIKAR RASOOL WANI AND HIS PREDECESSOR G A MIR, ACCOMPANIED GANDHI DURING THE FINAL LEG OF THE BHARAT JODO YATRA**

**Kathua (J&K), Jan 20:** The Bharat Jodo Yatra started its Jammu and Kashmir leg from this border district on a rainy Thursday morning with Sanjay Raut of the Shiv Sena (UBT) among those joining Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in the march.

Gandhi donned a black raincoat over his now trademark white T-shirt for the yatra, which was scheduled to start at 7 am but could begin only after 8.15 am. The march, which started from Kanyakumari September 7, entered Jammu and Kashmir from Punjab Thursday evening and is scheduled to end in Srinagar January 30.

Several Congress leaders, including the party's Jammu and Kashmir unit president Vikar Rasool Wani and his predecessor G A Mir, accompanied Gandhi during the final leg of the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said, "I have come to join the Yatra on behalf of my party. The atmosphere in the country is



changing fast and I am seeing Gandhi as a leader who is raising his voice on real issues." "The way people are connecting with this yatra is heartwarming. He is a leader and that is why he is on the roads. The people will choose (who would be their leader)," he added.

The march entered Jammu and Kashmir through Lakhnath Thursday and halted there for the night following the flag handover ceremony which was attended by a galaxy of prominent leaders in-

## No security problem for Yatra: LG Sinha

**L**ieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Friday said all necessary security arrangements have been made for the Jammu and Kashmir leg of the Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. The march entered Kashmir Thursday and will culminate with a rally in Srinagar January 30. "There will be no problem from the security point of view for the yatra. All security arrangements have been made," Sinha told reporters after laying the foundation stone of a mega housing project for Kashmir migrant employees under PM package at Zewan, 12 km from here. The march started from Kanyakumari September 7.

## Security tightened in Rajouri, Poonch ahead of R-Day

**Rajouri/Jammu, Jan 20:** Security arrangements in the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch have been strengthened further in view of the upcoming Republic Day celebrations and the recent recovery of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) from Rajouri town.



The region was already under heightened security after the January 1 terror attack in Dhangri village, while massive cordon and search operations (CASOs) are going on across Rajouri district to track terrorists. Official sources said that strengthening the security apparatus is a necessary SoP before Republic Day, but forces are extra cautious this year in view of the IED recovery in Kheora Rajouri Tuesday evening.

An official source said, "Security apparatus in the district was already on high alert mode after January 1 terror attack that left seven civilians dead and fourteen injured but in view of forthcoming Republic Day and also after IED recovery more measures for tight security have been taken." There has been an increase in Motor Vehicles Check Points (MVCPs) and Area Domination Patrols (ADPs), especially in sensitive as well as border areas.

They said the Cordon and Search Operations (CASOs) going on across Rajouri district are being carried out by Jammu and Kashmir police, Indian Army and CRPF and many villages are still under cordon where even movement of local population is regulated. On being contacted, SSP Rajouri Mohammad Aslam said that forces are on task in every possible manner. The Rajouri SSP further said elaborate security arrangements have now been put in place for forthcoming Republic day celebrations in the district.

# 17 families face social boycott

**Modasa, Jan 20:** Seventeen families of the barber community in Gujarat's Bhutavad village have been facing social boycott after a youth from the community married an upper caste woman.

One of the affected, Prabhudas told media persons, "A youth from our community has married a woman from Chaudhary family (Patel), even we are against this love marriage, yet, upper caste members are socially boycotting Nai families living in the Bhutavad vil-



lage since the last one week. They have stopped selling milk and other groceries to Nai families, children are not allowed to attend school, and a pregnant woman is treated badly."

Women and children are worst affected, complained Manjulaben. "Though males tried to talk to upper caste males, they are adamant and are not allowing

us to live in the village," she alleged and demanded that the district administration should immediately intervene.

Prabhudas said, "We have submitted a memorandum to the Collector office and pleaded to rehabilitate the village."

District Collector Narendra Meena said: "On Wednesday evening, the issue was brought to my knowledge. I have instructed the Sub Divisional Magistrate and local officers to visit the village and address the issue within 24 hours."

## 'No helmet, no fuel' rule in J&K's Samba

**Jammu, Jan 20:** Authorities in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district Thursday directed petrol pumps not to provide fuel to motorists who do not wear helmets, officials said.



They have also been asked to install CCTVs at their premises and provide the footage to police, the officials said. "An order has been issued under section 144 CrPc that motorists who don't wear helmets, will not be given fuel. This directive has been conveyed to petrol pumps in the jurisdiction of Samba district," Deputy Commissioner, Samba, Anuradha Gupta said.

The officials said petrol pumps will be of immense help in generating awareness among people about the importance of crash helmets and seat belts.

# GUJARAT POLLS Cong suspends 38 for anti-party activities

**Ahmedabad, Jan 20:** The Congress' Discipline Committee suspended 38 workers and leaders for anti-party activities during the Gujarat Assembly elections held in December 2022, a party leader said Friday.

Discipline Committee convener Balkrushna Patel told the media that the party state unit and the committee had received 71 complaints against 95 workers and leaders.

On January 19, all complainants and local leaders were heard, where concrete evidence was

found against 38 workers and leaders, who are suspended from the party for six years.

In 18 complaints, those accused of having indulged in anti-party activities will be heard in person soon, after which action will be taken against them, Patel said.



# Cricket bat industry in Kashmir stares into oblivion

**MANUFACTURERS FEAR A SHORTAGE OF WILLOW CLEFTS MIGHT FORCE THEIR FACTORIES TO CLOSE WITHIN FIVE YEARS**

**Srinagar, Jan 20:** The 102-year-old cricket bat industry in Kashmir has upped its standards over the years to compete with manufacturers that work with the fabled English willow. But bat-makers fear a shortage of clefts might force closure of the ₹300-crore enterprise that provides livelihood to over 100,000 people.

"We have been manufacturing cricket bats for the past 102 years. The quality of our bats is good and approved by the International Cricket Council (ICC). So quality-wise, we are not lacking. We are at par with (manufacturers that use) English willow, if not better," said Fawzul Kabir, spokesperson for

Cricket Bats Manufacturing Association of Kashmir.

"This was evident from the fact that the longest six in the recent ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Australia was hit using a Kashmir willow bat," Kabir told PTL.

The UAE's Junaid Siddique hit the 2022 ICC Men's T20 World Cup's longest six against Sri Lanka using a bat manufactured by Anantnag-based GR8 Sports. However, the 400-odd bat manufacturing units are staring at an uncertain future as they fear a shortage of willow clefts might force their factories to close within five years.

"Willow produce is dwindling fast and we fear that it might become extinct within the next five years. We have been requesting the gov-



ernment to go for a willow plantation drive to ensure a sustainable supply," Kabir said. He also highlighted the afforestation drives undertaken in Canada and Pakistan to drive home his point. He said more than a lakh people,

not only from Jammu and Kashmir but from Jalandhar in Punjab and Meerut in Uttar Pradesh, rely on the industry for their livelihoods. "In a scenario where an industry is on the verge of collapse, the government needs to work on a war footing," he said.

Kabir said while the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology provided them 1,500 willow saplings last year for replacement, each unit needs a supply of around 15,000 clefts a year. "As cricket is growing fast, the demand for bats will also increase. We had a dozen countries playing cricket two decades ago. Today, that number has gone up to around 160."

"Ten years ago, 2.5 lakh to 3 lakh bats were manufactured in Kashmir. These days, 30 lakh bats are made every year," he said, adding that the industry's annual turnover is over ₹300 crore. Kabir suggested that the government should consider allowing sapling plantations in the wetlands and on the riverbanks where willow trees used to be grown earlier. "If willow trees are planted in these places again, the bat industry can

survive," he said.

GR8 Sports Production Manager Mohammad Niyaz said the government had taken steps for plantation of willow saplings but it was not at the scale required to support the industry. "More and more cricket leagues are coming up around the world and the demand for bats is only going to increase. While the industry can provide employment to artisans, finished bats can keep youngsters involved in sports and away from evils such as drug abuse," he added.

An Industries and Commerce department official said while there was no dearth of willow in Kashmir, the main issue facing the units was a lack of modern seasoning technology and smuggling of clefts to factories outside Kashmir.

The official said a proposal to set up a seasoning plant was approved a few years ago but was shelved due to the outbreak of Covid-19.

of the day quote

The Narendra Modi government at the Centre has been a game changer for the defence sector

The person who harassed me has also preyed on other women. One woman reported on the 181 helpline that on January 17 this man had repeatedly circled around her with his car on Lodhi Road, asking her to get in. I am thankful that I got him caught. I appeal to everyone to not be afraid but raise your voice

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiatives for youth empowerment have resulted in the development of the country

SHORT TAKES

Woman duped

Lucknow: A woman, who had saved Rs 1 lakh for her daughter's surgery, was duped by cyber fraudsters who offered her prize money in a lucky draw. In her complaint, Shiva Sharma of sector-K of Ashiyana, Lucknow, said she got a message regarding her selection among the lucky candidates for a prize, announced by an online shopping company. She dialled a mobile number given in the message after she opened the link on her mobile phone. "I was asked to deposit Rs 4,200 as registration fee and I did it. The caller then told me to talk to the chief executive officer of the company and I followed the directions. The CEO congratulated me for the win and told me that the money was being sent to his bank account," the victim said.

Tusks recovered

Kolkata: Smuggled elephant tusks worth Rs 1 crore were recovered at the Khoribari forest area of Darjeeling in a joint operation by Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and West Bengal police, police sources said here on Friday. Three persons have been arrested in this connection. The three arrested have been identified as Asit Oraon, Anil Oraon and Punilal Nagachia. While Asit and Anil are residents of Fulbari area, Punilal belongs to Garidhura. Based on a tip-off that a group of wildlife smugglers were trying to smuggle an elephant calf in a mini-truck through the Khoribari forest area, a joint team of district police and SSB personnel launched a search operation.

Marijuana seized

Guwahati: The Assam Police have recovered a major consignment of marijuana in Guwahati worth Rs 2 crore, officials said Friday. Joint Commissioner of Police in Guwahati, Partha Sarathi Mahanta informed the marijuana weighing about 320 kg was seized on Thursday night. He said that on-duty police officials recovered the narcotics upon searching a truck. The consignment was kept in hidden chambers of the vehicle.

Woman found dead

Ahmedabad: In a suspected case of domestic violence, a woman was found dead and her husband critically injured with a stab wound near their apartment in Godrej Garden city (Satellite township) of Ahmedabad on Friday. Their flat was also on fire, police said. While the woman died, the critically injured husband is undergoing treatment at a government hospital.



We overcame several problems in Delhi's education system after 2015. There were leakages in the foundation, missing dots in the education policies and students who had the mindset of only seeking jobs

NEW ROLE

Justice Sabina, the senior-most judge of the Himachal Pradesh High Court, was Friday, appointed its acting chief justice. In a notification, the Department of Justice in the Union Law Ministry said she would assume charge January 21 following the retirement of Justice Amjad Ahtesham Sayed, Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court



New Congress campaign to spread Rahul's message

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathua (J&K), Jan 20: The Congress will launch a two-month door-to-door campaign across India from next week to spread Rahul Gandhi's message among the masses, senior leader Jairam Ramesh said Friday. The Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra is a fight between the BJP-RSS combine's ideology and the Congress, which has always believed in unity and brotherhood, Ramesh said and mentioned that his party had prepared a "charge sheet" against the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led central government.

"The Congress has prepared a charge sheet against the Modi government that will be released in Delhi on Saturday. We will go with copies of the charge sheet along with the message of Rahul Gandhi to every household in the country," Ramesh said, the Congress general secretary said at the end of the Bharat Jodo Yatra's first day here.

Ramesh, who was flanked by senior colleagues, including former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Digvijaya Singh and Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee chief Vikar Rasool Wani, said the 'Haath Se Haath' campaign would run from January 26 to March 26. Under the campaign, Congress workers will be mobilised in all 2.5 lakh panchayats, six lakh villages and 10 lakh polling booths to spread the message of Rahul Gandhi, who launched the Kanyakumari-to-Kashmir yatra to remove hatred and spread the message of love, Ramesh said.

The march, which started from Kanyakumari on September 7, is



The Congress has prepared a charge sheet against the Modi government that will be released in Delhi on Saturday. We will go with copies of the charge sheet along with the message of Rahul Gandhi to every household in the country

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS LEADER

in its final phase. It is scheduled to culminate in Srinagar with Rahul hoisting the national flag at the party headquarters on January 30. Calling economic inequality, social polarisation and political dictatorship the three major worrisome issues for the country, Ramesh said, "While others subscribe to the view that unity is diversity, we believe it is diversity which leads to unity. When we are suppressing the diversity, which BJP and RSS is doing right now, it means our unity is in danger."

Responding to a question about National Conference chief Farooq

Abdullah advocating for dialogue with Pakistan, Singh said he had every right to express his opinion. "In all diplomatic relations and all issues, dialogue is an option and when to use it or not depends on the situation of that time," he said.

Ramesh added that former BJP leader Sushma Swaraj had said talks and terrorism did not go together but "I want to ask this government that China is sitting on our land but we had a record trade with the country over the past two years".

"China is occupying our land after making incursions and creating tensions on the borders in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh but the trade with it is going on without any restrictions. Who does not want to talk to Pakistan but the only condition was that cross-border terrorism should be stopped and that has been the policy of every government," he said. Responding to a question on the exodus of migrant Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley in 1990, Singh reminded that it was not the Congress that was in power at the Centre at that time.

SC PROTECTS FILMMAKER FROM ARREST

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: The Supreme Court Friday granted interim protection from coercive action to filmmaker Leena Manimekalai in connection with FIRs registered against her in various states over a controversial poster of her upcoming documentary film showing goddess Kali smoking a cigarette.

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha issued notices to the Centre, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand governments on her plea.

The top court noted that a look out circular has been issued against her. "No coercive action should be taken against the petitioner in respect of the FIRs lodged against her. At this stage, it may be noted that lodging of FIRs in multiple case may be of serious prejudice. We are inclined to issue notice so that all FIRs can be consolidated in one place in accordance with law," the bench said.

Advocate Kamini Jaiswal, appearing for Manimekalai, submitted that there is no intention to hurt religious feelings. The plea filed by Manimekalai sought to club and quash the FIRs registered against her in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand over the poster, which shows Manimekalai herself dressed as goddess Kali and smoking a cigarette while holding a pride flag. The filmmaker has also sought an ex-parte stay on criminal proceedings emanating from these FIRs.



Govt issues guidelines for social media influencers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: The government Friday made it mandatory for social media influencers to disclose their "material" interest in endorsing products and services and violations can attract strict legal action, including ban on endorsements.

The regulations are part of continuing efforts to curb misleading advertisements as well protect the interests of consumers amid the expanding social influencer market which is projected to be worth around Rs 2,800 crore by 2025.

The new guidelines named 'Endorsement Know Hows - for celebrities, influencers and virtual media influencers (Avatar or computer generated character) on social media platforms' has been issued by the Department of Consumer Affairs.

In case of violation, the penalty prescribed for misleading advertisement under the Consumer Protection Act 2019 will be applicable.

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) can impose penalty of up to Rs 10 lakh on manufacturers, advertisers and endorsers. For subsequent offences, penalty of up to Rs 50 lakh can be imposed. The authority can prohibit endorser of a misleading ad from making any endorsement for up to 1 year and for subsequent contravention, prohibition can extend up to 3 years.

Launching these guidelines at a press conference, Consumer Affairs Secretary Rohit Kumar Singh said the guidelines have been issued under the ambit of the consumer law that provides framework for the



protection of consumers against unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements.

He hoped that the guidelines would act as a deterrent for social media influencers. "It's a very important subject. The size of social influencer market in India in 2022 was of the order of Rs 1,275 crore and by 2025, it is likely to rise to Rs 2,800 crore with a compound annual growth rate of about 19-20 per cent.

The social media influencer of substance, those having good number of followers, are in excess of 1 lakh in the country," Singh said.

Stating that the social media influencing is here to stay and will only grow exponentially, he said social influencers need to behave responsibly. "The today's guidelines are aimed at social media influencers which have material connection with the brand they want to promote on various social media platforms. This is an obligation for them to behave responsibly as far as the disclosure is concerned to the consumers.

"One of the biggest paradigm of the consumer law is the consumers right to know and this falls in that purview. Consumers should know if something is thrown at him from digital media, the person or the entity which is sponsoring it have they taken money or any form of connection they have with the brand," Singh said.

In case of violation, the penalty prescribed for misleading advertisement under the Consumer Protection Act 2019 will be applicable

ISRO spy case: Setback for CBI

The CBI vehemently opposed it, but suffered a setback when Justice K. Babu granted anticipatory bail to former Kerala DGP Siby Mathews, former Gujarat DGP R.B. Sreekumar and four others - then probe officials of both the Kerala Police and the Intelligence Bureau

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kochi, Jan 20: Two former police officials in the rank of DGP and four others, who were part of the probe team in the ISRO spy case and were charged by the CBI for conspiring and fabricating of documents, heaved a sigh of relief on Friday as the Kerala High Court granted them anticipatory bail.

The CBI vehemently opposed it, but suffered a setback when Justice K. Babu granted anticipatory bail



to former Kerala DGP Siby Mathews, former Gujarat DGP R.B. Sreekumar and four others - then probe officials of both the Kerala Police and the Intelligence Bureau. The court, however, directed the six officials that they cannot travel abroad until further notice and asked for a security bond of Rs one lakh each as part of granting the anticipatory bail.

In July last year, the CBI registered an FIR with the Thiruvananthapuram Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court against 18 people, all of whom had probed the case and include top former Kerala Police and IB officials, who

have been charged with conspiracy and fabrication of documents.

The ISRO spy case surfaced in 1994 when S. Nambi Narayanan, then a top scientist at the ISRO unit here, was arrested on charges of espionage along with another senior ISRO official, two Maldivian women and a businessman, but he was exonerated by the CBI in 1995 and he rejoined the ISRO.

Mathews, who a decade back took voluntary retirement from the post of director general of police, then served a five-year term as Chief Information Commissioner before retiring and has settled in the state capital city.



Akash Ganga team of the Indian Air Force performs during the celebration of the Raising Day of Kalaikunda Air Force Station, in Kalaikunda, West Bengal

Snowfall in hill states of north India leads to closure of roads

Snowfall and rain in various parts of Uttarakhand intensified the cold, adding to the woes of people from land subsidence-hit Joshimath living in temporary relief camps

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 20: The hill states of northern India witnessed snowfall and light rain on Friday under the influence of a western disturbance, causing the closure of roads and impacting flight operations even as the plains saw a rise in minimum temperatures.

In the national capital, the minimum temperature was recorded at 10.6 degrees Celsius, three notches above the normal, while the maximum is expected to hover around 22 degrees Celsius. Minimum temperatures in most places of Haryana

and Punjab on Friday registered a slight increase giving relief to people from severe cold weather conditions.

Snowfall and rain in various parts of Uttarakhand intensified the cold, adding to the woes of people from land subsidence-hit Joshimath living in temporary relief camps.

Apart from Joshimath, located at a height of around 6,000 feet, many famous locations in the higher altitudes of Chamoli and Rudrapur districts, including Badrinath, skiing destination Auli, Kedarnath, Hemkund Sahib, Nanda Devi National Park and the Valley of Flowers also witnessed snowfall, officials said.

Of the 47 villages in the Chamoli district affected by snowfall, 19 are in the Ghat sub-division, 13 in Joshimath, eight in Gairsain and seven in the Chamoli sub-division, the District Disaster Management office said.

Dehradun also woke to an early morning drizzle while Mussoorie, a popular tourist spot, received



the season's first snowfall. The plains in the state, including Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar districts, were enveloped in fog. Snowfall in the high-altitude areas continues and overcast conditions prevail in most of the places in the plains, officials said.

Kashmir too witnessed fresh

snowfall on Friday that led to the closure of the Srinagar-Jammu national highway and impacted flight operations to and from the Valley. Snowfall was recorded in the tourist towns of Pahalgam and Gulmarg, as well as in Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian, Pulwama, Budgam, and the upper areas of

Kupwara, Ganderbal and Srinagar. The higher reaches of Himachal Pradesh witnessed light to moderate snowfall while intermittent rains occurred across the state under the influence of western disturbances, leading to the closure of 278 roads. Jalori Jot and Rohtang Pass in Kullu received 60

and 45 cm of snow respectively while the south portal of the Atal Tunnel and Chansel each witnessed 30 cm of snowfall.

Chaurdhar and Dodrakwar recorded 25 cm of snow, Khadrula 16 cm and Jakho peak in Shimla and adjoining areas of Kufri received three to 10 cm of snow. Manali, Gohar and Tander received 16 mm, 11 mm and 8.3 mm of rain followed by Nahan and Bhumtar each logging 5.7 mm of rainfall.

National Highway 3 and 305 were blocked at Rohtang Pass and Jalori Pass while the Gramphu to Lassar stretch of NH 505 was also closed. As many as 177 roads were closed for vehicular traffic in Lahaul and Spiti, 64 in Shimla, nine in Kinnaur, five in Chamba, three in Kullu and two each in Kangra and Sirmour districts.

The local meteorological office has predicted a wet spell in the region till January 26 with light rain and snow at isolated places on January 21 and 22 and light to moderate snow at many places in mid and high hills on January 23.

# international

## of the day quote

Over the last three years, we have entered a new era of globalisation. We have shifted from market-driven globalisation to politically powered globalisation

BRUNO LE MAIRE | FRENCH POLITICIAN

Pakistan is not in a position to bear any delay in elections. Any compromise on the transparency of elections or political engineering will be tantamount to enmity with the nation

IMRAN KHAN | EX-PAKISTAN PM

Russia's war against Ukraine is hitting Africans particularly hard by exacerbating food insecurity and putting an unnecessary drag on the continent's economy

JANET YELLEN | US TREASURY SECRETARY

## SHORT TAKES

### Western envoys visit Kosovo, Serbia

**Pristina:** Western envoys Friday were visiting Kosovo and Serbia as part of their ongoing efforts to defuse tensions and help secure a reconciliation agreement between the two. Envoys from the United States, the European Union, France, Germany and Italy met with Prime Minister Albin Kurti in Kosovo. They plan to move to Belgrade later in the day to meet with President Aleksandar Vucic to discuss possible next steps toward normalising relations Serbia and Kosovo.

### More bodies found in Tibet avalanche

**Beijing:** More bodies were found Friday following an avalanche that buried vehicles outside a highway tunnel in Tibet, raising the death toll to 20 with eight people still missing. Images from the scene at the exit of the tunnel connecting the city of Nyingchi in Tibet's southwest with an outlying county showed about half a dozen backhoes digging through deep snow. Reports said around 1,000 rescuers had joined the effort. Tons of snow and ice collapsed over the mouth of the tunnel Tuesday evening, trapping drivers in their vehicles. Many of the people were headed home for China's Lunar New Year holiday that starts Sunday.

### 7 killed, many hurt as van, school bus collide

**Colombo:** Seven people were killed and over 50 others, including school children, were injured when a bus collided with a van in the Central hills of Sri Lanka Friday. Six passengers in the van along with a three-wheeler driver who got caught in the accident were among the dead. The bus, carrying school children, returning from an educational tour, had met with the accident at Radalla in Nanu Oaya and it had toppled over a precipice. The injured have been rushed to Nuwaraeliya hospital. President Ranil Wickremesinghe has instructed relevant officials to provide all necessary assistance to the students.

### Shooter killed

**Evansville (US):** A 25-year-old man opened fire at a Walmart store in Indiana where he once worked, wounding at least one person before officers fatally shot him, authorities said Friday. The gunman was identified as Ronald Ray Mosley II by Sgt. Anna Gray of the Evansville Police Department. She said Mosley had previously worked at the store in the city in southwest Indiana. Officer Taylor Merriss said Friday that a female employee was struck when Mosley opened Thursday night.



The reality is before everyone. Pakistan was used for personal gain. Lt Gen (retd) Faiz and Gen (retd) Bajwa were responsible for making it all about their personalities, wishes, and desires

NAWAZ SHARIF | PML-N SUPREMO

## CHURCH OF ENGLAND APOLOGISES

The Church of England formally apologised Friday for its treatment of LGBTQ people even as it said that same-sex couples still will not be allowed to marry in its churches. The apology from the church's bishops came in a report following five years of debate on the church's position on sexuality



# Defence chiefs try to resolve dispute over tanks for Ukraine



AGENCIES

**Ramstein Air Base (Germany), Jan 20:** Defence leaders gathered at Ramstein Air Base in Germany heard an impassioned plea for more aid Friday from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as they struggled to resolve divisions over who will provide battle tanks and other military aid to his embattled country.

It did not appear, at least early in the meeting, that the tank debate roiling the coalition was resolved, but Germany's new defence minister suggested the issue was inching forward. Germany has so far resisted mounting pressure to quickly supply Leopard 2 tanks to Kyiv, or at least clear the way for other countries, such as Poland, to deliver the German-made Leopards from their own stocks.

But, speaking to reporters outside the conference hall at midday, German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said that while there was no decision yet on whether to send the Leopard tanks, "we will make our decisions as soon as possible." He said he has ordered the ministry to look into the tank stocks Germany has so he can be prepared for a possible green light and be able to "act immediately." Pistorius added that Germany will "balance all the pros and cons before we decide things like that just like that. ... I am very sure that there will be a decision in the short term but ... I don't know how the

decision will look." Zelenskyy, speaking live via video link, told the gathering that "terror does not allow for discussion." He said "the war started by Russia does not allow delays."

And as the conference began, US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin warned that, "this is a crucial moment. Russia is regrouping, re-cruiting and trying to re-equip."

Now, Austin said, is a decisive moment for Ukraine and a "decisive decade for the world," adding that the group's presence in Germany signalled their unity and commitment to continue supporting Ukraine.

Austin and US Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were expected to discuss the latest massive package of aid the US is sending, which totals \$2.5 billion and includes Stryker armoured vehicles for the first time. The US has also declined, at least so far, to provide M1 Abrams tanks, citing the extensive and complex maintenance and logistical challenges with the high-tech vehicle.

The US believes it would be more productive to send Leopards since many allies have them and Ukrainian troops would only have to get trained on that one, versus needing far more training on the more difficult Abrams. The United Kingdom announced last week that it would send Challenger 2 tanks, describing it as a natural progression of military aid to Ukraine. At a Pentagon briefing Thursday, spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said the

## France to hike military funds

**PARIS:** French President Emmanuel Macron Friday proposed to boost defence spending by more than a third through 2030 and to "transform" France's nuclear-armed military, to better face evolving threats and take into account the impact of Russia's war in Ukraine. Macron announced a proposal for 413 billion euros (nearly \$450 billion) in military spending for the period of 2024-2030, to ensure "our freedom, our security, our prosperity, our place in the world". That compares with spending of about 295 billion euros in a similar military plan for 2019-2025. The money would notably go to modernising France's nuclear arsenal, boosting intelligence spending by 60 per cent, doubling the number of military reservists, reinforcing cyberdefence and developing more remote-controlled weapons.



Leopard and Challenger aren't comparable to the Abrams tanks because the Abrams is much harder to maintain and wouldn't be a good fit. Nearly 11 months into the Russian invasion, Zelenskyy has expressed frustration about not obtaining enough weaponry from the Western allies. Speaking by video link on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, Wednesday, the Ukrainian leader offered a veiled critique of major supporters such as Germany and the US that have hesitated on sending tanks.

## Protests move into Peru's capital

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Lima, Jan 20:** Thousands of protesters demanding the ouster of President Dina Boluarte poured into Peru's capital, clashing with police who fired tear gas.

Many came from remote regions, where dozens have died in unrest that has gripped the country since Peru's first leader from a rural Andean background was removed from office last month.

The protests have been marked by Peru's worst political violence in more than two decades and highlighted deep divisions between the country's urban elite, largely concentrated in Lima, and poor rural areas. Former President Pedro Castillo has been in detention and is expected to be tried for rebellion since he was impeached after a failed attempt to dissolve Congress.



# India to hike devpt assistance to Lanka



Jaishankar, who is on a two-day visit to the debt-trapped island nation, met top leaders to enhance bilateral ties and finalise a debt restructuring plan to help Colombo carve out a path from its economic crisis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Colombo, Jan 20:** India Friday agreed to double its high-impact community development project in Sri Lanka with a new bilateral agreement signed during the much-anticipated visit of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

Jaishankar, who is on a two-day visit to the debt-trapped island nation, met top leaders to enhance bilateral ties and finalise a debt restructuring plan to help Colombo carve out a path from its economic crisis.

"This agreement related to community development projects in Sri Lanka with the support of the government of India was signed in May 2005. Its project limit was rupees 300 million which will now be doubled to rupees 600 million by the agreement signed today," a statement from President Ranil Wickremesinghe's office said. Jaishankar also handed over 300 completed houses in the Galle, Kandy, and Nuwara Eliya districts in the housing project implemented by India.

Wickremesinghe's office said that during the talks special attention was paid to "the debt re-

structuring programme of Sri Lanka which received a positive response from the Indian government". Jaishankar was quoted as saying that India had a good understanding of the situation Sri Lanka currently faced and that the Indian government would provide all possible support to solve the current economic issues, leading to the country's first-ever sovereign default in April last year.

The visit by Jaishankar was much looked forward to by the government here after India had issued the necessary financing assurances requested by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) so that the island nation could unlock the \$2.9 billion bailout facility.

Commenting on the Indian decision to back Sri Lanka, state minister Shehan Semasinghe said negotiations would now commence with the Indian side following the issuance of assurance to IMF.

After the US appreciation of India on Thursday over New Delhi's backing of Sri Lanka in debt restructuring, the Australian government in a statement said: "Great news that India had confirmed its commitment to provide Sri Lanka with debt relief consistent with restoring debt sustainability under the IMF supported programme."

Sri Lanka was hit by an unprecedented financial crisis in 2022 due to a severe paucity of foreign exchange reserves, sparking political turmoil in the country which led to the ouster of the all-powerful Rajapaksa family, which has dominated Sri Lankan politics for over two decades.

India has extended about \$4 billion in terms of credits and rollovers to help Sri Lanka get through an economic crisis.

## BBC defends documentary on PM Modi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Jan 20:** The BBC Friday defended its controversial series on Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "rigorously researched" documentary that sought to highlight important issues, a day after the Indian government condemned the programme as a "propaganda piece" lacking objectivity.

"The documentary was rigorously researched according to the highest editorial standards," a BBC spokesperson said in a statement. The statement came a day after Prime Minister Rishi Sunak came out in defence of Prime Minister Modi after the BBC documentary claimed that the British government was aware of the Indian leader having an alleged role in the 2002 Gujarat riots. "The UK government's position on that is clear and long-standing, and it has not changed," Sunak responded.

# UK police 'looking into' Sunak's seatbelt 'error'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Jan 20:** The local police force where British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak filmed a social media video in a moving car without a seatbelt said Friday that they were "looking into" the matter.

Lancashire Police said it was aware of the matter from Thursday when Sunak apologised for a "brief error of judgment" in removing his seatbelt to film a video while driving in north-west England. He now faces the prospect of a GBP 100 fine if a legal breach is established by the police.

"That was a brief error of judgment. The PM removed his seatbelt to film a small clip. He fully accepts this was a mistake and apologises about it," Sunak's spokesperson said. "The Prime Minister believes everyone should wear a seatbelt," the spokesperson added.



In the UK, passengers caught failing to wear a seatbelt while in a car, unless covered by a valid medical exemption, can be given an on-the-spot fine of GBP 100, increasing to GBP 500 if the case goes to court. Sunak filmed the

# China plays down Covid outbreak with holiday rush at full tilt

REUTERS

**Beijing, Jan 20:** People across China crowded into trains and buses for one of its busiest days of travel in years Friday, feeding fears of new surges in a raging Covid-19 outbreak that officials say has hit its peak.

In comments reported by state media late Thursday, Vice Premier Sun Chunlan said the virus was at a "relatively low" level, while health officials said the number of Covid patients in hospital and with critical conditions was on the decline.

But there are widespread doubts about China's official account of an outbreak that has overwhelmed hospitals and funeral homes since Beijing abandoned strict Covid controls and mass testing last month.

That policy U-turn, which followed historic protests against the government's tough anti-virus curbs, unleashed Covid on a population of 1.4 billion that had been largely shielded from the disease since it emerged in the city of Wuhan in late 2019.

Some health experts expect that more than one million people will die from the disease in China this year, with British-based health data firm Airfinity forecasting Covid fatalities could hit 36,000 a day next week.

## 'EAGER TO GO HOME'

Excited passengers laden with luggage and boxes of gifts boarded trains Friday, heading for long-awaited family reunions. "Everyone is eager to go home. After all, we haven't seen our families for so long," a 30-year-old



Travellers wait for their trains at Hangzhou East railway station during the Spring Festival travel rush ahead of the Chinese Lunar New Year, in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, China

surnamed Li told Reuters at Beijing's West railway station.

But for others, the holiday is a reminder of lost loved ones.

- Top official says Covid at 'relatively low' level
- Hospital, critical cases dropping, authorities say
- More than 2 billion trips expected over Lunar New Year
- Some fear travel season could see infections surge

Gu Bei, a writer from Shanghai, said on the Weibo social media platform that she had been waiting nearly two weeks to have her mother cremated and that the funeral home could not tell her when the service would be scheduled.

China's internet regulator said this week it would censor any "fake information" about the spread of the virus that could cause "gloomy" sentiment dur-

ing Lunar New Year festivities. China has said nearly 60,000 people with Covid died in hospital between December 8 and January 12. However, that toll excludes those who died at home, and some doctors have said they are discouraged from putting Covid on death certificates.

President Xi Jinping said this week that he was concerned about an influx of travellers to rural areas with weak medical systems, and that protecting the elderly - many of whom are not fully vaccinated - was a top priority.

The World Health Organisation's immunisation director, Kate O'Brien, praised China Friday for making quick progress on vaccinating older people with Covid shots and boosters since lifting anti-virus controls last month.

## of the day quote

The insurance industry will need a capital infusion of ₹50,000 crore per year to double its penetration in the next five years



DEBASHISH PANDA | CHIEF, IRDAI

The recent release of ChatGPT, I must admit to some addiction since I started using it, is a transformational moment in the democratization of AI given its astounding capabilities as well as comical failures



GAUTAM ADANI | CHAIRMAN, ADANI GROUP

Though the government has been providing impetus towards job creation through initiatives like the PLI Scheme, Make in India, Atmanirbhar Bharat, etc., the employment challenge remains



VISWANATH P | MD & CEO, RANDSTAD INDIA

## SHORT TAKES

### Railways revenue

**New Delhi:** Ahead of the Union Budget, the Railways said it has earned ₹41,000 crore more in revenue so far in 2022-23 as compared to the same period in the previous fiscal. This year till date, the Railways earned ₹1,91,162 crore compared to ₹1,48,970 crore in the year-ago period, official data showed. According to the data, the Railways loaded 1,185 MT of goods so far this year. The Railways expects to end this fiscal with a total revenue of ₹2,35,000 crore, officials said.

### Yes Bank in soup

**Mumbai:** The Bombay High Court, Friday, quashed the write-off of additional Tier 1 (AT1) bonds issued by Yes Bank Ltd, said legal sources with direct knowledge of the matter. These bonds were written off by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and a Yes Bank administrator March 13, 2020, as part of a restructuring plan to rescue the bank. With this, the court offered relief to bondholders who had an exposure of ₹84.5 billion to these bonds.

### Google to comply

**New Delhi:** With the SC turning down Google's plea for a stay on the CCI order, the tech giant Friday said it is reviewing the details of the decision. The company said it remains committed to users and partners and "will cooperate with the CCI on the way forward in parallel with our appeal." In a setback to Google, the SC Thursday endorsed the order of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal declining to grant an interim stay on the imposition of ₹1,337 crore penalty on the US tech major by the competition regulator for allegedly abusing its dominant position in the Android mobile ecosystem.

### JSW Steel Q3 falls

**New Delhi:** JSW Steel Friday posted a sharp 85.50 per cent fall in its December quarter consolidated net profit to ₹474 crore mainly on account of higher expenses. The firm had clocked a net profit of ₹4,516 crore in the year-ago period, it said. Total income during the October-December quarter of the ongoing fiscal rose to ₹39,322 crore from ₹38,225 crore a year ago. Expenses were also higher at ₹38,288 crore as against ₹31,986 crore.

### E-Chetak in Europe

**Mumbai:** Swiss sports bike maker KTM, which has a manufacturing joint venture with Bajaj Auto, Friday said it will begin selling the electric model of the resurrected iconic Chetak in the first quarter of 2024 in Europe.



Fragmentation can cost up to 7 per cent of the global GDP. If we don't unite now, we'll face significant risk to the economy and people's wellbeing

KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA | CHIEF, IMF

## RECORD TRADE GAP IN JAPAN

Japan logged its largest ever annual trade deficit last year, with the soaring price of energy and raw materials compounded by the dramatic fall of the yen. In 2022, the value of imports was 19.97 trillion yen (\$155 billion) higher than exports - Japan's largest ever deficit



## BLOODBATH IN TECH WORLD

# Google axes 12K in fresh blow to tech

As a pandemic-led demand boom rapidly fades, tech companies shed more than 150,000 workers in 2022, and more layoffs are expected as growth in the world's biggest economies start to slow

### AGENCIES

**Washington, Jan 20:** Google's parent Alphabet Inc said Friday it is cutting about 12,000 jobs, or 6% of its workforce, as the technology sector reels from layoffs and companies stake their futures on artificial intelligence (AI).

Alphabet's shares rose almost 4% in pre-market trading. The cuts come at a delicate moment for the US company, which has long been the leader in key areas of AI research.

Alphabet now faces a challenge from Microsoft Corp in a branch of tech that can, for instance, create virtually any content a user can think up and type in a text box.

Microsoft this week said recession worries were forcing it to shed 10,000 jobs, less than 5% of its workforce, and would focus on imbuing its products with more AI going forward - a point Alphabet's CEO Sundar Pichai echoed in a staff memo.



Alphabet faced "a different economic reality" from the past two years when it rapidly expanded headcount, decisions for which Pichai said he took "full responsibility." Pichai became Alphabet CEO in 2019.

Still, he said, Google was gearing up "to share some entirely new experiences for users, developers and businesses," and the company has

**I'm deeply sorry. The fact that these changes will impact the lives of Googlers weighs heavily on me, and I take full responsibility for the decisions that led us here**

SUNDAR PICHAI | CEO, ALPHABET

"a substantial opportunity in front of us with AI across our products." Alphabet's layoffs followed a review of its people and priorities, leading to layoffs across geographies, he said. Among those facing cuts included recruiters, corporate staff, engineering and product teams, he said.

For years Google parent company, Alphabet has attracted top talent to build Google, YouTube and other products that reach billions of users, but it is now locked in competition with Microsoft Corp in a burgeoning area known as generative artificial intelligence.

In the United States, where Alphabet has already emailed af-

## TECHIES IN TROUBLE

- ALPHABET** : Alphabet Inc is eliminating 12,000 jobs, or 6% of its total workforce globally.
- MICROSOFT CORP** : The US tech giant said it would cut 10,000 jobs by the end of the third quarter of fiscal 2023. The software firm laid off under 1,000 employees across several divisions in October.
- AMAZON.COM** : The e-commerce giant said company-wide layoffs would impact over 18,000 employees.
- META PLATFORMS** : The Facebook-parent said it would cut 13% of its workforce, or more than 11,000 employees, as it grapples with a weak advertising market and mounting costs.
- TWITTER** : The social media giant has trimmed almost 50% of its workforce following Elon Musk's \$44 billion takeover.
- LYFT** : The ride-hailing firm said it would lay off 13% of its workforce, or about 683 employees, after it already cut 60 jobs earlier this year and froze hiring in September.
- SALESFORCE** : The software company said it would lay off about 10% of its employees and close some offices as a part of its restructuring plan, citing a challenging economy.
- CISCO SYSTEMS** : The networking and collaboration solutions company said it will undertake restructuring which could impact roughly 5% of its workforce.
- HEWLETT-PACKARD** : The computing devices maker said it expected to cut up to 6,000 jobs by the end of fiscal 2025.

ected employees, staff would receive severance and six months of healthcare as well as immigration support.

Overseas, layoff notifications will take longer due to local employment laws and practices, Pichai added.

Susannah Streeter, an analyst with Hargreaves Lansdown, said Alphabet's advertising business,

which underpins Google's search engine and YouTube, was not immune to economic turbulence.

"Ad growth has come off the boil, a sharp contrast from the busy days of the post-pandemic re-opening which saw a surge in consumer spending," she said. The company faces competitive and regulatory threats as well, she said.

## Swiggy hands pink slips to 380

**New Delhi:** Online food delivery platform Swiggy Friday laid off 380 employees as part of a "restructuring exercise" citing challenging macroeconomic conditions, with its CEO Sriharsha Majety saying that overhiring was a case of "poor judgement" where he should have done better. In an internal email, Majety, Co-Founder and CEO, also said the company will shut down its meat marketplace very soon. He apologised to the affected employees and said the "extremely difficult decision" was taken after "exploring all available options" and offered an employee assistance plan for the impacted people.



## BUDGET 2023-24

### PLI FOR MORE SECTORS LIKELY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 20:** The government is likely to extend fiscal incentives for the production of toys, bicycles and leather and footwear in the forthcoming budget as it looks to expand production linked incentive (PLI) scheme to cover more high-employment potential sectors, sources said.

The government has already rolled out the scheme with an outlay of about ₹2 lakh crore for as many as 14 sectors, including automobiles and auto components, white goods, pharma, textiles, food products, high-efficiency solar PV modules, advance chemistry cell and speciality steel.

The scheme aims to make domestic manufacturing globally competitive and create global champions in manufacturing, and it is yielding solid results, sources said. A proposal to extend PLI scheme benefits to different sectors such as toys and leather is at advanced stages of finalisation and there is a likelihood that it may figure in the Budget, they added.

The Budget for 2023-24 is scheduled to be presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman February 1.

# Reliance net profit dips 15%

THE CONGLOMERATE'S CONSOLIDATED NET PROFIT STANDS AT ₹15,792 CR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 20:** Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd Friday reported a 15 per cent drop in its net profit for the December quarter as higher finance costs and depreciation negated strong operating performance.

The oil-to-retail-to-telecom conglomerate's consolidated net profit of ₹15,792 crore or ₹23.34 per share, in October-December compares with ₹18,549 crore, or ₹28.08 a share, earnings in the same period a year back, according to company's stock exchange filing.

The firm plans to raise ₹20,000 crore more to fund expansion across the business - from building Giga factories for a new energy ecosystem to 5G telecom service rollout and retail expansion.

While finance cost soared 36.4 per cent to ₹5,201 crore, other expenses were up by ₹5,421 crore. Debt, which the company is using to fund its massive green energy foray and expansion in telecom and retail business, soared almost ₹59,000 crore to ₹3,03,530 crore in the third quarter of the current fiscal year when compared to the year-ago period.

Depreciation increased by 32.6



per cent to ₹10,187 crore due to an expanded asset base across all the businesses and higher network utilisation in the digital services business, a company statement said.

Its gross revenue was up 15 per cent at ₹240,963 crore. Sequentially, the net profit was up 15 per cent from ₹13,656 crore in July-September 2022.

Operationally all businesses were firing all cylinders. EBITDA at ₹38,460 crore, was up 13.5 per cent year-on-year led by consumer busi-

nesses and higher oil and gas prices aiding the upstream segment.

While digital services, which includes telecom, EBITDA at ₹12,900 crore was 26 per cent higher, retail EBITDA was up 25 per cent at 4,786 crore. Oil and gas EBITDA almost doubled to ₹3,880 crore.

However, the mainstay oil refining and petrochemicals business, called O2C, was muted with a 3 per cent rise in segment EBITDA to ₹13,926 crore.

Telecom arm Jio reported a 28.6 per cent jump in net profit to ₹4,881 crore on customer base swelling to 43.3 crore and a 17.5 per cent increase in per-user earnings.

Retail business net profit was up 6.2 per cent to ₹2,400 crore on the addition of 789 more stores, growth across consumption baskets, and rising contribution from digital channels led to a rise in retail segment profits.

The company said net debt after considering ₹1,93,282 crore cash balance, was lower than annualised EBITDA.

Commenting on the results, Mukesh D Ambani, Chairman and Managing Director, Reliance Industries Ltd said: "All segments contributed to the robust growth in consolidated EBITDA on a y-o-y basis".

## BIZ BUZZ

### SBI celebrates 'Swachhata Pakhwada'

**Bhubaneswar:** On the occasion of 'Swachhata Pakhwada' from January 16 to January 31, 2023, SBI Bhubaneswar Circle organised cleanliness drive and a health check-up camp January 19. All newly recruited security staffs and other staffs of LHO, around 50 persons, participated in the cleanliness drive. The health camp was inaugurated by the CGM Chandrasekhar Sharma in the presence of GM Ponnambalam and CDO Manoj Kumar Singh and other staffers and pensioners. Renowned doctors from AMRI and ASG Eye Hospital conducted the check-up camp where blood pressure, random blood sugar, eye test, ECG and other cardiological tests were done. Around 350 staffs, SBI pensioners took part in the camp.



# Twitter loses 14 top advertisers, 35% revenue since Musk

*Twitter is moving to reverse the advertiser exodus. It has introduced a slew of initiatives to win back advertisers, offering some free ads, lifting a ban on political advertising and allowing firms greater control over the positioning of their ads*

REUTERS

**San Francisco, Jan 20:** Top advertisers on Twitter slashed their spending after Elon Musk's takeover, according to estimates compiled for Reuters by research firm Pathmatics, in the latest shock to the company's dominant revenue source.

Fourteen of the top 30 advertisers on Twitter stopped all advertising on the platform after Musk took charge October 27, according to the Pathmatics estimates. Four advertisers reduced spending between 92% and 98.7% from the

week before Musk's acquisition through the end of the year.

Overall, advertising spending by the top 30 companies fell by 42% to an estimated \$53.8 million for November and December combined, according to Pathmatics, despite an increase in spending by six of them.

Pathmatics said the previously unreported figures on Twitter advertising are estimates. The firm bases its estimates on technologies that track ads on desktop browsers and the Twitter app as well as those that mimic user experience. But the company said those es-



timates do not account for deals advertisers may receive from Twitter, or promoted trends and accounts. "It is possible the spending data could be higher for some brands" if Twitter is offering incentives, Pathmatics said in an email.

In a November event on Twitter Spaces, Musk, addressing the issue

of companies pausing ads, said that he understands if advertisers "want to give it a minute." He added that "the best way to see how things are evolving (at Twitter) is just use Twitter."

Technology-focused publication The Information, citing details shared by a top Twitter ad executive

at a staff meeting Wednesday, reported that Twitter's fourth quarter revenue fell about 35% year over year due to a slump in advertising.

Twitter posted a loss of \$270 million in the three months ended June 30, on total revenue of about \$1.18 billion.

The Pathmatics estimates show continued upheaval in Twitter's main revenue stream heading into 2023, led by a pullback from top consumer brands.

Forward bookings, or agreements to lock in future ads, were also down for January and February, according to research firm Standard Media Index, which did not provide details.

Coca-Cola Co halted spending in mid-November, after purchasing an estimated \$1.1 million in Twitter ads earlier that month, while HBO spending collapsed to approximately \$38,000 in December from

roughly \$1.1 million in November, Pathmatics found.

Among consumer brands, Heinz ketchup maker Kraft Heinz Co and Stouffers meal manufacturer Nestle SA stopped all advertising, according to the Pathmatics estimates.

Mass retailer Target Corp and department store operator Kohls Corp also skipped advertising on Twitter on Black Friday, one of the biggest shopping days of the year; the estimates show. However, Apple Inc and PepsiCo Inc increased spending.

Financial technology provider SmartAsset and Amazon.com Inc said Pathmatics estimates showing an increase in advertising were inaccurate. Amazon did not elaborate further and SmartAsset said the figures were "inflated" without giving details. Pathmatics said "we want to reiterate that our figures are just estimates."

# India weigh pace options

# India 'missed Hardik' vs Wales

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 20:** India were far from being impressive in their 4-2 win over Wales in their final FIH Men's Hockey World Cup pool game and twin goal scorer Akashdeep Singh said the home team felt the absence of injured midfielder Hardik Singh.

Hardik, who sustained a hamstring injury and missed the Wales match, is uncertain for the remainder of the tournament. India needed to beat Wales by a margin of eight goals against Wales on Thursday to top Pool D and qualify directly for the quarterfinals. But they failed to do so and will now face New Zealand in their crossover match on Sunday to make it to the last eight stage.



Akashdeep Singh receives the 'Player of the Match' award from former Para Olympian shot putter Deepa Malik, Thursday

"We could not score too many goals in the first two quarters, we scored only one. But we were able to score three more in the third and final quarters. I was able to contribute for the team, so I am very happy," said the 28-year-old Akashdeep, who has played for more than 200 senior international matches. "We could not make it to the quarterfinals directly but we hope to be there by winning our crossover match."

Asked if the team felt the absence of injured Hardik, Akashdeep said, "Yes, when you have 18 players to play for a team, and because of some reason if you are one player less, the remaining players will play more time and become tired."

"So, definitely we felt his absence. I feel he will recover in time for the next match and play against New Zealand. It's a do or die match against New Zealand. We are physically and mentally ready for the match."

Hardik, who scored a brilliant goal against Spain with a solo effort, got injured in the goalless draw against England. Head coach Graham Reid said a decision on his availability will be taken a day before the crossover match against New Zealand. India and Wales were 2-2 at the end

of the third quarter but Akashdeep restored India's lead in the first minute of the fourth quarter with a fine field goal as his thunderous reverse shot beat the Wales goalkeeper all ends up.

"The coach said we were lacking a bit of energy as compared to the matches against Spain and England. We need to play the ball more upfront and convert the chances that came our way. So, we will try to improve on these things," said the captain.

Reid said India ought to take positives from the below par performance, and reminded the players that nothing is easy. "The players fought against Wales and that is what pleased me, though we lacked finishing and could not simply put the ball in (the opposition goal)."

"We lost our first match in the 2014 World Cup, 2018 (WC) was an unusual one (qualifying directly to the quarterfinals after topping pool). So we have to fight our way now."

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Raipur, Jan 20:** India will be expecting more runs from the middle order and discipline in the death overs as they look for a series sealing win against New Zealand in the second ODI here Saturday.

With the city hosting its first-ever international game, a sellout crowd of 60,000 plus is expected to cheer the home team.

After being down and out at 131/6, New Zealand were allowed to score another 206 runs in the chase of 350 and that should worry India. The visitors looked like getting a remarkable come-from-behind win but the individual brilliance of Mohammed Siraj stopped them.

With the bat, Shubman Gill, who scored a scintillating double century, had singlehandedly taken India to a competitive total with the others falling by the wayside. Virat Kohli's individual effort had stood out in the previous game against Sri Lanka.

Hardik Pandya, who has not been at his belligerent best of late, will be expected to give final flourish to the innings. Accommodated in the middle-order following his double hundred performance in Bangladesh, Ishan Kishan would be itching to make the most of the opportunity after an off-day in Hyderabad. Skipper Rohit Sharma has looked good and got starts but has not been able to convert, and Saturday could his day.

However, bigger concerns lie in the bowling department after the hiding the bowlers got from Michael Bracewell, who put the Indian attack to sword Wednesday.

India brought Shardul Thakur into the team at the expense of the super quick Umran Malik considering his batting abilities. But the management needs to decide quickly if it wants a bowler who can bat or a specialist who can rattle the opposition with extra pace and get wickets in the middle overs.



Shardul Thakur (C) bagged two wickets in the first ODI against New Zealand, but he was expensive in his 7.2 overs conceding 54 runs, including 41 runs in his last 2.2 overs



Umran Malik might get a chance if India decide to bench Shardul

Siraj has developed into an all phase bowler but others need to step up. Mohammad Shami was brilliant with the new ball but was taken to the cleaners by Bracewell.

Hardik too was expensive. In the spin department, Washington Sundar had a game to forget while Kuldeep Yadav continued his impressive run. The

team also has the option playing Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep together but it has stuck to one wrist spinner and one finger spinner policy.

New Zealand's never-say-die spirit came to the fore in the series opener and they would take a lot of heart from that. It won't be a regular occurrence that a number seven in Bracwell and number eight in Mitchell Santner will bring back the team from a hopeless situation.

Finn Allen played some bold strokes but could not make it big. And in the absence of Kane Williamson, New Zealand need someone to anchor the innings.

The pace trio of Henry Shiple, Lockie Ferguson and Blair Tinkner will be looking for more accuracy after being mercilessly attacked by Gill. It remains to be seen if Ish Sodhi regains full fitness for the must-win game for his team.

# Belgium, Australia secure quarterfinal berths



Belgium players rejoice after a goal against Japan, Friday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Rourkela, Jan 20:** Defending champions Belgium and World No.1 Australia sealed quarterfinal berths after topping their respective groups in the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup, Friday.

Hosts India will face Belgium in the quarterfinals if they beat New Zealand in the crossover match in Bhubaneswar Sunday. India had finished second in Pool D behind England on goal difference, forcing the home side to play in the crossovers round.

In the first Pool B match of the day at the Birsra Munda Stadium, Belgium hammered Japan 7-1 to top the group and directly qualify for the quarterfinals. Tom Boon

slammed five goals, including four field goals (22nd, 27th, 28th and 51st minutes) and a penalty stroke in the 56th. Cedric Charlier (18th) and Sebastien Dockier (52nd) were the other goal getters for Belgium. Kentaro Fukuda scored a consolation goal for Japan in the 46th.

In another match, Germany defeated South Korea 7-2 to finish second in Pool B. Germany will now play crossover match against France January 23 in Bhubaneswar. South Korea, who finished third in the pool, face Argentina January 23 in their crossover match in Bhubaneswar.

Wellen Niklas Wellen (2nd, 17th and 41st) scored a hat-trick while Gonzalo Peillat (43rd), Justus Weigand (51st), Mats Grambusch

(53rd) and Moritz Ludwig (53rd) were the other goal getters for Germany. Jang Jonghyun scored both goals for South Korea, in the 15th and 60th minutes.

Aussies maul South Africa. Star forward Blake Govers scored four times, including from a penalty stroke, as title contenders Australia thrashed South Africa 9-2 to top Pool A and directly qualify for the quarterfinals.

Australia will face the winner of the crossover match between Malaysia and Spain in the quarterfinal match January 24 in Bhubaneswar.

Govers struck in the fourth, 15th, 19th and 20th minutes as the ram-paging Australians led 7-1 at half-



Australian players celebrate after scoring against South Africa

time. His first and fourth strikes were field goals while the second one was from a penalty corner and the third from the penalty spot.

Tom Craig (10th), Jake Harvie (22nd), Daniel Beale (28th), Jeremy Hayward (32nd) and Tim Brand (47th) were the other Australian goal getters at the Birsra Munda Stadium. Ntuli Nqobile (8th) and Kok Tevin (58th) were the scorers - both field goals - for South Africa.

In another Pool A match, Argentina and France scored a goal each in the final minute to play out a 5-5 draw in a dramatic contest.

Victor Charlet (36th, 38th, 48th and 60th) struck four goals for France. Tynevez Etienne scored the other goal for France in the 11th minute. For Argentina, Nicolas Della Torre (34th, 42nd and 60th) struck a hat-trick while Keenan Nicolas (3rd) and Martin Ferreira (51st) were the other goal scorers.



Germany players react after scoring a goal against Korea in Rourkela

# CITY COME FROM BEHIND TO BEAT TOTTENHAM 4-2



Riyad Mahrez

**Manchester, Jan 20:** After four Premier League titles in five years, Pep Guardiola publicly questioned Manchester City's credentials to win another this season, even after cutting Arsenal's lead at the top to five points.

A rousing second-half fightback Thursday saw the defending champion score four goals to beat Tottenham 4-2 at the Etihad Stadium. It was a performance that lifted

the mood among City fans, who had jeered the team as it trailed 0-2 at halftime. For Guardiola, however, it was evidence that his players may have lost their edge after so much success.

After the derby loss to Manchester United last weekend, City watched Arsenal open up an eight-point advantage at the top of the standings and risked losing further ground as Tottenham raced into a commanding first-half lead through goals from Dejan Kulusevski and Emerson Royal.

But City came back to score three times in 12 minutes after the break through Julian Alvarez, Erling Haaland and Riyad Mahrez. Mahrez then killed off any chance of a late twist when breaking away to score again in the 90th minute.

A win against Wolverhampton Sunday will see City move to within two points of Arsenal before the Londoners host Man United at Emirates Stadium later that day.

# Korda trumps Medvedev

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Melbourne, Jan 20:** Sebastian Korda beat two-time runner-up Daniil Medvedev 7-6(7), 6-3, 7-6(4) in the Australian Open's third round Friday night, the latest in a string of victories by young American men against top players at Melbourne Park.

Korda is a 22-year-old from Florida who is seeded 29th, is the son of 1998 Australian Open champion Petr and counts eight-time major champ Andre Agassi as a mentor. Korda equalled his best showing at any Grand Slam tournament by reaching the round of 16.

The No.7-seeded Medvedev won the US Open two years ago and made it to the final in Australia in 2021, when he lost to Novak Djokovic, and 2022, when he lost to Rafael Nadal after holding a two-set lead. The Russian also was briefly ranked No.1 last season.

This result comes on the heels of two other attention-grabbing victories by players from the US,



SEBASTIAN KORDA

whose men last won a Grand Slam title 20 years ago. Wednesday, Mackenzie McDonald beat No.1 seed Nadal. On Thursday, Jenson Brooksby beat No.2 seed Casper Ruud. And now it was Korda's turn to add his name to the list.

To get to his first Slam quarterfinal, Korda will need to get past No.10 Hubert Hurkacz Sunday. That day's other men's matches

will be No.3 Stefanos Tsitsipas vs No.15 Jannik Sinner, No.6 Felix Auger-Aliassime vs Jiri Lehecka, and No.18 Karen Khachanov vs No.31 Yoshihito Nishioka.

Nishioka was a 7-6(6), 6-3, 6-2 winner over McDonald, while another one of the eight US Men to reach the third round was sent home when Khachanov topped No.16 Frances Tiafoe 6-3, 6-4, 3-6, 7-6(9).

# WFI chief refuses to quit, compares protest with Shaheen Bagh stir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Nandini Nagar (UP), Jan 20:** Under-fire Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh Friday termed the protest by the country's top grapplers "dharna of Shaheen Bagh" and reiterated that he won't quit from the post.

The agitating wrestlers Friday reached out to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), demanding formation of an enquiry committee to probe the allegations of sexual harassment against Singh, a day after threatening to lodge multiple FIRs against the WFI chief.

However, Singh has stuck to his stand to not relinquish the post. "The protest by wrestlers against me is the dharna of Shaheen Bagh," Singh, who is also a sixth-time Lok Sabha MP from UP's Kaisarganj constituency, told reporters in his native place here.

Singh also termed the protest in Delhi's Jantar Mantar an attack on BJP and orchestrated by the Congress party.

Earlier speaking to a TV channel, he had said, "The protesting players have become a toy in the hands of Congress and Deepinder Hooda. This type of conspiracy was done against me by the Congress almost three decades ago. Once again the conspiracy has been repeated. "I had earlier said that there was a conspiracy, and big powers are behind it. Now those forces are coming out in the open."

He added, "The picture becomes more clear with the tweets and statements by Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Deepinder Hooda. This attack is not only on me, but on the Bharatiya Janata Party through me," Singh had said.



Singh is scheduled to hold a press conference at Nandini Nagar Stadium in Gonda later in the evening. Top Indian wrestlers had Thursday refused to back down from their demand to disband the WFI as they met union sports minister Anurag Thakur.

Celebrated Indian wrestlers, including Olympic medallist Bajrang Punia and Sakshi Malik, world championship medallist Vinesh Phogat and others have been staging a sit-in protest for the past two days at Jantar Mantar against the WFI president, accusing him of sexual harassment and intimidation.

The wrestlers' meeting with Thakur remained inconclusive Thursday. Bajrang, Ravi Dahiya, Sakshi and Vinesh were part of the meeting. Thakur flew to Delhi from Himachal Pradesh after an earlier meeting between government officials and the protesting wrestlers remained inconclusive the previous day.

The ministry has asked the wrestling body for an explanation. The WFI is yet to respond to the sports ministry, which Wednesday gave the wrestling body 72 hours to respond to the allegations of sexual harassment.

# 7-member committee formed to probe allegations

**New Delhi:** The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) Friday formed a 7-member committee, including MC Mary Kom and Yogeshwar Dutt, to probe the allegations of sexual harassment against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh by top grapplers. Besides legendary boxer Mary Kom and wrestler Yogeshwar, the panel also includes archer Dola Banerjee and Indian Weightlifting Federation of India (IWLF) president Sahdev Yadav. The decision was taken during IOA's emergency Executive Council meeting which was attended by the likes of Abhinav Bindra, Yogeshwar along with IOA president PT Usha and joint secretary Kalyan Chaubey. This comes after the agitating wrestlers had earlier in the day reached out to the IOA, demanding formation of an enquiry committee to probe the allegations against Singh, a day after threatening to lodge multiple FIRs against the WFI chief. In a letter addressed to IOA president, the wrestlers alleged financial misappropriation (of funds) on part of the WFI and claimed that the coaches and sports science staff at the national camp are "absolutely incompetent".