



PARENTING EXPERIENCE

Actor Kareena Kapoor Khan says parenting is literally like standing on one leg and she is good at it

LEISURE P2



SEARCH BEGINS

Distraught relatives throng hospitals in Peshawar to look for their kin a day after the suicide bombing

INTERNATIONAL P10



SERIES DECIDER TODAY

India's top order would look to deliver when they take on New Zealand in the series-deciding third T20I in Ahmedabad

SPORTS P12

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



BUDGET today!

Adani out of top 10 richest list

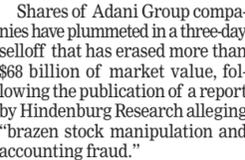
AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 31: Gautam Adani has slipped out of the list of the world's top 10 richest people and could soon be unseated as Asia's wealthiest person if shares in his conglomerate continue to slide, sources said Tuesday.

The Indian tycoon has fallen from fourth place to the 11th on the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, with a personal wealth wipeout of \$34 billion in just three trading days. With a current fortune of \$84.4 billion, Adani now sits just one spot above rival and Reliance Industries Limited chairman Mukesh Ambani, whose net worth is \$82.2 billion.

Shares of Adani Group companies have plummeted in a three-day selloff that has erased more than \$68 billion of market value, following the publication of a report by Hindenburg Research alleging "brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud."

Adani now languishes below Mexico's Carlos Slim, Google co-founder Sergey Brin and former Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer on the Billionaires Index. Meanwhile, the selloff in Adani Group shares continued as Asia's richest man seeks to complete a \$2.5 billion equity sale by its flagship firm amid the turmoil triggered by short-seller Hindenburg Research.



Growth to slip to 6-6.8% in FY24

INDIA'S GDP GROWTH OF 6 TO 6.8% IN FY 2023-24 COMPARES WITH AN ESTIMATED 7% EXPANSION IN THE CURRENT FISCAL AND 8.7% IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR, AS PER THE ECONOMIC SURVEY 2022-23

AGENCIES

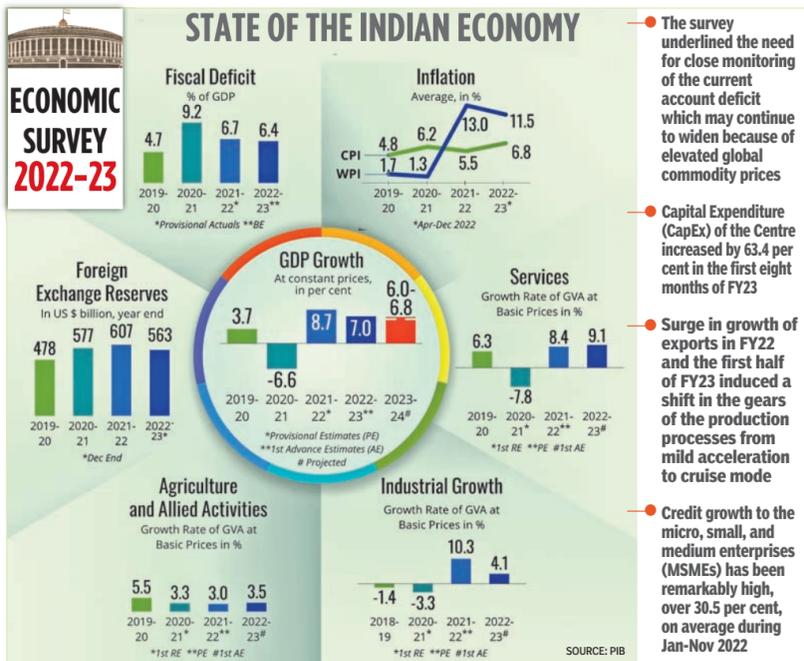
New Delhi, Jan 31: India's economy is projected to slow to 6-6.8 per cent in the fiscal year starting this April - still remaining the fastest growing major economy in the world - as extraordinary challenges facing the globe will likely hurt exports, the Economic Survey 2022-23 said Tuesday.

India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth is higher than the 6.1 per cent estimate of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and compares with the survey's estimated 7 per cent expansion in the current fiscal year (April 2022 to March 2023) and 8.7 per cent in the previous year.

The survey that details the state of the economy was tabled in Parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman a day before she presents Union Budget 2023-24.

"At least three shocks have hit the global economy since 2020," the report, prepared by Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran, said. Starting with the pandemic-induced contraction of the global output, the Russian-Ukraine conflict last year led to a worldwide surge in inflation. And then, central banks across economies, led by the US Federal Reserve, responded with synchronised policy rate hikes to curb inflation.

The rate hike by the US Fed drove capital into the US markets



causing the US dollar to appreciate against most currencies. This led to the widening of the Current Account Deficits (CAD) and increased inflationary pressures in net importing economies like India.

The Indian economy, however, appears to have moved on after its encounter with the pandemic, staging a full recovery in FY22 (April 2021 to March 2022) ahead of many nations and positioning itself to as-

cent to the pre-pandemic growth path in FY23.

"Yet in the current year, India has also faced the challenge of reining in inflation that the European strife accentuated," the survey

said. However, the challenge of the depreciating rupee, although better performing than most other currencies, persists with the likelihood of further increases in policy rates by the US Fed. The widening of the CAD may also continue as global commodity prices remain elevated and the growth momentum of the Indian economy remains strong, it said.

The survey stated that the inflation projection by RBI at 6.8 per cent for current fiscal (FY23) is above the central bank's tolerance limit but the pace of price increase is not high enough to deter private consumption or low enough to weaken investment.

According to the survey, the pressure on the Indian rupee could continue due to the tightening of monetary policy. CAD may also remain elevated as imports could remain high due to a strong local economy while exports ease due to weakness in the global economy.

India's CAD was 4.4 per cent of GDP in July-September period, higher than 2.2 per cent a quarter ago and 1.3 per cent a year ago, as rising commodity prices and a weak rupee increased the trade gap.

The survey said there has been an improvement in employment conditions in India due to stronger consumption but a pick-up in private investment is essential to creating more jobs.

The survey underlined the need for close monitoring of the current account deficit which may continue to widen because of elevated global commodity prices

Capital Expenditure (CapEx) of the Centre increased by 63.4 per cent in the first eight months of FY23

Surge in growth of exports in FY22 and the first half of FY23 induced a shift in the gears of the production processes from mild acceleration to cruise mode

Credit growth to the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) has been remarkably high, over 30.5 per cent, on average during Jan-Nov 2022

AGENCIES

Ahmedabad, Jan 31: A court in Gandhinagar Tuesday sentenced self-styled godman Asaram Babu to life imprisonment in a rape case filed by a former disciple in 2013 after the prosecution argued for the strictest punishment saying he is a 'habitual offender'.

Additional sessions judge DK Soni also imposed a fine of ₹50,000 on Asaram which will be paid as compensation to the victim.

The defence said the order will be challenged in the Gujarat High Court. The 81-year-old godman is currently serving a life term in a Jodhpur jail in another case of raping a minor girl at his ashram in Rajasthan in 2013.

He was produced in the Gandhinagar court via video link when the judge passed the order Tuesday.

A day earlier, the court had convicted Asaram in the case registered in 2013 for raping a woman disciple, who hailed from Surat, on several occasions from 2001 to 2006 when she was living at his ashram at Motera near Ahmedabad.

Six other accused in the case, including Asaram's wife Laxmiben, their daughter, and four disciples who were accused of aiding and abetting the crime, were acquitted for want of evidence, the prosecution had said.

Naba assassination: SP, SDPO shunted

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: The state government Tuesday transferred and attached Jharsuguda superintendent of police (SP) Rahul Jain and Brajarajnagar sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) Gupteswar Bhoi to the Odisha Police headquarters amid allegations of security lapses that might have led to the assassination of Health and Family Welfare Minister Naba Kishore Das in the district January 29.

Bargarh SP Parmar Smit Parshottamdas will replace Jain, while Athmalik SDPO Chintamani Pradhan will take charge as Brajarajnagar SDPO. Prahalad Sahai Meena, the Boudh SP, has been posted as the Bargarh SP, while Raj Prasad, who is currently the Rayagada Additional SP, has been appointed as Boudh SP, it was learnt.

In another significant development, authorities of Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar Tuesday handed over the autopsy report of Naba Kishore Das to the Crime Branch.

Meanwhile, the Crime Branch team probing the assassination of the BJD heavyweight has picked up Satyanarayan Das, the elder brother of accused and former ASI Gopal Krishna Das, for questioning. The investigating agency has taken



Satyanarayan to an undisclosed location, it was learnt.

The Crime Branch team camping at Brajarajnagar continued its effort to collect more evidence from the crime scene using various scientific tools. "The CID-Crime Branch team has put an FARO 3D scanner to find out further clue from the spot. The scanner has taken entire details of the spot in 3R format that will help the investigator understand the sequence of events better," a Crime Branch official said.

The Crime Branch team and forensic officials inspected the vehicle used by the slain minister to find out evidence. The team was also examining the CCTV footage collected from near the spot where the BJD heavyweight was killed by the accused ASI. On the other hand, an eight-member Crime Branch team, led by DSP Basudev Bhuyan, left for Jharsuguda to assist the team camping at Brajarajnagar. A Crime Branch team also interrogated the relatives of accused in Berhampur, it was learnt.

Visakhapatnam to be Andhra's capital

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: Andhra Pradesh (AP) Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy Tuesday said the state capital will be shifted to Visakhapatnam. Speaking at the preparatory meeting for the Global Investors' Summit to be held in Visakhapatnam in March, he said that he also would be shifting his office to the port city in the months to come.

"Here I am to invite you to Visakhapatnam which is going to be our capital in the days to come. I myself would also be shifting over to Visakhapatnam in the months to come as well," he told the investors at the meeting.

The N Chandrababu Naidu-led government in 2015 acquired over 33,000-acre of land from farmers to develop Amaravati as the capital of the state. After Jagan Mohan

Reddy took over in 2019, the state government wanted to have three capitals-Visakhapatnam-Executive Capital, Amaravati-Legislative capital and Kurnool-Judicial capital and passed an appropriate legislation.

The Jagan government passed a Bill in the Assembly in November last year, repealing the controversial AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Act, 2020.

MORE P9

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	59549.90 ↑ 49.49
NIFTY	17662.15 ↑ 13.20
DOLLAR	81.51 ↑ ₹0.02
EURO	88.71 ↑ ₹0.31
GOLD	₹56,945 ↑ ₹163
SILVER	₹68,319 ↓ ₹270

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	31.9°C	29.6°C
TEMP MIN	19.0°C	19.0°C
Humidity	71%	74%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Dry weather likely	



GRINDING HALT: Vehicles stuck at Qazigund after the Jammu-Srinagar national highway was closed for traffic for the second consecutive day due to a landslide in Ramban district, Tuesday

Earth on track to exceed 1.5°C warming in next decade

If emissions remain high over the next few decades, the study predicts a one-in-two chance that Earth will become 2 degrees Celsius hotter on average compared to pre-industrial times by the middle of this century, and a more than four-in-five chance of reaching that threshold by 2060

AGENCIES

Boston, Jan 31: The world is on the brink of breaching a critical climate threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius within 10 to 15 years even if emissions decline, according to a study that employed artificial intelligence (AI) to predict the results, signifying time is running exceedingly short to spare the world the most catastrophic effects of global heating.

If emissions remain high over the next few decades, the study predicts a one-in-two chance that Earth will become 2 degrees Celsius hotter on average compared to pre-in-



Schoolchildren take part in an awareness programme on the occasion of World Earth Day in Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh

dustrial times by the middle of this century, and a more than four-in-five chance of reaching that threshold by 2060. The research, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, employed AI to predict climate change using recent temperature observations from around the world.

"Using an entirely new approach that relies on the current state of the climate system to make predictions about the future, we confirm that the world is on the cusp of crossing the 1.5 C threshold," said the study's lead author, Noah Diffenbaugh, a climate scientist

at Stanford University in the US. "Our AI model is quite convinced that there has already been enough warming that 2 C is likely to be exceeded if reaching net-zero emissions takes another half century," said Diffenbaugh, who co-authored the research with Colorado State University atmospheric scientist Elizabeth Barnes.

The finding may be controversial, Diffenbaugh said, because other authoritative assessments have concluded that the 2-degree mark is unlikely to be reached if emissions decline to net zero before 2080.

Contd...P4

NAVEEN APPROVES 50 FIRE SERVICE POSTS FOR AIRPORTS

Of the 50 posts, nine each will be deployed at Utkela and Jeypore and 16 each at Jharsuguda and Rourkela airports

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday approved a proposal for creation of 50 posts of fire service personnel in different ranks for four airports under the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) - UDAN scheme.

These airports are Jharsuguda, Utkela, Rourkela and Jeypore. Of the 50 posts, nine each will be deployed at Utkela and Jeypore and 16 each at Jharsuguda and

Rourkela, an official said.

Recently, three fire stations have been made functional at three premier medical colleges of state - Cuttack, Berhampur and Burla.

Besides, two more fire stations have been made functional at Tihidi in Bhadrak and Baruan in Jajpur districts.

These stations were running by rationalisation of personnel at different fire stations. Recently, 16 Fire Service personnel have been deployed at Rourkela airport in December 2022.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES
No matter what you do, today you are not going to have your way. The times when you have been selfish are finished. Besides, you are likely to solicit trouble today. It may actually turn out to be good for you, says Ganesh, provided you change the focus of your actions.

TAURUS
This is a productive day to deal in money matters, foresees Ganesh. You will probably enjoy both money and muscle power in the afternoon. A necklace or pendant is awaiting your sweetheart, so surprise her. Caution: There is a risk of your money being swindled.

GEMINI
You will feel some measure of loneliness today. You will need the company of someone close to you for reassurance. The evening will see you plagued by rapid mood swings. Meditative techniques can help calm your mind, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Your imagination and creativity will surpass new heights. You will try to find easy answers to the most difficult riddles. Your creativity will be beneficial. A favourable day for investors and traders, says Ganesh.

LEO
You will want some change in your daily surroundings, and this will manifest in the form of shopping for new clothes or home renovation projects and the like. You may also modify your daily routine. You need to take a closer look at your personal relationships today, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
You enjoy a strong position, but its foundations will be rattled today. In all probability you may have to encounter some unwanted problems which will be a cause for worry. However, Ganesh says you may still end up doing something beneficial if you get out of the rut and attempt to do something unusual.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will be assigned the responsibility to organize a meeting, which will give you the opportunity to prove your efficiency. Those of you in research and development fields will find success by putting your knowledge to use. It is a good day for signing important documents or agreements

SCORPIO
You are like one butterfly today, literally flying from one place to another either for work or for socialising. New projects and business agendas form the crux of your day. There are chances that good business proposals may come your way and you may think of considering it, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Work, work and more work will be your day's agenda. A power-packed performance is expected from you. Though hectic, the day will be easy going as your bosses are likely to be lenient on you. Love and affection from family is on the cards as well.

CAPRICORN
You're on the verge of losing hopes as you can't bear the weight of work and responsibilities any more. But, like the strong individual that you are, you are not going to put your arms down without fighting fiercely. Also, your mental strength and physical stamina will be acknowledged and appreciated by one and all, predicts Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
The day promises to be filled with freshness. You will apply your mind and find solution to some of the complicated questions. You will now get the clarity about your paths and directions. Try to meet as many people as you can and build new relations, so that you can add a fresh perspective to your life.

PISCES
There is a high chance that you will get closer to someone who has hitherto only been an acquaintance. There is also a distinct possibility of love at first sight and yet at the same time Ganesh advises you to take one wary step at a time and not let the fast pace of relationships overwhelm you.



MJ'S NEPHEW JAAFAR TO PLAY LEAD IN HIS BIOPIC

Late 'King of Pop' Michael Jackson will be played by the late icon's 26-year old nephew Jaafar Jackson in the Antoine Fuqua-directed film biopic. The singer and songwriter is the son of Jermaine Jackson, who is the brother of Michael and member of *The Jackson 5*.

ANISTON WEARS LEHENGA IN MURDER MYSTERY 2 TRAILER

Actor Jennifer Aniston wore a Lehenga designed by fashion designer Manish Malhotra in her upcoming film *Murder Mystery 2*. The trailer of the film was released Monday evening on Netflix's YouTube channel. Fans rushed to the comment section praising Jennifer's look.



Parenting is like standing on one leg: Kareena

Mumbai: Kareena Kapoor Khan and Saif Ali Khan are known for their glamorous appearances at events and outdoor occasions. But as far as their parenting is concerned, it seems they are no different than the common citizens. The two are parents to two boys Taimur and Jehangir.

Touching upon the topic of parenting during a conversation with Variety magazine, Kareena said, "It's literally like standing on one leg, but I'm pretty good at yoga. I'm also very lucky to have a husband who works in the same profession. We take turns as to when we have to travel."

Elaborating on this, she added, "When I was doing Hansal's film, Saif was at home with the kids, and now he's doing a film in Amritsar. And I'm at home till March. And then after that, he finishes and stays home, and then I go into *The Crew*. It's a lot of meticulous planning, but if you're well planned, I think you can achieve it."

On the work front, Kareena will be making her OTT debut this year with director Sujoy Ghosh's adaptation of the Japanese author Keigo Higashino's novel *The Devotion Of Suspect X*.

Ananya thinks she is going too slow

Mumbai: It's been over four years that Ananya Panday has been working in showbiz. Ever since she arrived, she has been a part of films of varied genres. From making a debut with a typical entertainer like *Student of the Year 2*, to doing a romantic drama *Gehraiyaan* and a bilingual sports action film *Liger*; the actress got to explore various genres ever since she began.

Asked how she feels that she got to do so much in such a short span of time and she shares, "In fact, on the contrary, I feel I am going too slow." The actress feels that the pandemic ate up her initial years where she could grow as an actor. She elaborates saying, "During COVID we all lost two years. We couldn't work. Maybe if those two years of COVID won't be there then there would have been more work for some of us." She concludes saying, "Maybe it is the right pace and I can go even faster than this."

This year, Ananya will be joined by her childhood friends Suhana Khan and Shanaya Kapoor who are making a debut in Hindi film industry.



'Destiny works in mysterious ways'

Mumbai: Multilingual star Raashii Khanna has shared how she bagged her part in the Raj and DK show *Farzi* starring Shahid Kapoor and Vijay Sethupati.

Raashii signed *Farzi* before her digital debut release *Rudra: The Edge of Darkness*, but also her audition for the Shahid Kapoor-Vijay Sethupati co-starrer show was filmed years ago.

She said: "*Farzi* came to me based on an audition I did for Mukesh Chhabra's casting agency a few years back. It wasn't particularly for any project, however, it led me to *Farzi*."

"Apparently, Raj and DK saw the audition tape and had also seen clippings of my work in a few South Indian films, and visualised Megha in me. I guess destiny works in mysterious ways."

Raashii also has Dharma Productions' *Yodha* alongside Sidharth Malhotra in July, in addition to a few projects in South.

Radhika's Sanaa to be premiered at SBIFF

Mumbai: Filmmaker Sudhanshu Saria's directorial *Sanaa* starring Radhika Madan has locked its North American premiere at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival (SBIFF) and will be the only Indian film to be screened at the event.

Saria said: "I'm so honoured that the festival has chosen to invite *Sanaa* and launch the film in North America. Their response confirms the universality of the film and the urgent need to further conversations around female agency and autonomy - especially in the American context."

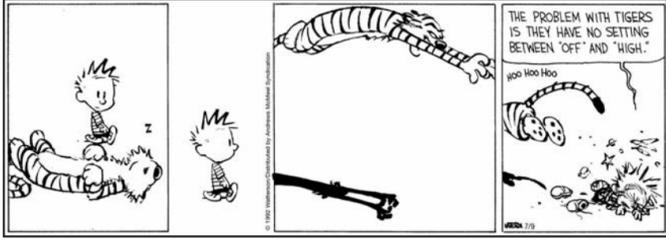
Eminent Hollywood stars and Oscar-nominees like Brendan Fraser, Cate Blanchett and Colin Farrell will be seen attending the festival this year. *Sanaa* is an introspective drama about an ambitious and headstrong woman who is fighting an internal battle due to unresolved trauma. The film stars Radhika in the lead role along with Soham Shah, Shikha Talsania and Pooja Bhatt.



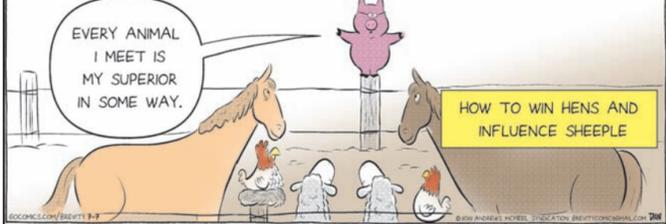
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

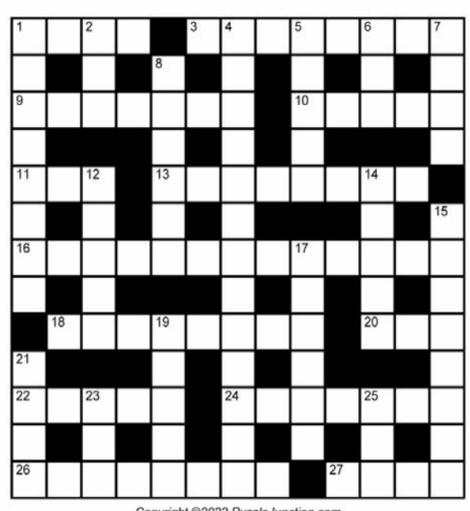


BREVITY



FUN post

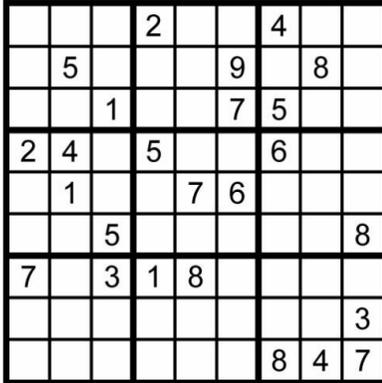
CROSSWORD



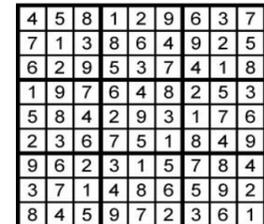
- Across
- 1 Vagrant
 - 3 Great wealth
 - 9 Opera house
 - 10 Speedy
 - 11 Small indefinite amount
 - 13 Soaking wet
 - 16 Pursue to a conclusion (6-7)
 - 18 Property of sentimental value
 - 20 High rocky hill
 - 22 Bitter
 - 24 ___ and mash
 - 26 Primitive eel-like fish
 - 27 Charity
- Down
- 1 Quickly become friends (3,2,3)
 - 2 Hairy-bodied insect
 - 4 In a grandiose manner
 - 5 Poem type
 - 6 Small drink
 - 7 Whirlpool
 - 8 Artist's workshop
 - 12 Burrow
 - 14 Burst
 - 15 Sweet talkers
 - 17 Hearsay
 - 19 One on horseback
 - 21 British peer
 - 23 Ewe's mate
 - 25 Shoe repair tool

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

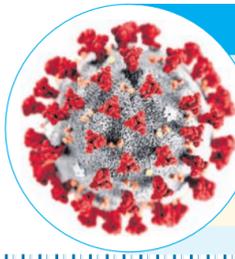


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



BUDDING ARTISTES
Students of New Stewart School in Cuttack pose for a photograph during a fancy dress competition, as part of the annual day celebrations on the school premises, Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	67,49,02,818	64,71,77,239	67,59,752
India	4,46,82,719	4,41,50,131	5,30,740
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

Oppn sees conspiracy in minister's assassination

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: Alleging conspiracy behind the brutal murder of Health Minister Naba Das, Opposition BJP and Congress Tuesday raised questions on silence of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Director General of Police (DGP) Sunil Kumar Bansal.

Rejecting the Crime Branch probe ordered by the Chief Minister, the BJP demanded a CBI probe into the matter while the Congress demanded an SIT probe under the supervision of Orissa High Court.

Speaking to mediapersons, state BJP president Samir Mohanty said, "Minister Das was not just a politician, he was an influential and powerful cabinet minister in the state. If such a personality is killed in broad daylight, one can easily assume the condition of a common man in the state."

"It is unfortunate that Naveen Babu, who has been in charge of the Home department for the last 23 years, has remained silent on the sensitive issue," he added.

Though a Cabinet minister was killed, the DGP and the Home secretary neither visited the spot in Jharsuguda nor spoke a word on the heinous murder, the state BJP president said.

He asserted that people will not accept it that the state police is investigating the case in which a cop has killed the minister. "By ordering a Crime Branch investigation, the state government has already decided what to do in this case. The CB has taken over a lot of cases in the past. But the findings are not encouraging," Mohanty said.

To ensure proper investigation of the case, the BJP leader demanded a CBI probe into the case.

Leader of Opposition in Odisha Assembly Jayanarayan Mishra (BJP) said, "We are not going to accept the story of the Odisha gov-



ASI Gopal had 'clear intention' to kill: FIR
Bhubaneswar: The Odisha Police in its FIR in the killing of Health minister Naba Kishore Das said the accused assistant sub-inspector (ASI) Gopal Das had "clear intention" to kill him. This was stated by Brajarajnaraj police station inspector-in-charge (IIC) Pradumnya Kumar Swain, who was present at the site when the ASI allegedly opened fire at the 60-year-old minister, leading to his death after some hours during treatment Sunday. While no explanation was given in the FIR for the attack by Gopal Das, psychiatrists treating the police officer for nearly a decade said he was suffering from bipolar disorder, a mental disease which causes extreme, at times 'maniac' mood swings.

Though a Cabinet minister was killed, the DGP and the Home secretary neither visited the spot in Jharsuguda nor spoke a word about the heinous murder, the state BJP president said

BJP has demanded a CBI probe into the matter while the Congress demanded an SIT probe under the supervision of Orissa High Court

ernment that the accused police ASI Gopal Das was mentally unsound. A plot was created to kill the minister."

Mishra also questioned "why the DGP is silent on this case". "As per the information available with us, the minister died on the spot. What was the necessity to airlift him from Jharsuguda to Bhubaneswar? Whether the Jharsuguda hospital authority had certified that Das was fit to be airlifted further treatment," Mishra asked.

Claiming that the CB probe "cannot reveal the truth", he demanded a CBI investigation into the incident. Alleging there is a deep-rooted conspiracy behind the killing of the minister, Congress spokesperson Sudarshan Das demanded a probe by a SIT under the supervi-

ASI Gopal had 'clear intention' to kill: FIR

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sion of a sitting judge of the Orissa High Court.

Alleging that a conspiracy is being made "to suppress the truth behind the crime", the Congress leader said that the Chief Minister should leave his Home portfolio on moral ground.

Reacting to the allegations made by the Opposition, senior BJD lawmaker Debi Prasad Mishra said, "A Crime Branch probe was ordered because questions will be raised if the police will investigate the case in which a cop is the accused. To ensure transparency, the government has requested the Orissa High Court to monitor the investigation by a sitting/retired judge."

On the demand for CBI and SIT probe, Mishra said, "Let's wait till the findings of the CB investigation come up."

The minister was shot dead by police ASI Gopal Krushna Das January 29.

Health, edu, price control prime concerns

Though the post-Covid recovery and economic growth has been steady, the country is still dealing with higher rates of inflation and unemployment, which make this year's Budget a challenging one for the Union government.

To understand the sentiments and the expectations associated with the Union Budget 2023-24, **OrissaPOST** speaks to several people from different walks of life:

All India Kisan Sabha, Odisha, secretary **Suresh Panigrahy**, expects more government investments in agriculture sector. He says, "There should be more allocation made for MGNREGA to create more jobs and the arrears of past MGNREGA works should be cleared fast to mitigate rural distress. Sufficient funds should be allocated for procurement of farmers' produce at Minimum Support Prices (MSP) declared by Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). More money should be put towards input subsidies, one-time loan waivers for small, middle and marginal farmers, Fasal Bima Yojana, PM Kisan Yojana etc."

Utkal Chamber of Commerce and Industry president **Brahma Mishra**, says, "We expect more focus on MSME. We are also expecting duty-free import of stainless steel, scrap among other things. Since steel and mines are core sectors of manufacturing, they should be given more emphasis."

Babyrani Sahoo, a housewife, wants the government to bring inflation under control. Sahoo says, "The prices of essential commodities like rice, pulses, wheat, wheat flour and sugar have skyrocketed. The situation has

come to such a pass that the price of domestic LPG cylinder has touched a whopping Rs 1,100. We expect the Union finance minister to lessen the burden on our family budget."

Utkal University Analytical and Applied Economics department head **Himanshu Sekhar Rout** believes that health and education need more investment. He says, "A sizeable chunk may go to research and development. As the impact of Covid is yet to fully fade, investment in health becomes obvious. But investment in manufacturing and production might be restricted to small scale industries only. There might also be some relaxation in taxes for the highest bracket of income earners (above Rs 15 lakh) as the rate of 30 per cent income tax is too high and rationalisation is needed."

Environmentalist **Jaya Krushna Panigrahi** hopes the budget will reflect the commitments government has made at international forums. He says, "The Union Budget needs to make provisions for enhanced expenditure on environment sector keeping in view climate action and energy transition. The Centre should allocate more funds on disaster management, ecosystem restoration and biodiversity conservation."

Educationist and SAI International Education Group

chairperson **Silpi Sahoo** says, "GST on educational services should be reduced from 18 per cent to 5 per cent. Given that 67 per cent of graduates struggle today with placements, allocating funds to new endeavours reinventing the educational sector by integrating learning and working will give a huge 'Return on Investment' to learners, employers and the society. Facilitating formal partnerships with universities abroad to offer online and hybrid degree programmes is another relevant issue this year."

Health expert **Amrit Patojoshi**, while appreciating the tax provisions to nudge preventive and primitive healthcare, says, "The current limit of Rs 5,000 towards preventive health check-up should be enhanced to at least Rs 10,000. The limit of deduction on health insurance premium paid should be increased from current limits of Rs 25,000 and Rs 50,000 (latter for seniors). 18 per cent GST on health insurance premium should be reduced to encourage more and more people to buy health insurance. GST on healthcare should be introduced and kept at a lower level. Paramedical education needs more focus."

Education sector should be the focus of this year's budget, believes educationist **Naba Kishor Pujari**, who says, "It will be the last full-year budget for Modi gov-

ernment ahead of the Lok Sabha election due in early 2024. So it should set an example by allocating 6 per cent of GDP for education, a recommendation made by the Kothari Commission in 1964-66, which will help bridge the learning gap created by the pandemic. There should also be additional funds to address students' mental health in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic."

An employee at a private firm in City, **Tapas Ranjan Sahoo**, expects the government to invest adequately in the railway sector, saying, "It has become an uphill task to get a confirmed train ticket at short notice. Citizens like me who travel outstation frequently face a lot of difficulties. Besides, the toilets of these trains are often in a sorry state. There should be an increase in number of trains and improvements in the facilities available in them."

Srusti Mishra, a student, says, "Budget must devote a sizeable portion towards primary and higher education. The amounts should be higher than the previous budget. Most importantly, funding should be made towards research and development, startup ecosystem at university and college levels, and infrastructure spending in terms of internet services."

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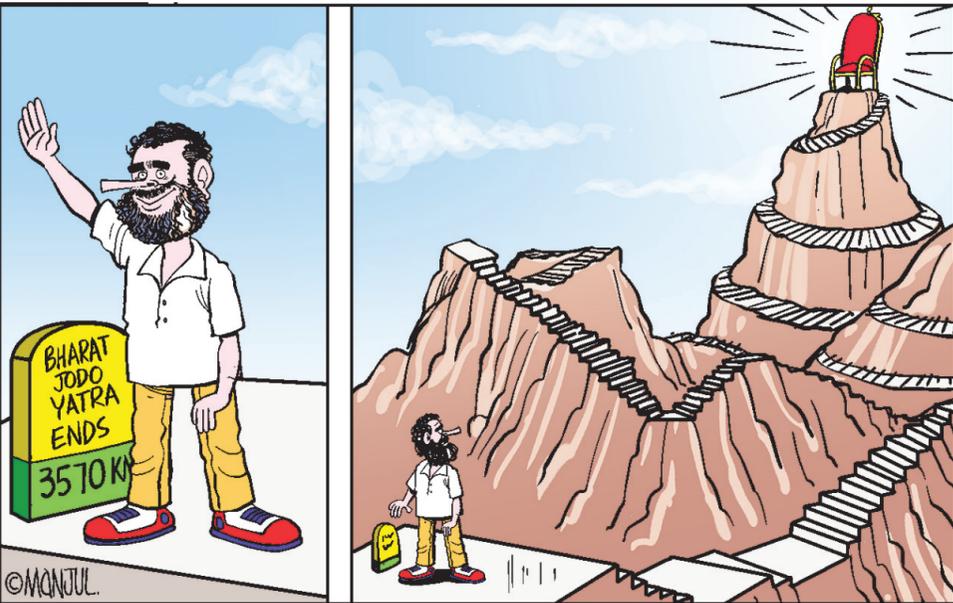
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POLITICKLE by MANJUL



100 UTPs in jails despite bail, SC told

The SC had earlier flagged the issue of UTPs who continue to be in custody despite being granted bail on account of their inability to fulfil the conditions of bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: At least 100 undertrial prisoners (UTPs) in Odisha are languishing in jails despite being granted bail. This was revealed Tuesday during a hearing in the Supreme Court wherein the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) told the apex court that as per recent data about 5,000 UTPs were in jails across the country despite being granted bail and 1,417 of them have been released.

The report annexed the state-wise chart according to which the number of such identified UTPs in Odisha is 238 (as per the data received from Odisha SLSA), out of which 138 have

been provided legal assistance and 81 have been released.

In the report filed in the apex court, NALSA has said it is in the process of creating a "master data" of all such UTPs, who are unable to furnish surety or bail bonds due to poverty, including the reasons for non-release from jail.

The SC had in its November 29 last year order flagged the issue of UTPs who continue to be in custody despite being granted bail on account of their inability to fulfil the conditions of bail.

The apex court had asked the states to issue directions to jail authorities to provide details of such UTPs to NALSA, which will process it for mak-



ing necessary suggestions on how to deal with this issue and provide legal assistance wherever necessary.

The November 29 last year order was passed days after President Droupadi Murmu, in her maiden Constitution Day address November 26 last year at the Supreme Court, had highlighted the plight of poor tribals of her home state Odisha and Jharkhand, saying they remain incarcerated despite getting bail for lack of money to furnish the bail amount or arrange sureties.

The matter, which relates to policy strategy for grant of

bail, came up for hearing Tuesday before a bench comprising Justices SK Kaul and AS Oka.

Advocate Gaurav Agrawal, who is assisting the apex court as an amicus curiae in the matter, referred to the report filed by NALSA.

The report said that pursuant to the November 29 order, NALSA wrote to the state legal services authorities (SLSAs) to obtain details of such UTPs within 15 days and they were also directed to provide necessary legal assistance for their release.

It said by the end of December 2022, data was received from almost all the SLSAs after which the NALSA asked them to furnish a progress report regarding legal assistance and release of such UTPs who were in custody despite being granted bail.

NCC to be part of UG syllabus

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: The state government has decided to introduce National Cadet Corps (NCC) as an elective subject for undergraduate (UG) students in 183 colleges of the state.

The Higher Education department has written letters to the vice-chancellors of all the universities coming under the department asking them to implement the National Cadet Corps (NCC) as a 'General Elective Course' at UG level from the academic session 2023-24. NCC course will be included in the UG curriculum in Odisha from 2023-24 academic session.

At present, NCC is mostly based on practical and field theory classes in colleges with one trained officer in Odisha.

Awareness drive soon against cybercrimes

Bhubaneswar: The state government will soon launch first-of-its-kind campaign to create awareness among the citizens regarding rising cybercrimes. Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, who chaired a special meeting Tuesday, stressed upon organising awareness programmes at grassroots level against cybercrime. He instructed the authorities to involve people from all sections of the society especially the elderly, students, ASHA and Anganwadi workers and members of self-help groups (SHGs) in the initiative. As many as 34 specially made vehicles (Raths) will be rolled out to spread awareness regarding cybercrime through audio-visual mediums. The vehicles will touch all the police stations across the state. Paintings with messages to avoid cybercrime will be drawn on the walls of Anganwadi centres and schools in the state. Discussions will be held during parent-teacher meetings in schools. The public will be instructed to not verify before any financial transactions, make friends online with unknown persons, click unknown links received through SMS, download suspicious apps. The campaign will be organised in both online and offline platforms. Awareness messages to rein in cybercrime will be published regularly through various social media platforms.

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Toshali Nat'l Crafts Mela from today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: Handlooms, Textiles & Handicrafts department is going to organize 17th Toshali National Crafts Mela at Janata Maidan, Bhubaneswar from February 1, to 12. Artisans, weavers, from all over the country will participate in the mela and exhibit their traditional and contemporary handicraft and handloom products. As important cultural nerve centre of the country, Bhubaneswar hosts the mela every year. The crafts mela has already carved a unique niche of its own in the country's Annual Carnival Calendar.

The vision of the mela is to offer an open forum to artists, artisans and connoisseurs for interaction. It will also strengthen the position of the weavers and artisans who are economically derived by creating market for their products as well as preserve and nurture the traditional art forms, handicrafts and handlooms of India.

This year, the "Theme Pavilion" of the Mela will showcase the "Handlooms: Tradition & Trends". 560 Artisans and weavers will participate in the mela, out of which 250 Handicrafts artisans from different part of the Country are sponsored by Development



ARTISTES TO BE FELICITATED HANDICRAFT AWARDS IN MELA

BHUBANESWAR: The state government has announced different categories of Handicraft Awards for the year 2020 and 2021. Padma Vibhushan Sudarshan Sahoo, Benudhar Mohapatra and Debendra Mishra will be felicitated the Life Time Achievement Awards for the year 2019, 2020 and 2021 respectively. The awardees will be felicitated February 1 during the inaugural ceremony of 17th Toshali National Crafts Mela. Udaya Mohanty (Stone Carving),

Nirmal Chandra Das (Palm Leaf Engraving) and Purna Chandra Mohapatra (Pattachitra) will be conferred with State Handicraft Awards for the year 2020.

Similarly, Babita Pradhan (Pattachitra), Pramoda Kumar Moharana (Palm Leaf Engraving), Pramoda Kumar Moharana (Stone Carving), Pravatī Patra (Lacquer Craft), Amiya Podar (Cair Craft), Urbasi Moharana (Clay Toys) will be conferred with State Handicraft

Commissioner (Handicrafts) under National Handicrafts Fair Scheme. 50 weavers from different part of the Country have been sponsored by DC (Handlooms). Similarly, 150 Artisans and 110 Weavers of the state have been sponsored by Directorate of Handicrafts, Odisha and Directorate of Textiles and Handlooms, Odisha respectively.

The mela will be opened every day from 2:30pm to 9:30pm. Last year the mela witnessed a foot fall of 19 lakh people and ₹16.13 crore businesses was achieved. It is expected that around 20 lakh people will visit the mela this year and products worth ₹20 crore will be sold approximately.



ENFORCING CIVIC SENSE: Two-wheelers creating noise pollution being detained by traffic police at Madhupatna Police Station in Cuttack, Tuesday

SOA signs MoU with L&T Edutech

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) Deemed to be University here signed an MoU with L&T EduTech, a business vertical of Larsen and Toubro Limited (L&T), in which the latter would extend professional training, internship and placement to SOA's core engineering students.

The MoU was signed Monday by Pradipta Kumar Nanda, Pro-Vice Chancellor of SOA and R Balasubramanian, Consultant, L&T EduTech.

Those present during the signing of the MoU were Sujit Dash, Professor and Head, Training and Placement, DN Thatoi, Additional Dean (Academics), Saroj Acharya, Head, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Bidyadhar Basa, Head, Department of Civil Engineering, Binod Sahu, Head, Department of Electrical



Engineering, Niranjana Nayak, Head, Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Sumit Mitra, Head, Career Development Cell, ITER, Pramod Kumar Panda, Chief Administrative Officer, SOA and Pabitra Kumar Parida, Manager, L&T EduTech, were present during the signing of the MoU.

As per the agreement, Larsen and Toubro, one of the leading engineering conglomerates operating across the world would aim to bridge the gap between industry and academia. Initially, the facility would be available to students of core engi-

neering disciplines like Civil, Electrical, Mechanical and Electrical & Electronics Engineering (EEE) which would be subsequently extended to other disciplines, Dash, said.

The core objective would be to enhance the employability of students as well as aspiring professionals across various engineering and technology sectors. Focusing on employability, L&T is set to launch a series of industry-led application-oriented courses under its programme—L&T CollegeConnect which would be made available to SOA students.

Growth to slip...

Continued from P1

"The loss of export stimulus is further possible as the slowing world growth and trade shrinks the global market size in the second half of the current year."

It indicated that while inflation may not be too worrisome, borrowing costs are likely to remain 'higher for longer' as an entrenched inflation may prolong the tightening cycle.

India's recovery from the pandemic was relatively quick, growth will be supported by solid domestic demand, pick-up in capital investment, the survey said but highlighted the challenge to the rupee with the likelihood of further interest rate hikes by the US Fed.

"The survey projects a base-line GDP growth of 6.5 per cent in real terms in FY24," the report said. "The actual outcome for real GDP growth will probably lie in the range of 6 per cent to 6.8 per cent, depending on the trajectory of economic and political developments globally."

CAD may continue to widen as global commodity prices remain elevated and because of strong economic growth momentum. If CAD widens further, the rupee may come under depreciation pressure, it said, adding the overall external situation will remain manageable.

On exports, it said the growth moderated in the second half of current fiscal year. Slowing world growth, shrinking global trade led to loss of export stimulus in the second half of the current year.

India's economic growth in FY23 has been principally led by private consumption and capital formation. It has helped generate employment as seen in the declining urban unemployment rate and in the faster net registration in the Employee Provident Fund.

Vets' statewide protest from today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar Jan 31: The veterinary surgeons across the state have decided to begin a protest seeking fulfillment of their demands from February 1.

The demands include complete parity with allopathic doctors, cadre restructuring, and transformation of service delivery system in the department. The present veterinary cadre is facing a bottleneck condition, while the newly joined vets expect to have their next promotion after 25 years.

According to their demand, there should be a veterinary dispensary for each 8 to 10 GPs, a specialized service for animal healthcare, advance diagnostic facilities at sub-divisional level and establishment of veterinary forensic labs. The new blue print can change the sixty year old service delivery system in the state in a conducive way, said the president, Odisha Veterinary Service Association (OVSA) Jadunath Parida.

Currently, the vets are refrained from the general medicinal practices due to increase in activities

of diversified works which directly encourages quack practice in the state causing huge economic loss to the cattle owners. Also the vets of the state vehemently oppose the fact that they get considered as an allied sector to the agriculture department. As compared to agriculture, veterinary healthcare and vet responsibilities includes greater degree of emergency in nature like allopathic procedures.

The department requires a separate Veterinary University and livestock enterprise development corporation.



FOR EMPLOYMENT: Members of AICCTU staged a demonstration seeking jobs for students from Crew Training Institute, Chandbali, Bhadrak at PMG Square in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

Earth on track...

Continued from P1

Crossing the 1.5 C and 2 C thresholds would mean failing to achieve the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement, in which countries pledged to keep global warming to "well below" 2 C above pre-industrial levels, while pursuing the more ambitious goal of limiting warming to 1.5 C.

Previous assessments have used global climate models to simulate future warming trajectories; statistical techniques to extrapolate recent warming rates; and carbon budgets to calculate how quickly emissions will need to decline to stay below the Paris Agreement targets. For the new estimates, the researchers used a type of AI known as a neural network, which they trained on the vast archive of outputs from widely used global climate model simulations.

A simple cup of coffee with milk may have an anti-inflammatory effect in humans, a study conducted in laboratory suggests.

Researchers from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark found that a combination of proteins and antioxidants doubles the anti-inflammatory properties in immune cells.

Whenever bacteria, viruses and other foreign substances enter the body, our immune systems react by deploying white blood cells and chemical substances to protect us.

This reaction, commonly known as inflammation, also occurs whenever we overload tendons and muscles and is characteristic of diseases like rheumatoid arthritis.

Antioxidants known as polyphenols are found in humans, plants, fruits and vegetables. They are

also known to be healthy for humans, as they help reduce oxidative stress in the body that gives rise to inflammation.

The study, published in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry, analysed how polyphenols behave when combined with amino acids, the building blocks of proteins.

"In the study, we show that as a polyphenol reacts with an amino acid, its inhibitory effect on inflammation in immune cells is enhanced. As such, it is clearly imaginable that this cocktail could also have a beneficial effect on inflammation in humans," said Professor Marianne Nissen from the University of Copenhagen.

"We will now investigate further, initially in animals. After that, we hope to receive research funding which will allow us to

study the effect in humans," said Nissen, who led the study.

The researchers found that the reaction between polyphenols and proteins also happens in some of the coffee drinks with milk that they studied.

To investigate the anti-inflammatory effect of combining polyphenols with proteins, the researchers applied artificial inflammation to immune cells.

Some of the cells received various doses of polyphenols that had reacted with an amino acid, while others only received polyphenols in the same doses. A control group received nothing.

The researchers found that immune cells treated with the combination of polyphenols and amino acids were twice as effective at fighting inflammation as the cells to which only polyphenols were added.

BJP bats for OBC census in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Jan 31: A delegation of BJP's Other Backward Classes (OBC) Morcha submitted a memorandum to National Commission for Backward Classes demanding a survey for enumeration of other backward classes in Odisha.

The outfit alleged that the Odisha government is delaying the survey for enumeration of OBCs in the state, thereby denying and depriving the backward classes people of their Constitutional rights and reservations in education and employment.

The BJP leaders also said that Odisha government is yet to accord Quasi Judiciary Status to the established Odisha Backward Classes Commission which makes it toothless on ground. In absence of judicial powers, there is no grievance redressal mechanism available to members of these communities in matters of discrimination, the BJP said.

Successful trial run of train on Angul-Sukinda new rail line

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 31: A trial run of a goods train on newly constructed Angul-Sukinda new Rail line was successfully carried out. The 93.2 kilometres long new rail line is now ready for regular train operations. With this, a mega rail infra project gets added to the rail-network of Odisha.

Although this project was sanctioned by the Railway Ministry in 1997, no headway could be made until 2010, as funding the project was a major bottle-neck. It was in this year that a Special Purpose Vehicle, namely Angul-Sukinda Railway Limited, was formed to execute this project in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.

Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) was engaged by the Ministry of Railways to execute this project. Unfortunately, no big company came forward to invest

money in this rail-line. Being a PPP project, this project is not directly funded from Railway Budget unlike Khurda-Bolangir or Talcher-Bilimgarh rail-lines, where an annual budget grant is received from Railway Ministry.

After considerable efforts, Dilip Kumar Samantray, Managing Director of ASRL could mobilise government of Odisha and Container Corporation of India to contribute equity for the project. Similarly, he roped in eight nationalized banks with Canara bank as lead bank to ensure ₹2200 crore rupees of debt available for the project. After that, serious efforts were made to complete land acquisition work and forest and environmental clearance. It was only in 2017 that the rail line work was taken up in earnestness, with forest clearance obtained and a considerable portion of land acquisition completed.

Coffee with milk may have anti-inflammatory effect



■ Researchers from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark found that a combination of proteins and antioxidants doubles the anti-inflammatory properties in immune cells

■ Antioxidants known as polyphenols are found in humans, plants, fruits and vegetables. They are also known to be healthy for humans, as they help reduce oxidative stress in the body that gives rise to inflammation

mals," said Associate Professor Andrew Williams from the University of Copenhagen, who is also senior author of the study.

Previous studies by the researchers demonstrated that polyphenols bind to proteins in meat products, milk and beer.

In another new study, published in journal Food Chemistry, the researchers tested whether the molecules also bind to each other in a coffee drink with milk.

Coffee beans are filled with polyphenols, while milk is rich in proteins. "Our result demonstrates that the reaction between polyphenols and proteins also happens in some of the coffee drinks with milk that we studied. In fact, the reaction happens so quickly that it has been difficult to avoid in any of the foods that we have studied so far," said Nissen.

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Brown sugar worth ₹27 lakh seized, 1 drug dealer held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jaleswar, Jan 31: In a major haul, police Tuesday seized 269 gram of brown sugar worth ₹27 lakh and arrested a drug peddler during a raid. Giving this information at a press meet here, SP Sagarika Nath stated that efforts are on to nab others involved in illegal trade of narcotics. Also present at the press meet were SDPO Dillip Kumar Sahu and IIC Shiba Prasad Bhadra.

The breakthrough came during a raid at the house of an alleged drug peddler at Patharpura village in Malgodel locality under Jaleswar civic body limits in Balasore district. According to an official communique, acting on a tip-off, a team of Jaleswar police conducted the raid.

Other than the contraband, police also seized cash worth ₹27,000, a mobile phone, a bank passbook and five PAN cards from the possession of the accused.



TRADITIONAL SPORT: Girls take part in a kabaddi match organised Tuesday by Rajya Vidyalaya Sangha at Sarangdhar Stadium in Kamakhyanagar of Dhenkanal district

OP PHOTO

Youth gets 10 yrs in prison for rape

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Jan 31: A local court Tuesday sentenced a youth to 10-years of rigorous imprisonment after convicting him of raping a minor girl. The convict identified as Khetra Munda, 22, is a native of Baliadala village under Patana police limits in Keonjhar district. Additional District and Sessions Judge Sumita Jena also slapped a penalty of ₹11,000 on the convict apart from the punishment. If he fails to pay, Munda will have to spend an additional seven months in prison. The judge also directed the district legal services authority (DLSA) to grant ₹4 lakh financial assistance to the survivors.

According to the case diary, the minor girl was playing with her sister on the evening of November 7, 2017. Taking advantage of the secluded place, Munda kidnapped both and raped the younger of the two girls. Family members searched for them in nearby jungle but failed to trace them.

Later, the family of the two girls lodged a complaint at the Thakurmunda police station. Police registered a case and launched a search operation and rescued both the girls. Police arrested the accused on the basis of the statements of the rape survivor, special public prosecutor Abhinna Kumar Patnaik said.

Guj question paper leak; Malkangiri teacher arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, Jan 31: A team of Gujarat police arrested Tuesday a government school teacher here in connection with the leak of question papers for recruitment examination to the posts of junior clerks. The exams were to be conducted by the Gujarat Panchayat Service Selection Board (GPSSB).

The accused was identified as Saroj Malu, a teacher of the Government High School at Kartanpali in Malkangiri district. Police have already left for Surat with Malu where he will be produced in court. Officials said that the examination which was scheduled for Sunday, has been cancelled due to the leak.

Officials said Malu had allegedly written answers to the questions and had shared them with the job aspirants. A total of 1,181 posts for junior clerk were on offer for which 9.53 lakh candidates were to appear. The examination would have been conducted in 2,995 centres. As the



questions and answers went viral on various social media platforms, the government had no option but to cancel the examination.

Gujarat police have so far arrested 15 people in this connection. They came to know from some of the accused that Malu had prepared the answers and posted those on social media. Police before departing for Surat said that investigations are still on to nab others involved in the leak of the question papers.

The next date of the examination will be announced within the next 100 days, the development commissioner of Gujarat Panchayatiraj department had earlier said.

Ban imposed on gill, ring nets for fishing

Despite orders, fishermen are violating those with impunity in their greed to get a lucrative catch

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paradip, Jan 31: In view of the rapid decline in fish population and death of Olive Ridley turtles and other marine creatures, the Odisha government has issued an order to stop the use of gill (phasi) and ring nets during fishing, sources said Tuesday.

Odisha has over 480-km of coastline and fishermen use these two types of nets to make a catch at many places in the sea. Fishermen residing in and around this port town mostly use these two types of nets. However, a sudden decline in fish population and death of fingerlings has led the Odisha government to issue such a directive.

The matter came to the fore after the Additional Fisheries Officer in Kujang, wrote a letter to the Marine Fisheries Officer here stating that these two types of nets should not be used. However, after receipt of the letter, the concerned officials here have only issued an advisory to the fishermen asking them not to use these two types of fishing nets.

Sources said that the Odisha Marine Fishing Control Act-1981



FILE PHOTO

bars the use of these two types of nets. However, fishermen use these two varieties despite restrictions as they can get a bigger catch. The fingerlings die after getting caught in these nets and this has led to the decrease in fish population in the sea, officials said.

There are some specific guidelines on use of the nets for fishing. The nets should be made of cotton and nylon having multiple ends. The gill nets should have a length of

300 metres and the knot of 140 metres. These nets when used will help in only catching big fish while allowing the smaller ones, eggs and fingerlings to drop back into the sea. The ring net is also based on the above specification.

However, fishermen in their greed to catch more fish, fix an iron ring on the bottom part of the net. The fishermen hurl the nets in circular manner at a particular point of sea and because the

The fish population is decreasing as fishermen are not ready to follow the restrictions on the use of different types of nets leading to damaging of marine life and death of fingerlings and destruction of eggs

specifications are not followed, along with the big fish also the smaller ones and fingerlings get trapped in the net. In most cases fishermen using small boats use these two types of nets.

When contacted, Marine Fisheries Officer Jagannath Rao said that the fishermen have sought two days time when he met them Saturday and asked them to stop using the two varieties of nets mentioned above. After the time frame is over, raids will be conducted and ring and phasi nets will be seized if fishermen are found using those, Rao stated.

Girl dies by suicide

POST NEWS NETWORK

G Udayagiri, Jan 31: Mystery shrouds the death of a minor girl who died by suicide by hanging herself at her elder sister's in-laws house in Kalinga panchayat under this police limits in Gajapati district, late Monday night. The deceased took the extreme step when everybody was asleep. The matter came to the fore in the morning when people woke up. However, the actual reason behind the girl taking the extreme step is yet to be ascertained.

The incident took place when the deceased, a student of Plus-II course was visiting her elder sister. Finding the girl hanging from the ceiling, others in the house immediately informed the police who arrived at the spot soon.

Police brought down the body of the girl hanging from the ceiling and sent it for post-mortem. Police also questioned the elder sister of the deceased as well as other members of her in-laws family. Later Tuesday, the body of the deceased was handed over to her family members after conducting the post-mortem.

Police said further investigation is on and they are examining the belongings of the deceased while her mobile has been sent for forensic tests.

No let-up in Keonjhar road mishap deaths

1,369 deaths in last 4 years, the majority of which were due to drunk driving and over-speeding

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Jan 31: There is no let-up in road mishap deaths in Keonjhar district despite a significant improvement in infrastructure, sources said Tuesday. In the last four years, 1,369 persons have died in road accidents in this district.

The number is indeed huge if one takes into account the restrictions imposed at various times in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19. During this four-year period, the district administration has built new roads and repaired the old ones. However, accidents continue to happen with monotonous regularity leading to the



FILE PHOTO

loss of lives and property.

People in the know of things claimed that an increase in the number of vehicles, over-speeding and drunk driving are the main reasons behind the increase in the number of mishaps. However, now it has become a cause of concern for commuters in the district.

According to reports available from the state Transport department, more road mishaps took place in 2022 than in 2021 in Keonjhar district. A total of 341 persons died and 549 were injured in 713 road

mishaps in 2022. In 2021, 341 people were killed and 509 were injured in 675 road mishaps. Even though there was no increase in the number of fatalities, there was a rise in the number of injured people in 2022. The maximum number of road accident deaths (39) took place in the months of January, May and November in 2022 while April (16) registered the least number of fatalities.

In 2020, 354 persons died and 435 suffered injuries in 649 road mishaps, while in 2019, 333 people lost their lives and 708 were injured in 674 road mishaps.

Many residents opined that accidents are also taking place due to illegal parking. The wrongdoers going free and no action being taken against them has sparked resentment among the residents.

When contacted, RTO Gopalkrushna Das said that road mishaps have increased in 2022 than

the previous year, but not the death toll. He said that efforts are on to sensitise the commuters about traffic rules, drunk and rash driving and over-speeding. He asserted that stringent action is being taken against the violators of traffic rules. Awareness programmes on the importance of 'safe' driving are being conducted at regular intervals by the Transport department and the district administration, he added.

Social activist Dillip Sahu said that accidents can be reduced if the black spots and errors in construction of highways and state roads can be identified and corrected.

Advocate Ashok Das, president of Keonjhar District Bar Association said users should keep the fitness certificates and insurance papers of their vehicles updated as it will help them compensation easily in case of an accident.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
Tender No. ELOP-T-17-2022

Name of work : SUPPLY OF SCREENED AND DRY RIVER SAND CONFORMING TO RDSO SPECIFICATION NO. "AAR M-916-51" IN 20 KG WATER PROOF NON-MOISTURIZED TRANSPARENT POLYTHENE BAGS AND FILLING IN THE ELECTRICAL/DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE SAND BOXES AT PALASA, KHURDA ROAD, BHADRAK, TALCHER, PARADEEP, ANGUL, PURI, BHUBANESWAR, RAJATHGARH, KENDUJHARGARH & JAKHAPURA ALONG WITH REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF SAND GEAR OF DIESEL AND ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVES AT KHURDA ROAD, TALCHER & PARADEEP ROUND THE CLOCK AS PER REQUIREMENT FOR A PERIOD OF 02 YEARS.

Advertised Value : ₹ 5,49,40,035.70, EMD: ₹ 4,24,700/-, Tender document cost: ₹ 11,800/-, Period of completion: 24 months.

Bidding start date : 03.02.2023, Tender closing date & time : at 1730 hrs. of 17.02.2023.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Complete details & tender documents will be available at website www.irps.gov.in

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (OP), PR-955/N/22-23, Khurda Road

DISHA
NEW OPPORTUNITIES

APPOINTMENT OF COMPANY SECRETARY

No. CAD-4662:IDCOL Ferro Chrome & Alloys Ltd. a Government Company in Odisha needs a qualified Company Secretary having minimum 3 years of post qualification experience in handling all Company Secretarial matters either in employment or in practice. Interested candidates having educational qualification of Graduate with Membership of Institute of Company Secretary of India, New Delhi, may apply by 06.02.2023 (5.00 PM) with their resume to Managing Director, IDCOL Ferro Chrome & Alloys Ltd, At/PO: Ferro Chrome Project -755020, Jajpur Road, Dist: Jajpur, Odisha. The envelop should be submitted superscribed with "Application for Appointment of Company Secretary in IFCAL". The Application for appointment of Company Secretary in IFCAL may be made in plain paper through e-mail to ifcal@nic.in or by post/courier or by hand. Pay package is negotiable. Period of Appointment: Initially for a period 3 (three) months and further extendable as per requirement

Sd./- Managing Director
OIPR-14106/11/0040/2223

'MGNREGS work demand back to pre-Covid level'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: The work demand under the MGNREGS hovered around the pre-pandemic level between July to November 2022, the Economic Survey released Tuesday said, attributing it to the 'normalisation of the rural economy' and 'swift recovery from Covid-induced slowdown'.

According to the Economic Survey, which was tabled in Parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in the current financial year, 6.49 crore households demanded employment under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) till January 24. Of them, 6.48 crore households were offered employment and 5.7 crore of them availed it, the Survey said.



FILE PHOTO

"The number of persons demanding work under MGNREGS was seen to be trending around pre-pandemic levels from July to November 2022. This could be attributed to the normalisation of the rural economy due to strong agricultural growth and a swift recovery from Covid-19 induced slowdown, culminating in better employment opportunities," the Survey said.

According to the Survey, the number of works done under MGNREGS has steadily increased over the years, with 85

lakh completed works in financial year 2021-22 and 70.6 lakh completed works in the current financial year by January.

The share of 'works done on individual's land' has increased from 16 per cent of the total completed works in 2015-16, to 73 per cent in 2022-23.

"Empirically, within a short span of 2-3 years, these assets have been observed to have a significant positive impact on agricultural productivity, production-related expenditure, and income per household, along with a negative association with migration and fall in indebtedness, especially from non-institutional sources," the Survey pointed out.

It added this will have long-term implications for aiding income diversification and infusing resilience into rural livelihoods.

इंडियन बैंक Indian Bank
प्लॉट नं. 516, मैग्नेटिक स्क्वोर, पी.ओ. की.टी. पटिया, भुवनेश्वर-751024

POSSESSION NOTICE
(FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)

Where as, The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Indian Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued Demand Notice on the date noted against Account as mentioned hereinafter, calling upon to Borrowers to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the under noted Borrowers and the Public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described here-in-below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 and 9 of the said rules on the dates mentioned against Account.

The Borrowers 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 Indian Bank, Patia Branch for the amount and interest thereon mentioned against account herein below.

The borrowers attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the Secured Assets.

Name & Address of Borrowers	Description of the Immovable Property	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession Notice	Outstanding Amount
(1) M/s Jyotshna Enterprises (Borrower - Proprietorship Firm), Plot No. 115/279, Dadha, Raghunathpur, Nandankanan Road, Bhubaneswar-751024, Odisha. (2) Mrs Jyotshnarani Das (Proprietor), W/o: Mr Pradipta Kumar Das, (3) Mr Pradipta Kumar Das, S/o: Sanatan Das, both are resident of At/PO: Begunia, Dist: Khurda, Pin- 752062	All the part and parcel of land & building situated in Plot No. 469, Khata No. 359, New Khata No. 986/989, Mouza: Begunia, PS: Begunia, No. 73, Tahasil/Sub-Registrar/Dist: Khurda, Area: 43560 Sqft., Title Holder: Mrs Jyotshna Rani Das, Boundaries of Plot: North- Govt. Land, South- Pradipta Kumar Mohanty & others, East- Govt. Land, West- Road.	10.11.2022	27.01.2023	Rs.95,69,858.21 with further interest, costs, charges & expenses thereon

Place : Bhubaneswar, Date : 31.01.2023
Authorised Officer, Indian Bank

FOCUS NATION

CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY



With the gradual fading away of liberal democracy against the onslaught of hyper nationalism and jingoistic populism, the world today is groping for ideals to uphold the values of yesteryears and bemoaning the sacrifices of leaders who had ushered in a hundred revolutions for social change

sport to India's global statesmanship role as the G20 President!

India is poised to be the world's most populous nation this year with more than half the population below 30 years. Its economy is buoyant despite the global recession though a populist budget is in the offing with an eye to the coming elections (this would be the current government's last full budget before the nation goes into elections), and this could boost inflation, unemployment, budget and fiscal deficit with further devaluation of the Indian rupee. The poor would go down further in the social value chain with the government ill placed to provide common goods such as good and affordable healthcare, education, sanitation and governance. The social compact between the majorities of the citizenry with the state, hallmark of a good democracy, would stand disturbed even further.

It is clear that a neoliberal economy where the nation's assets are controlled by a few corporates does not bode well for an emerging democracy, even though it could be seen by the West as a bulwark against Chinese expansionism in Asia. India today finds itself in a demanding situation where with the eyes of the West focussed on it, the edifice of democracy so painstakingly built by our nation builders should not be dismantled and the common citizen could still repose faith in the nation's institutions and leadership.

Coming out of jail after a 27-years' incarceration, with the fall of apartheid, Nelson Mandela, the most ardent disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, addressing a roaring crowd in Cape Town said, "I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an idea that I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

With the gradual fading away of liberal democracy against the onslaught of hyper nationalism and jingoistic populism, the world today is groping for ideals to uphold the values of yesteryears and bemoaning the sacrifices of leaders who had ushered in a hundred revolutions for social change.

The writer is a retired diplomat. Views are personal.

Adolf Hitler's Propaganda Minister Josef Goebbels had once satirically remarked that the funniest thing about democracy is that it gives the means to its enemies to destroy it. Nobel Laureate for Peace, Maria Ressa in her autobiography, "How to Stand Up to a Dictator" says, "Democracy is fragile. You have to fight for it every bit, every law, every safeguard, every institution, every story. You must know how dangerous it is to suffer even the tiniest cut."

Ressi, while cautioning the reader about the excesses of autocracies, also warned about the egregious role which social media can play in boosting the autocrat's chance to continue in power. In the same vein, Steven Levitsky in his powerful book co-authored with Daniel Ziblatt, "How Democracies Die" writes, "Democracies may die at the hands not of generals but of elected leaders-presidents or PMs who subvert the very process that brought them to power."

If one reads through the lines of PM Modi's valedictory address on January 17 at the BJP National Executive meeting one would note that India could be taking an important turn for the better, albeit with a view to securing the general elections of 2024, that finally reason would prevail over the country's ruling party or its affiliates to desist from ill-treating the minorities, the Muslims, Dalits and Christians, whose sufferings are being regularly played out in the media.

Modi's voice was clear and firm. "The BJP is no longer a political movement, but a social movement working to transform socio-economic conditions," he said. "We should aim to build relationships with all sections of society with sensitivity... We should not focus only on voters, but also build society." The Prime Minister's pointed address to his party workers was aimed at forgetting the bitterness of the past and march with a new zeal to rebuild India. He named the Pasmanda and Bohra Muslims, Dalits and Sikhs in particular with whom the BJP should build a relation of trust and friendship.

Within days of the PM's address, a bombshell was dropped on the Indian political scene in the form of a two-part BBC documentary series titled, "India: The Modi Question." The government

promptly banned the series under the IT Rules, 2001, and Section 69A of the IT Act, emergency provisions used to ban any media product which could aim at disturbing the security and territorial integrity of India. But by then the damage had already been done. The series had leaked out in the public domain and was still available on YouTube and other social media platforms to be downloaded and seen by multitude of Indians, mostly students, activists and even common folks.

The political class was aghast. Not only with the contents of the series which were downright deplorable in reliving the horrors of the 2002 Gujarat riots and several incidents of lynching and harassing Muslims through the years of the Modi rule, but also with the timing of its release. In universities, classrooms, private homes and even sea beaches the film was shown to the public. It was an education in remembrance for people, of a systematic ethnic cleansing pogrom organised right under the eyes of the police with the aim to teach "the Muslims a lesson they would never forget" as a powerful minister was to remark during the recent Gujarat elections.

It was evident that the BBC had a sinister motive to refresh the nation's memory of incidents which happened some 20 years back, but worse still when it tran-

spired that the documentary was filmed at the British government's behest under the orders of the then High Commissioner. Modi had then been banned from visiting the UK, a ban which stayed until 2013 when it was clear that he could come to power after being named the probable PM by the BJP. It is ironic that the UK High Commissioner was among the first heads of mission to meet Modi when he won by a huge mandate and occupied the office of the Prime Minister in May 2014, with the ostensible reason of rebuilding relations.

The question still remains, why did BBC have to release the documentary at this time, when the "Modi question" and role of the then Chief Minister of Gujarat had long been decided by the highest court of the land in his favour and exonerated by the state judiciary and the Special Investigation Team appointed by the Supreme Court? The question is salient as this is a delicate period when both India and the UK under the stewardship of an Indian-origin Prime Minister are assiduously cultivating relations and a Free Trade Agreement is in the works. Could be that the real motive of the public broadcaster was to show India's leader in a negative light and in the process damage the enthralls of India's democracy besides playing spoil-



Malay Mishra

IT IS CLEAR THAT A NEOLIBERAL ECONOMY WHERE THE NATION'S ASSETS ARE CONTROLLED BY A FEW CORPORATES DOES NOT BODE WELL FOR AN EMERGING DEMOCRACY

Tel Aviv Tightrope

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's ongoing visit to Israel is taking place in a period of intense crisis aggravated by provocative actions by the new ultra-right controlled government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Days after assuming the reins of power, the government authorised the deadliest Israeli army raid in years, which claimed at least nine Palestinian lives in the Jenin refugee camp. This triggered a backlash when a young Palestinian gunman launched an attack on a synagogue in Jerusalem killing seven Israeli civilians. Palestinians celebrated the killings by honking cars and distributing sweets. Investigation reveals the assailant's grandfather had been murdered 25 years ago allegedly by a Jewish supremacist. The ideological followers of those extremists are now in power in Israel.

Arriving in Tel Aviv against this backdrop, Blinken urged both sides to take "urgent steps to restore calm". But it is questionable how far his entreaties may go. In fact, analysts say Blinken's trip is not expected to produce any diplomatic breakthrough. His visit is nothing but an attempt by the Biden administration to quickly re-engage with Netanyahu, with whom the US president has a long, but often strained relationship.

During his Israel tour Blinken will meet Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas after his engagement with the Israeli Prime Minister. Tensions are mounting between Israelis and Palestinians after a surge in vigilante attacks carried out by Jewish settlers in the West Bank and raids by Israeli security forces followed by retaliatory strikes by Palestinian militants.

Interestingly, there is turmoil within the Israeli political system with the ultra-right ruling alliance partner pushing for overhauling the country's judiciary. Detractors of the new regime fear the move would dilute Israeli democracy and lead to further Palestinian dispossession. Blinken's visit becomes important for this reason. The US can ill afford to see major problems plaguing the region either in the form of fierce strife between Israelis and Palestinians over further occupation of the West Bank by Israeli settlers or attempts to rewrite Israel's democratic constitution making the judiciary subservient to the parliament.

At least 22 people have been killed in the past week, with dozens of copycat or retaliatory attacks targeting Israelis and Palestinians, including shootings and burning of cars and property. No wonder in a news conference after his meeting with Netanyahu, Blinken repeatedly called for calm and reaffirmed that the US believes that the dormant peace process aimed at a two-state solution is the "only path forward".

Blinken is making a balancing act to mollify Israel while at the same time keep the right-wing element of the new government at bay. This is why he left no one in doubt about the USA's "ironclad commitment" to its security ally. However, he also insisted any deviation from its policy of a two-state solution upholding status quo at Jerusalem's holy places would be detrimental to Israel's long-term security.

In a clever move Blinken sought to dissuade Israel's far-right government from overhauling the country's judicial system by asking it to have broad public support for its agenda. There have been major demonstrations in Israeli cities against the move by the ultra-right to rewrite the constitution. He made the right noise by iterating that "building consensus for new proposals" is the most effective way.

The main purpose of the visit, however, is not to stabilise Israeli-Palestinian relations, which is extremely difficult to manage now more than ever before. The USA's main concern is to prevent escalation of the conflict which, it fears, will weaken the West's fight against Russia over the latter's invasion of Ukraine. Similarly, the USA wants to tone down the acrimony between Iran and Israel. Netanyahu is determined to stymie the Iran-US nuke deal so as to frustrate Iran's ambition to produce nuclear weapons. The US is keen on getting the nuke deal with Iran with proper safeguards. Though negotiations in this regard have been stalled following political turmoil in Iran over attacks on women's rights, the US is aware its ambivalence over the nuke deal may push Iran to Russia's embrace.

It seems the US is aware that provocative actions from Israel's ultra-right government will be a considerable diplomatic liability at a time when it is trying to isolate Russia further on the world stage. That is what Blinken's visit could be all about.

WISDOM CORNER

- Appreciation is a wonderful thing: It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well. VOLTAIRE
- If you are lonely when you're alone, you are in bad company. JEAN-PAUL SARTRE
- Never let your sense of morals get in the way of doing what's right. ISAAC ASIMOV

WORDSWORTH

Florilegium

This Latin word is from flor-, a flower, and legere, to gather or collect. In that language it didn't refer literally to flowers, but to little flowers of composition, choice poems or epigrams by various authors (it's the exact Latin equivalent of the Greek anthology, which derives from anthos, a flower, and -logia, a collection). However, florilegium first appeared in the English language in 1711 in a sense nearer the literal one: describing a collection of flower illustrations. This continued a usage that had begun a century earlier in the Latin titles of books by European illustrators like Emanuel Sweert and Jean Theodore de Bry. Though the word was soon after taken back by scholars to refer to collections of writings, this sense may still sometimes be found, for example in the title of a 1996 book A Hawaiian Florilegium, subtitled "Botanical Portraits from Paradise". Now another early collection, created by the seventeenth-century gentleman gardener Alexander Marshal, has been published after being hidden away for years in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle, after being presented to George IV in the 1820s. This book, too, has florilegium in its title and brought the term a wider audience.

Flummox

It's certainly one of the odder-looking words in the language, with that final x. We can take the word back a couple of hundred years, but after that it's all guesswork. The word first appears in mainstream English in the middle of the nineteenth century. Charles Dickens is the first writer known to have used it, in his Pickwick Papers: "And my 'pinion is, Sammy, that if your governor don't prove a alleybi, he'll be what the Italians call reg'larly flummoxed, and that's all about it." Don't be misled by that reference to Italians, that's just a fancy of old Mr Weller. But there's evidence that the word is older in Scots and English dialects, in the same sense that we use it now, to be bewildered, perplexed, or puzzled, or to defeat or overcome somebody in argument ("That fair flummoxed 'im!"). At one time, Americans sometimes used it in the sense of failing or being defeated and so being exhausted or beaten, but that sense seems to have died out. There's also the English dialect flummox, at one time known from Yorkshire down to Gloucestershire, to go about in a slovenly or untidy manner, or to make things untidy, or to confuse, which may be a slightly older version of the same word. It might also be linked to lommox or lummox, a clumsy or stupid person, known from the same area. That's where the trail runs cold. The suggestion is that all these words are in some degree imitative of the noise of throwing things down noisily or untidily, so it may be associated with another dialect word flump, a heavy or noisy fall.

IN JEST THIS

Humans just can't stop smuggling

There are many kinds of smugglers in the world, but few as daring as those who smuggle dangerous animals in their clothing. A New York City man named Calvin Bautista joined this exclusive club in July 2018 when he travelled by bus from Canada to the United States while carrying three Burmese pythons in his pants.



Melvin Durai

SMUGGLING A DOG INTO A HOTEL ROOM IS QUITE EASY, AS LONG AS YOUR DOG DOESN'T BARK OR CALL FOR ROOM SERVICE

A spokesperson for the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) said that the 36-year-old man was caught when border officials inspected the bus and noticed two things: (1) the man had "visible bulges" in his pants; and (2) he was not happy to see them.

The spokesperson did not say how often men are stopped at the border for having "visible bulges" in their pants. But this may explain why some guys are always bragging about being stopped at the border. No, I am not one of these guys. If I have "visible bulges" in my pants while crossing a border, it's because I'm carrying enough money to bribe the border official.

Bautista was charged last October for violating several federal codes, including Title 16, Section 42 of the United States Code, which states that "no animal shall be transported by land, air or sea in any type of container or package that also houses a person's private parts."

You will be glad to know, however, that Bautista had put the pythons in fabric bags before inserting them in his pants, which protected his privates from the snakes, and vice versa.

Most smugglers are breaking the law - and some are committing serious crimes that endanger lives - but smuggling is more common than you think. It seems to come to human beings quite naturally. We've been doing it for so long that the moment we are forbidden from bringing something into a particular area, our first thought is, "Maybe I can hide it in my pants."

Unless you are one of those rare people who abide by every rule, you have probably done a little smuggling yourself. Perhaps you

smuggled a drink or snack into a movie theater because you didn't want to pay their exorbitant prices. It's a good thing the theater employees were too busy selling tickets to look for "visible bulges."

Maybe you smuggled a friend into your neighbourhood gym because your friend didn't want to pay the steep membership fee. This type of smuggling is also known as "opening the side door to get a breath of fresh air."

Perhaps, like me, you smuggled your dog into a hotel room because the hotel didn't allow dogs or discriminated against large dogs. Smuggling a dog into a hotel room is quite easy, as long as your dog doesn't bark or call for room service.

Such types of smuggling will not get you into serious trouble, of course. To get into serious trouble, you have to be a serious smuggler. Serious smugglers are usually smuggling across borders, bringing people, animals, drugs, guns and other contraband into a country. Some of them are ex-

tremely smart, devising all sorts of ingenious ways to get their contraband past the authorities.

Last December, security officers apprehended a man trying to get a .22-caliber semi-automatic handgun onto a plane at New York City's JFK International Airport. The gun was found inside two jars of peanut butter. The smuggler had disassembled the gun and hidden its parts in the jars, believing (as any normal person would) that the electromagnetic radiation of the X-ray machine would never get through something as thick as crunchy peanut butter.

About a month earlier, a traveller at a Florida airport was caught attempting to smuggle a gun inside a whole chicken (not a live one). The smuggler's chicken was uncooked, but his goose was cooked.

Because they were caught, these smugglers may not seem so smart. But they came up with unique ways to smuggle - and without putting anything dangerous in their pants.

Trust deficit in police

Sir, This refers to "Gopal Das admits crime, arrested," OrissaPOST, Jan 31. The murder of Odisha Health Minister Naba Kishore Das at the hands of a serving policeman is bad news for the government. The shocking incident exposed the gaping holes in the VVIP security system. What the murder does is make even the most powerful look very vulnerable, which is not a good sign so far as public perception goes. If this could happen to a leader as popular as Das, it could happen to anyone. What is more disturbing is it was carried out by an on-duty policeman. The men in khaki, the protectors of the public and the high and mighty, are a disciplined force. That one of them decided, for whatever reasons, to target a minister in full public glare is unimaginable. As the investigation is on, issues of the mental health of the accused policeman are coming under the scanner. The police across the country work under tremendous pressure, and there hardly exists any structural mechanism for their psychological evaluation, given the nature of their job and their ability to balance their professional and personal lives. However, a minister's murder by a cop will only exacerbate the growing trust deficit of the general public in the police force.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Tennis greatness

Sir, By winning a record-extending tenth title, Novak Djokovic has renewed his affinity with the Australian Open. The Serb's straight sets win over Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas has tied him with Rafael Nadal for the all-time Grand Slam men's record of 22 titles. Djokovic even sported a jacket with "22", emblazoned on the front while celebrating his victory. With the Australian Open win, Djokovic also jumps back to world No.1. He already holds the record for the most weeks atop the world rankings at 374, and this number will continue to swell. The win at Melbourne Park serves as yet another feather in Djokovic's cap and is a solid proof that the Serbian great still has in him what it takes to win a Major. With an astonishing 64 collective Grand Slam titles, the triumvirate of Djokovic, Nadal and Federer have created incredible metrics that in many ways redefined tennis greatness.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

national

of the day quote

The government's regional air connectivity scheme, which has created a landmark, is giving birth to regional carriers in a country that in the last 20 years has seen closing down of airlines

Rashtrapati Ji's address to both Houses of Parliament covered a wide range of topics, giving an in-depth picture of the transformative changes taking place across sectors. She highlighted how common citizens have been empowered and 'Ease of Living' furthered

Nitish Kumar is unable to take decisions on his own and doing it on the suggestions of others. Hence, I am appealing to Nitish Ji to start taking decisions at his personal level and save the party

SHORT TAKES

Hospital catches fire; 19 patients evacuated

Pune: A fire broke out at a scrap yard in Maharashtra's Pune district in the early hours of Tuesday, forcing evacuation of 19 patients from a hospital located nearby, a fire official said. No one was injured in the blaze, he said. The fire broke out at around 2 am at the scrap yard of used tyres in Kasarwadi area of Pimpri Chinchwad township, the official said. Fourteen fire vehicles were pressed into action and the blaze was doused by 5 am. No one was injured in the fire, the official said, adding the cooling operation was underway.

Car collides with bus, four killed

Palghar: Four persons were killed when their car collided with a bus on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad highway in Maharashtra's Palghar district Tuesday, police said. Two persons travelling in the luxury bus received injuries in the accident which took place at around 3.30 am near Mahalakshmi bridge on the highway, an official from Kasa police station said. The four occupants of the car were travelling from Gujarat to Mumbai, located about 100 km from Palghar, when it jumped a lane and collided with a luxury bus coming from the opposite direction, another official said in the evening.

Traffic restrictions in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: Traffic restrictions will be imposed around Hussain Sagar in the heart of Hyderabad from February 5 in view of the prestigious Formula E race to be held February 11. Traffic will not be allowed on Telugu Talli flyover to Khairatabad flyover and Mint compound to I Max. Special Chief Secretary, Municipal Administration and Urban Development, Arvind Kumar, Tuesday inspected Formula E track along with officials, ABB FIA Formula E World Championship and Greenko Hyderabad E-Prix.

Anubrata Mondal moves Delhi HC

New Delhi: Trinamool Congress leader Anubrata Mondal Tuesday moved the Delhi High Court challenging a court order denying him bail in connection with the multi-crore cattle smuggling case in West Bengal. A single-judge bench of Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma was supposed to hear the matter but due to his unavailability in court, the matter has been listed for the next hearing February 2.

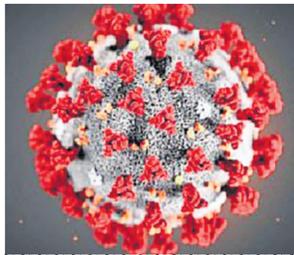


In the name of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, they (Centre) are confusing people. We have been taking care of the Matuas for a long time, but when polls approach, the BJP goes to them, claiming to be their friends... Screaming CAA

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

COVID SURGES

India saw a single-day rise of 66 coronavirus infections and active cases declined to 1,755 on Tuesday, three years after the first case was reported in Kerala and consequent waves of the pandemic left people scrambling for hospital beds and literally gasping for breath



MORBI BRIDGE COLLAPSE

Oreva MD surrenders

The MD of Oreva Group and the prime accused in the Morbi bridge collapse that left at least 132 persons dead in October last year, Jaysukh Patel, surrendered before the judicial magistrate's court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Morbi, Jan 31: Managing Director of Oreva Group Jaysukh Patel, an accused in the last year's Morbi suspension bridge collapse case who is facing culpable homicide not amounting to murder charges, Tuesday surrendered before a court here in Gujarat and was subsequently sent to jail. As many as 135 people were killed and scores others injured when a suspension bridge collapsed in Gujarat's Morbi town October 30 last year.



Patel, whose company was responsible for the operation and maintenance of the carriageway, surrendered before the Morbi-based court of chief judicial magistrate which had issued an arrest warrant against him. The court accepted his application for surrender and sent him to jail under judicial custody.

The businessman was named as the tenth accused in the case in a chargesheet filed by the police January 27. Ajanta Manufacturing Ltd (Oreva Group) was responsible for the operation and maintenance of the British-era suspension bridge on the Machchhu river that collapsed, days after its repairs. Nearly 250 persons were on the more than a century-old hanging bridge, a popular tourist site, when it caved in.

"Jaysukh Patel surrendered before the court of chief judicial magistrate MJ Khan which had issued an arrest warrant against him under section 70 of the CrPC. The court accepted his application and sent him to judicial custody. The police will approach the court and seek his custody," said Dilip Agechaniya, a lawyer representing families of the victims.

Moreover, both contractors hired by Patel's firm were not qualified to carry out such repair and renovation work, according to the SIT. The probe report also revealed the Ahmedabad-based Oreva Group did not hire any expert agency to assess the load-bearing capacity of the carriageway before throwing it open to the public after repair and renovation work.

The CrPC (Code of Criminal Procedure) section 70 deals with warrant of arrest. As the Oreva Group Managing Director arrived in the court for surrender, angry kin of the victims who had gath-

ered outside the court shouted slogans against him. After his surrender, Patel was taken for a medical check-up. "Jaysukh Patel surrendered in the court today. He was sent to judicial custody. We will soon initiate the process of seeking his custody from the court," said Morbi Superintendent of Police Rahul Tripathi.

On October 31, a day after the tragedy, the Morbi police had arrested nine persons in connection with the case, including two managers of the Oreva Group, two ticket booking clerks, two sub-contractors who repaired the bridge and three security guards deployed on the cable-stayed structure to guide and control the crowd.

A special investigation team (SIT) formed by the state government to probe the collapse had

SC agrees to consider Centre's plea for review of verdict on Benami law

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jan 31: The Centre Tuesday sought an open court hearing in the Supreme Court on its plea seeking review of the judgment by which several provisions of the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2016 were struck down.

N.V. Ramana, since retired, in August last year, had struck down section 3(2) and section 5 of the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988.

The top court had said that the Section 3(2) of the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act 1988 was unconstitutional on the ground of being manifestly arbitrary, and the stringent 2016 amendment to the law cannot be applied retroactively. It said: "Section 3(2) of the unamended 1988 Act is declared as unconstitutional for being manifestly arbitrary. Accordingly, Section 3(2) of the 2016 Act is also unconstitutional as it is violative of Article 20(1) of the Constitution. In rem forfeiture provision under Section 5 of the unamended Act of 1988, prior to the 2016 Amendment Act, was unconstitutional for being manifestly arbitrary."

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, submitted before a bench headed by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud: "This is an unusual request. We seek an open court hearing of the review."

1988 was unconstitutional on the ground of being manifestly arbitrary. Accordingly, Section 3(2) of the 2016 Act is also unconstitutional as it is violative of Article 20(1) of the Constitution. In rem forfeiture provision under Section 5 of the unamended Act of 1988, prior to the 2016 Amendment Act, was unconstitutional for being manifestly arbitrary."

He added that due to this judgment, a lot of orders are being passed even though some of the provisions of the Benami Act were not even under challenge. The bench, also comprising Justice PS Narasimha, said "We will consider it". A three-judge bench headed by then Chief Justice of India

is declared as unconstitutional for being manifestly arbitrary. Accordingly, Section 3(2) of the 2016 Act is also unconstitutional as it is violative of Article 20(1) of the Constitution. In rem forfeiture provision under Section 5 of the unamended Act of 1988, prior to the 2016 Amendment Act, was unconstitutional for being manifestly arbitrary."

No infection certificate compulsory for food staff in Kerala

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 31: Effective February 1, employees of restaurants and all establishments in Kerala involved in making and serving food should be certified by a doctor that they do not suffer from any contagious diseases and not have open wounds.

food items. Health Minister Veena George said the Food Safety Department and Health inspectors would start inspecting hotels, restaurants and other places where food is being cooked or distributed. Cleanliness and health cards for employees would be checked.

Billed as 'Health card', the certificate has been made mandatory by the State Health Department in the wake of food poisoning incidents and the government has warned of tough action against violators. The Health card is compulsory for restaurants, hotels, catering firms and other establishments involved in cooking, serving, distributing and selling

"The health card is mandatory for all staff at all the establishments in the state that are associated with cooking, distributing and sale of food. The cleanliness and the health card will be inspected by the officials at regular intervals and stern action will be taken against violators," the Minister's office said in a statement. The health certificate of employees obtained from a doctor should be kept in the establishment itself, it



Presidential Bodyguards at Parliament House on the first day of the Budget Session in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

said. Those handling food in all establishments need to obtain health cards certifying that they are

not suffering from any contagious diseases, infections or have any open wounds. Earlier, the State

Billed as 'Health card', the certificate has been made mandatory by the State Health Department in the wake of food poisoning incidents and the government has warned of tough action against violators

The Health card is compulsory for restaurants, hotels, catering firms and other establishments involved in cooking, serving, distributing and selling food items

government had banned the sale of food items without the "best before date" label. "From February 1, strict action will be taken against those who fail to distribute food without such labels carrying details including date of cooking,

packing and the best before date and time in the label," the statement said. The Health card move comes following the state government's intensified campaign against restaurants and eateries selling adulterated food.

The State has been witnessing a spike in food poisoning incidents for quite some time. Recently, a nurse working at the Kottayam medical college died in December last year after consuming a dish from an eatery on the premises of the institution. In the wake of such incidents, the Health department had come out with instructions for eateries, like getting licence, making registration and maintaining hygiene and cleanliness.

AIR INDIA URINATION CASE

Accused Shankar Mishra gets bail



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: A Delhi court Tuesday granted bail to Shankar Mishra, accused of urinating on a woman co-passenger on an Air India flight from New York to Delhi. Additional Sessions Judge Harjot Singh Bhalla granted the relief on a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh and one surety of the like amount.

may be disgusting but that is another matter; let's not get into that. Let's go into how the law deals with it." Seeking relief, Mishra had submitted that initially the bail had been declined by a magisterial court because the investigation was pending.

Mishra was arrested from Bengaluru January 6 and sent to judicial custody by a court here January 7. He had allegedly urinated on the 70-year-old woman co-passenger in an intoxicated condition in the business class of the Air India flight November 26 last year.

Italian woman creates ruckus on flight; held

A 45-year-old Italian woman passenger allegedly punched a crew member, spat on another staffer and stripped on board a Vistara flight to Mumbai from Abu Dhabi after she was stopped from entering the business class, police said Tuesday. The incident took place Monday and after the flight landed in Mumbai, the crew members handed her over to Sahar police and she was arrested, they said. Vistara in a statement said the passenger was restrained by the crew for "unruly and violent behaviour" and the incident was reported to the relevant authorities as per the standard operating procedures. According to an official from Sahar police station, the woman, identified as Paola Peruccio, boarded the flight at around 2 am Monday with an economy class ticket.

The judge was hearing an appeal filed by Mishra against an order of a magisterial court that had denied him bail. During the hearing on the application Monday, the judge observed that the witnesses named by Delhi Police in the case were not deposing in the prosecution's favour.

"The witnesses you (investigation agency) have named are not deposing in your favour... There is a contradiction in the complainant's statement and Ila Banerjee's (witness and another co-passenger) statement," the judge noted. Opposing the bail application, police said, "India has been defamed internationally because of the incident." Replying to this, the judge said, "It

SMUGGLING OF PDS RICE CONTINUES

TN civil supplies, police on high alert



The Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation has been arresting people who are indulging in smuggling of rice and other PDS commodities to other neighbouring states like Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Jan 31: The Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies special squads and the police are on high alert as the smuggling of Public Distribution Scheme (PDS) rice is on an increase in the state.

In the latest incident of smuggling, 11,440 kg rice was seized by the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies officials on the Chennai-Bengaluru highway on Friday night. The department had received information that rice was being smuggled from Kancheepuram district into Karnataka and the special squad and police chased the national permit lorry which was used for transporting the smuggled rice. Kancheepuram district police seized the vehicle after a chase and arrested three men.

The Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation has been arresting people who are indulging in smuggling of rice and other PDS commodities to other neighbouring states like Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.

The Tamil Nadu Police have also intensified patrolling in the border check posts to prevent the smuggling of rice. A senior official of the Tamil Nadu civil supplies said that rice is distributed for free for BPL card holders and this rice is being bought by middlemen and smuggled out into other states.

The Kerala Police had intercepted a national permit truck in Walayar that was smuggling rice into the state from Tamil Nadu. On questioning the driver and helper in the truck, it was found that the rice was meant for some mills in central Kerala. This rice will be converted into branded products and sold at a higher price.

With an increase in smuggling of rice from Tamil Nadu, the concerned district police have posted special police teams to manage the check posts.

FARMERS SEEK COMPENSATION

Hailstorm gives Kashmir-look in Udaipur

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Jan 31: A thick blanket of hail covered parts of Rajasthan giving them a Kashmir-look. While the pictures have gone viral, the farmers in the areas have been badly affected and are demanding compensation.

Udaipur and surrounding districts like Rajsamand during the weekend were lashed with heavy hailstorm, strong winds and lightning. All the roads, houses and fields were covered with hail which appeared to be snow.

The scene resembled snow in Kashmir. The pictures of the white sheet covering the lake city of Udaipur have gone viral on social media. However, for the farmers this hailstorm has created worries as the standing crops are destroyed now. The wheat and paddy crops have been badly affected.

In Udaipur district, rain started on Saturday evening which was accompanied with a hailstorm around 4 p.m. This phase continued till Sunday morning. On the Udaipur-Chittor highway and Dabok to Singhania University road, a blanket of snow was seen. Later, heavy rain also started in



Lake City on Sunday night which continued till Monday morning dipping the temperature and increasing the cold. The Udaipur district administration has issued toll free numbers for the insured farmers regarding the damage caused to the notified crops (wheat, jowar, gram, mustard, isabgol).

(City) Prabha Gautam said that in view of heavy rainfall and hailstorm in the district, holiday has been declared till January 31 for students up to Class 5. He said that this order will be effective on all government and private schools. Schools have been directed to follow the order.

HOWEVER, FOR THE FARMERS THIS HAILSTORM HAS CREATED WORRIES AS THE STANDING CROPS ARE DESTROYED NOW. THE WHEAT AND PADDY CROPS HAVE BEEN BADLY AFFECTED

Udaipur and districts like Rajsamand during the weekend were lashed with heavy hailstorm, strong winds and lightning. All the roads, houses and fields were covered with hail which appeared to be snow.

demanding compensation for the huge losses caused to the farmers due to unseasonal rain and hailstorm. The MP said that due to rain and hailstorm in Rajsamand Lok Sabha constituency and various places of Rajasthan, farmers' crops have suffered heavy losses. This time is very sensitive for the farmers.

Meanwhile, MP Diya Kumari has

Raj govt okays ₹100 crore to strengthen ITMS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Jan 31: The Rajasthan government has approved an additional financial provision of Rs 100 crore for strengthening the traffic management system in the state.

The Integrated Traffic Management System (ITMS) is being strengthened to prevent accidents and tackle the increasing traffic pressure on roads, according to an official statement.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has approved an additional financial provision of Rs 100.99 crore for this purpose, it said. This system will play an important role in ensuring speedy action against



traffic rule violators, according to a proposal.

Road accidents due to over-speeding and overloaded vehicles will also be curbed with the strengthening of the ITMS, it said.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

modities to other neighbouring states like Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.

6,000 teachers may not receive salary on time

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Jan 31: Teachers of aided colleges in Tamil Nadu are in a fix as around 6,000 of them will not get salaries on time.

According to the Association of University Teachers (AUT), the Higher Education Department has suspended salary disbursement, citing that funds were not allocated by the government. AUT leader P. Thirunavakkarasu, in a statement on Monday, said that by the last week of every month, aided colleges would upload salary details of

According to the Association of University Teachers, the Higher Education Department has suspended salary disbursement, citing that funds were not allocated by the government

the teachers on a portal provided by the government solely for this purpose, but the portal link has not yet opened and has delayed the salary for the month of January which is generally paid by January 31st. He said that the previous Director of Collegiate Education had erred in the preparation of statements regarding the estimation of salaries and this was causing the delay in disbursement. He added that the state government allocates a grant to 184 aided colleges in the state and the Director of Collegiate Education must prepare an estimate for the same well in advance which was not done leading to the crisis.



Bangles to help trace elderly in Chennai

The bangles will have the telephone numbers of a close relative inscribed on them so that if the elderly is not returning home, someone who finds them will make a call on the telephone number provided

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Jan 31: The Greater Chennai police in Tamil Nadu will soon provide bangles with the telephone number of a close relative inscribed on them to trace elderly people who wander off due to momentary loss of memory.

The idea was mooted by a probationary Sub Inspector of Arumbakkam police station in Chennai. The probationer, Prakash developed the idea along with a constable Prabhu of the same police station.

The bangles will have the telephone numbers of a close relative inscribed on them so that if the elderly is not returning home, someone who finds them will make a call on the telephone number provided.

An 80-year-old woman, Rajam alias Rajeswari was found missing from her home in Arumbakkam



and the relatives registered a complaint with the police station on Saturday. The police shared her photograph on several WhatsApp groups as also went through the CCTV visuals and finally traced her down at Washermenpet.

A senior official of the Greater Chennai Police said that Arumbakkam police station will do a pilot project on this and if successful, it will be extended to the whole corporation limits.

The Arumbakkam police have now taken a list of elderly people living under the police station limits

its and those who are prone to wandering off will be provided with bangles that have inscription of the phone number of a close relative.

The police said that they would provide bangles to the elderly in general, but the main focus is on those who lose their memory momentarily and who lose track of the place or the situation. The Arumbakkam police station will also keep a record of all these people who are prone to wandering. This will also help the police have a proper record of all the people who requires support from the police.

Rajasthan to get Pratap Circuit soon

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Jan 31: Rajasthan, blessed with scenic beauty and heritage places, encompassing proud pages of history and lavish forts, will soon script another glorious story of the past with the Pratap Circuit. It will be developed soon in the desert state, confirmed Jaipur's former princess and Rajsamand MP Diya Kumari.

With the new circuit coming in, tourists and history lovers from across the world will be able to see the places where the great warrior Maharana Pratap was born, where he grew up, where his coronation was done and where he fought the battle of Haldighati against the Mughals. Also the place where he spent his last days and passed away can be visited by avid travellers, she confirmed.

Diya Kumari said: "Rajasthan is blessed to be the place where Maharana Pratap was born. There are many places associated with his life which include his birthplace and the place where he grew up. Places such as Kumbhalgarh where Pratap was born, Gogunda where his Raj Tilak was done, Chavand where



Rajasthan is blessed to be the place where Maharana Pratap was born. There are many places associated with his life which include his birthplace and the place where he grew up. Places such as Kumbhalgarh where Pratap was born, Gogunda where his Raj Tilak was done, Chavand where he spent his last days are still present here, but certain facilities are missing

DIYA KUMARI | RAJSAMAND MP

he spent his last days are still present here, but certain facilities are missing."

The MP added that when she met Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently, she discussed the proposal for a 'Pratap Circuit' so that "tourists coming from far-flung areas can see these glo-

rious places of the past associated with Maharana Pratap and his life."

The idea is that all the places associated with Maharana Pratap should be developed into a Pratap Circuit, Diya Kumari said. The originality of these places should be maintained

and facilities should be developed so that the tourists can easily visit them. "The PM took these proposals seriously and hence we should expect to see the 'Pratap Circuit' come up soon," she added.

Maharana Pratap was born in Kumbhalgarh and was crowned as king in Gogunda Palace in 1572. It was from here that the Battle of Haldighati was fought in 1576. He spent his last days in Chavand. "Everyone wants to see these places and original structures so while maintaining their originality we need to bring in tourist facilities, Diya Kumari said. "This initiative will help in generating employment and new business opportunities," she added.

Talking about the work she has done as the Rajsamand MP, Diya Kumari said: "The people of Rajsamand believed in me and helped me win despite knowing that I am from Jaipur. They trusted me, so I owe them a lot."

She added: "During the Lok Sabha polls, I was assigned two major tasks, first one was Mavli Marwar gauge conversion and second is Gombti Beowar four lanes, now both these tasks have been accomplished."

This woman cop motivates people

She cycles a minimum of 6 km a day from her home to the police station and back. In between, she also pedals to the City Police Commissioner's office and has now turned into a motivator to many

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Jan 31: Pushparani is a sub inspector in Tamil Nadu police working with the Flower Bazar Police station. However, what makes this 45-year-old officer unique is her resolve to use cycle as a mode of transport even in this busy world.

The woman cop said, "My father was a police officer and he



used to cycle every day. It was he who taught me safe pedalling and since then there was no looking back and it's my resolve to cycle to my station and back home."

She cycles a minimum of 6 km a day from her home to the police station and back. In between, she also pedals to the City Police com-

missioner's office and has now turned into a motivator to many.

Subbalakshmi, a flower vendor in Sowcarpet, said, "I have now started using a bicycle for travel from my home to the flower market. This saves money and provides good health. I knew cycling since my school days but had stopped using it. After seeing

Pushparani Madam cycling to the police station in uniform, I thought why not me? Now I am cycling 5 km a day from my home to the market and back."

Pushparani joined the Tamil Nadu police as a grade II constable with the Tamil Nadu Special police and then the Armed reserve police. Since then, she has been cycling to her work and this is her seventh cycle. Incidentally, the present cycle is gifted to her by the Chennai City police commissioner, Shankar Jiwal.

She said, "I don't compel anyone to use cycle but also don't allow anyone to dissuade me from cycling which is a passion for me." The Tamil Nadu police have taken note of Pushparani cycling her way to the police station and back to her home in uniform and the interest it has kindled in society among women.

Heavy rain likely in parts of TN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Jan 31: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted heavy to very heavy rains on Wednesday in the southern and delta districts of Tamil Nadu.

A rare winter depression over the south Bay of Bengal is likely to bring heavy isolated rains in southern and delta districts, it said.

According to the weatherman, the rains could continue up to February 3 with Kanyakumari, Thanjavur, and Nagapattinam districts experiencing heavy rains on February 1, Wednesday.



A rare winter depression over the south Bay of Bengal is likely to bring heavy isolated rains in southern and delta districts, it said

The weather system that causes rains is a rare phenomenon and is a depression over the southeast and adjoining southwest Bay of Bengal. This phenomenon will bring in isolated rains in Southern Tamil Nadu till Thursday and the strength of the rains is likely to dip from Friday.

Additional director general of meteorology, S. Balachandran, in a statement said that the weather system in the lower latitude is likely to move east to west direction and another westerly trough in the middle level. The interaction of the easterly and westerly systems will lead to rain.

The weather department official said that such weather systems are rare during the second half of January and February. He also cited the example of a severe cyclonic storm at a lower latitude in February 1987.

of the day quote

Deeply pained to hear the news that former Union Law and Justice Minister Shanti Bhushan ji is no more. My deepest condolences to the family members on his passing away. My prayers for the departed soul. Om Shanti

KIREN RIJU | LAW MINISTER

Delhi government is working in mission mode under the leadership of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. The work of strengthening and beautification of these roads will be completed by March

MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

As per the law, the Central government has prepared a notification as per the orders of the tribunal in 2017. The DPR is cleared by the Union government now. Everything has been done systematically as per the law, and step by step. I would like to bring to notice that all this has been done after the legal battle over the project

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI | KARNATAKA CM

SHORT TAKES

HC refuses bail to Surendra Gadling

Nagpur: The Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court Tuesday refused bail to advocate Surendra Gadling in connection with a 2016 Surjagarh iron ore mine arson case, noting that prima facie the accusations against him are true. On December 25, 2016, Maoists allegedly set ablaze 76 vehicles that were being used for transporting iron ore from Surjagarh mines in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli.

HP: 3 NHs among 357 roads blocked

Shimla: More than 350 roads, including three national highways, have been blocked due to the recent snowfall in the higher reaches and tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh, officials said Tuesday. In the past 24 hours, 140 out of the more than 450 roads that were blocked due to the snowfall have been opened, they said, adding that 357 still remain closed. The maximum 154 roads are blocked in Lahaul and Spiti, 86 in Shimla, 73 in Kinnaur, 16 in Kullu, 13 in Chamba, three in Mandi and two in Kangra district, officials said.

Woman, partner get lifer in murder case

Muzaffarnagar (UP): A court in Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district has sentenced a woman and her partner to life in prison for murdering her husband on the basis of testimony provided by her six-year-old son. Judge Griesh Kumar Vaish on Monday found the couple guilty under Section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code, the government counsel said.

'Steady decline in school dropout rate, enrolment up'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: There has been a steady decline in the school dropout rate and increase in enrolment both in school and higher education, the Economic Survey for 2022-23 tabled in Parliament Tuesday showed.

The gender parity has also improved in this financial year, the survey, tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, stated.

"The Gross Enrolment Ratios (GER) in the primary-enrolment in Class 1 to 5 as a percentage of the population in age six to 10 years - for girls as well as boys has improved during the financial year (FY)". This improvement has "reversed the declining trends between FY-17 and FY-19", it stated, adding that "the GER in upper-

All about Visakhapatnam, AP's new capital

JAGAN REDDY TUESDAY SAID THE STATE CAPITAL WILL BE SHIFTED TO VISAKHAPATNAM AND HE ALSO WOULD BE RELOCATING HIS OFFICE TO THE PORT CITY IN THE MONTHS TO COME

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati, Jan 31: Nicknamed the City of destiny and the Jewel of the East Coast, Visakhapatnam is all set to get a new identity as the capital of Andhra Pradesh, going by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's announcement.

In his address at the preparatory meeting for the Global Investors Summit in Delhi, Jagan Tuesday

said the State capital would be shifted to Visakhapatnam and he would also be relocating his office to the port city in the months to come.

The announcement that Visakhapatnam would be the new capital has elicited mixed response. While a section of people feel that it is the right choice, there are also concerns over civic issues, pollution and traffic congestion.

According to Vizag port web-



site, the city, which is home to the headquarters of Eastern Naval Command had trade relations with the Middle East and Rome during ancient times and in 1682 it became a settlement of a branch of East India Company.

The Visakhapatnam Port was

formally inaugurated by Lord Willingdon, the then Viceroy and Governor General of India December 19, 1933.

In March last year, the Andhra Pradesh High Court had ruled against the proposal to establish three capitals in the state and di-

rected the YSRC government to develop Amaravati as the state capital as envisaged.

The court had also in its verdict March 3, 2022 said the state legislature lacked competence to enact any law for shifting, bifurcating or trifurcating the capital.

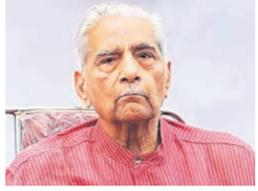
The state government has filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the High Court order. Asked on the announcement, former chairman of Confederation of Real Estate Developers Association of India (CREDAI) Visakhapatnam chamber G V Satyanarayana said Visakhapatnam is a cosmopolitan city with all necessary infrastructure and it is a good decision.

Former law minister Shanti Bhushan dies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: Former Union law minister and eminent jurist Shanti Bhushan, who represented politician Raj Narain in the historic case that led to the annulment of then prime minister Indira Gandhi's election in 1975, died here Tuesday following a brief illness.

He was 97. Bhushan, who was also a senior advocate, served as the law minister from 1977 to 1979 in the Morarji Desai cabinet. Bhushan, whose sons Jayant and Prashant Bhushan are leading lawyers, was active in the legal profession till recently and had argued on a PIL in the Supreme Court seeking a court-monitored probe into the Rafale fighter jets deal. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was pained by Bhushan's death.



Air Marshal Sandeep Singh inspects the Guard of Honour after he was demitted the office of the Vice Chief of the Air Staff (VCAS) in New Delhi

ADDRESS TO NATION

Govt's thrust on development: Prez

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: Laying out the government's vision for building a developed India in the next 25 years, President Droupadi Murmu Tuesday underlined its thrust on 'virasat' (heritage) as well as 'vikas' (development) and said it has worked for all without any discrimination.

In her first address to the joint sitting of Parliament on the first day of the Budget session, the president said people have been given basic amenities missing for decades and modern infrastructure long aspired for is being built across the country. She cited the expansion of the digital network and the crackdown on corruption during the Modi government's tenure. The government has ushered in many positive changes in its nearly nine years in power and the biggest has been that the self confidence of every Indian is at its peak, the President said. The world has changed the way it looks at India, she said during her



more than hour-long speech.

While India used to depend on others to solve its problems, it is now working to solve global problems, Murmu, India's first tribal President, said. She emphasised the government's approach of combining tradition with modernity and said it had always kept national interest supreme. The President highlighted the government's cultural, development and pro-poor agenda, noting that it has worked to build a Ram temple as well as a

modern building of Parliament, the Kedarnath dham as well as medical colleges. India, she said, emerged as a space power and a centre for innovation.

If it has followed the path shown by saints like Shankaracharya and Guru Nanak, it has also been striving to make India a hub of high-tech knowledge, Murmu said.

The President's address reflects the views of the government of the day. She urged people to dis-

BJP's manifesto for '24 elections: Oppn

New Delhi: Opposition parties Tuesday criticised the President's address alleging that the speech was like the "first chapter" of the ruling BJP's manifesto for 2024 and key issues related to price control, communal harmony and women were "missing". Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said it is the "government's statement that has come through the President" and there is nothing new in it. TMC Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien said that while it is "convention" that the President's address is "written" by the government of India, key issues were absent in her speech. CPI MP Binoy Viswam alleged the empowerment of women, youths, Dalits and tribals was only on paper.

charge their duties to the maximum to build in the next 25 years a developed India connected to its past glory and containing every golden chapter of modernity.

BMC sacks 55 staffers for corruption, suspends 134 for graft, crimes

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Jan 31: In a massive clean-up operation before the upcoming civic elections, India's biggest and richest civic body BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has booted out 55 employees for corruption and suspended another 134 for graft and other crimes, an official said here Tuesday.

The 55 staffers at various levels have been found guilty after court proceedings in corruption and have accordingly been dismissed from service, as approved by BMC Commissioner I.S. Chahal.

Besides losing their jobs, these staffers will forfeit all other benefits like pension and gratuity and worse - they are permanently debarred from applying from any government jobs in future, as dismissal is deemed as the most severe punishment. Another 53 employees have cases of bribes lodged against them, while 81 staffers are facing other minor or severe criminal cases from the police.

Not sparing them either, the BMC has suspended these 134 staffers from their services for an undisclosed period - when they are barred from attending duties and face other

repercussions. The BMC said that a total of 200 civic staffers are embroiled in 142 cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) and in 105 cases, the civic body has given its 'pre-prosecution sanction' to file the cases.

Of the remaining 37 complaints, 30 are under investigation by the departments and no approval has been sought from the BMC, but if they come up for sanction, the suitable action will be taken on priority.

From the remaining 7 cases, in 4 cases, sanction has been given to the ACB and it is in the process for the 3 other matters.

An official said that they had received 395 complaints against BMC employees under the Prevention of Corruption Act's Section 17(a). These complaints ranged from potholes to neglected wastes, poor garbage collection, bad condition of footpaths, water problems, improper spraying of insecticides, malpractices in public health services, etc. Since these do not fall under the pre-prosecution sanction category, all these written complaints are being handled by various departments of the BMC for necessary action.

CBI searches 50 locations in 7 states

New Delhi: The CBI Tuesday conducted searches at 50 locations in seven states as part of its probe in two cases related to the leak of constable recruitment exam papers in Himachal Pradesh, officials said. The agency had registered two FIRs November 30, 2022 on a request from the state government to take over the investigation of cases probed by the state police. Question papers of written examinations for the post of Constables in Himachal Pradesh Police, held March 27, 2022 were leaked ahead of the date by, it has emerged, several middlemen spread across states. Middlemen based in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, and Punjab were operating in an organised manner to leak the exam papers, it has been alleged. The papers were provided to aspirants in return for huge money, officials said.

HP PAPER LEAK CASES

ADULTEROUS ACTS

Armed forces can take action against their officers: SC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: The Supreme Court Tuesday ruled that armed forces can take action against their officers for adulterous acts, as it clarified the landmark 2018 judgement that decriminalised adultery. A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice K M Joseph said its 2018 judgement was not concerned with the provisions of the armed forces acts.

The top court, on a plea filed by NRI Joseph Shine, in 2018 had struck down Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code dealing with the offence of adultery, holding it unconstitutional.

The Tuesday order by the bench, also comprising justices Ajay Rastogi, Aniruddha Bose, Hrishikesh Roy, and C T Ravikumar came after Additional Solicitor General Madhavi Divan, appearing for the Centre, submitted a plea seeking clarification of the 2018 judgement.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) had moved the apex court for an exemption to armed forces from the September 27, 2018 judgement striking down adultery, saying it may hinder action against officers who indulge in such actions and can cause 'instability' within the services. "In view of the aforesaid (2018) judgment, there will always be a concern in the minds of the army personnel who are operating far away from their families under challenging conditions about the family indulging in untoward activities," the application said.

international

of the day quote

Yes, Africa is in turmoil and is also suffering from the invasion of exploiters

POPE FRANCIS



New Zealand's new Cabinet will be focused on "core bread and butter issues" like the cost of living, education, health, housing and keeping communities and businesses safe

CHRIS HIPKINS | NEW ZEALAND PM



I see that the Chief of NATO is in South Korea and Japan ... He does not represent me and my country there. It is not a NATO area, but it is in the neighbourhood of China. It has nothing to do with Croatia

ZORAN MILANOVIC | CROATIAN PRESIDENT



SHORT TAKES

Pakistan court to indict Imran

Islamabad: A Pakistan court Tuesday said that PTI chief and former Prime Minister Imran Khan will be indicted in connection with the Toshakhana reference case. Additional Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal said that Khan will be indicted on February 7, Dawn reported. Khan, who is recovering after sustaining a gunshot wound following an assassination bid during a rally on November 3, had sought exemption from today's hearing. During the hearing, Judge Iqbal directed the PTI chief to submit surety bonds worth Rs 20,000 and instructed him to ensure in-person attendance in court at the next hearing.

Aircraft crashes, pilot killed

Hanoi: A Vietnamese pilot was killed in a fighter jet crash in Vietnam Tuesday, state media reported. The Su-22 aircraft crashed while landing Tuesday noon in Yen Bai Province, Vietnam News Agency (VNA) reported. Thirty-one-year-old captain Tran Ngoc Duy was ordered to parachute but he tried to save the aircraft. However, the plane crashed, killing the pilot, Xinhua News Agency reported quoting the VNA.

TTP militant gunned down

Lahore: Pakistan police Tuesday said they have shot dead a TTP militant, who they believe was involved in the assassination of two officials of the country's spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) earlier this month. Umar Khan Niazi, a Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militant, who escaped to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province after allegedly killing two ISI officers in Khanewal district in Pakistan's Punjab province on January 5, was shot dead during an operation on Monday, the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of the Punjab Police said in a statement.

Nepal air crash: DNA tests begin

Kathmandu: Authorities in Nepal Tuesday began conducting DNA tests on the remains of the six unidentified passengers who died in the horrific plane crash earlier this month, termed the country's worst aviation disasters in over three decades. Yeti Airlines flight 691, after taking off from Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport on January 15, crashed on the bank of the Seti River between the old airport and the new airport in the resort city of Pokhara, minutes before landing, killing all 72 people on the ATR-72 aircraft.

MACRON'S PENSION REFORM

France hit by new wave of strikes

REUTERS

Saint-Nazaire, France, Jan 31: Striking workers disrupted French refinery deliveries, public transport and schools Tuesday in a second day of nationwide protests over President Emmanuel Macron's plan to make people work longer before retirement.

Crowds marched through cities across France to denounce a reform that raises the retirement age by two years to 64 and which is a test of Macron's ability to push through change now that he has lost his working majority in parliament.

On the rail networks, only one in every three high-speed TGV trains were operating and even fewer local and regional trains. Services on the Paris metro were thrown into disarray. Buoyed by their success earlier in the month when more than a million people took to the streets, trade unions which have been battling to maintain their power and influence urged the public to turnout en masse.

"We won't drive until we're 64!" bus driver Isabelle Texier said at a protest in Saint-Nazaire on the Atlantic coast, adding that many careers involved tough working conditions. Others felt resigned ahead of likely bargaining between Macron's ruling alliance and con-



- REFORM WOULD RAISE RETIREMENT AGE TO 64
- SCHOOLS, TRANSPORT NETWORKS, REFINERY DELIVERIES HIT
- MACRON: REFORM VITAL TO ENSURE VIABILITY OF PENSION SYSTEM

servative opponents who are more open to pension reform than the left.

"There's no point in going on strike. This bill will be adopted in any case," said 34-year-old Matthieu Jacquot, who works in the luxury sector. Unions said half of primary school teachers had walked off the job. TotalEnergies (TEEPA) said 55% of its workers on morning shifts at its refineries had downed tools, a lower number than on Jan. 19. The hard-left CGT union said the figure was inaccurate. For unions, the challenge will be

maintaining a strike movement at a time when high inflation is eroding salaries. At a local level, some announced "Robin Hood" operations unauthorised by the government. In the southwestern Lot-et-Garonne area, the local CGT trade union branch cut power to several speed cameras and disabled smart power meters. "When there is such a massive opposition, it would be dangerous for the government not to listen," said Mylene Jacquot, secretary general of the CFDT union's civil servants branch.

Russia claims village on outskirts of Bakhmut



REUTERS

Kyiv, Jan 31: Russia claimed Tuesday to have captured a village on the northern outskirts of the city of Bakhmut, which it is attempting to surround in a big push for what would be its biggest prize in Ukraine since last summer.

There was no immediate response from Kyiv to Moscow's claim about the village of Blahodatne, and Reuters was not immediately able to verify the situation there.

It came three days after the head of Russia's Wagner Group said the mercenary force had seized the village in an attack Kyiv said it had repelled.

The village, which sits on one of the main roads into Bakhmut, about 5 km (3 miles) north, was captured with the help of aerial support, Moscow's defence ministry said in a statement.

Moscow has made clear, if gradual, advances in the area in recent weeks, notably capturing the salt-mining town of Soledar to Bakhmut's north.

Were it to force Ukraine to withdraw from the city that once held 75,000 people, it would be Moscow's

The village, which sits on one of the main roads into Bakhmut, about 5 km (3 miles) north, was captured with the help of aerial support, Moscow's defence ministry said

first big prize since it took the similarly-sized cities of Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk in July.

During the fighting for Bakhmut, two civilians, a boy and a 70-year-old man, were killed in a Russian artillery attack on Tuesday, regional governor Pavlo Kyrylenko said.

Four others were wounded in the attack, he said. Separately, a large Russian force has launched an assault against the Ukrainian-held bastion of Vuhledar this week, further south along the same eastern front.

Russian officials have claimed to have gained a foothold there, while Kyiv says it has largely repelled that attack so far.

NATO chief urges closer ties with Japan

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tokyo, Jan 31: NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg sharply criticized China on Tuesday for "bullying its neighbors and threatening Taiwan" and stressed the need for Japan and other democracies to work together with the alliance to defend the international order.

Calling it a "critical moment for NATO and for Japan," Stoltenberg, who is visiting Tokyo, said China and Russia are "leading an authoritarian pushback against international rules-based order." He said trans-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security is "deeply interconnected," and a victory by Russian President Vladimir Putin in Ukraine would send a message that authoritarian regimes can achieve their goals through brute force. "This is dangerous," he said.

"China is watching closely and learning lessons that may influence its future decisions," Stoltenberg said at a joint news conference with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. "China is substantially building up its military forces including nuclear weapons, bullying its neighbours and threatening Taiwan, trying to control critical infrastructure and spreading misinformation about NATO and the war in Ukraine," Stoltenberg said. "China is not our adversary, but we must understand the scale of the challenge and work together to address it." Stoltenberg's direct criticism of China contrasted with Kishida's more indirect expression of opposition to any one-sided changes by force to the status quo in the East and South China Seas. Japan, already a close ally of the US, has expanded its military ties with other Indo-Pacific nations amid a growing security threat from China and North Korea.



As the world enters the fourth year of the pandemic, there is no doubt that we are in a far better situation now than a year ago when the Omicron wave was at its peak. However, Covid continues to be a health emergency

TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL

MANMOHAN HONOURED

India's former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh was recently conferred a Lifetime Achievement Honour by the India-UK Achievers Honours in London for his contribution to economic and political life



Sirisena apologises for Easter bombings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, Jan 31: Former Sri Lanka President Maithripala Sirisena Tuesday apologised to the country's minority Catholic community for the devastating 2019 Easter Sunday bombings that killed over 270 people, including 11 Indians, saying that the carnage took place without his knowledge.

Nine suicide bombers belonging to the local Islamist extremist group National Thawheed Jamaat (NTJ) linked to ISIS carried out a series of blasts that tore through three Catholic churches and as many luxury hotels on April 21, 2019, killing more than 270 people and injuring over 500.

The bombings triggered a political storm as then President Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe were blamed for their inability to prevent the attacks despite prior intelligence being made available. "I say sorry to the Catholic community for something done by others," Sirisena said while addressing the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) press briefing here.

Sirisena's apology came after Sri Lanka's Supreme Court on January 12 ordered him to pay



SLR 100 million as compensation to the victims. His failure to pay the victims would send him to jail on contempt of court charges.

"As far as I know, the Catholic people hold no grudge against me," news portal Economy Next quoted the 71-year-old MP as saying. "As someone who read the Bible at 15, 16 years of age, I ask God for forgiveness that something like this happened during my tenure — though carried out by others and because of which I have had to pay compensation — I ask for forgiveness from those who died and lost their limbs and from God that an incident like this occurred during my term," he said.

The former president stressed the attack took place without his knowledge. "This verdict does not say that I did anything wrong. It says if officials appointed by the president make a grave mistake, the President is responsible. That's what the paragraph on the verdict says about me," the report quoted Sirisena as saying.

China raps Czech President-elect over Taiwan call



REUTERS

Beijing, Jan 31: China condemned Tuesday a phone call between Czech President-elect Petr Pavel and Taiwan President Tsai Ing-Wen, saying he ignored Beijing's repeated attempts at dissuasion.

Monday's call was a diplomatic breakthrough for the China-claimed island, which has no formal relations with Prague. The Czech government, though, said as a sovereign country, it made its own decisions on who it talked to, while the call did not mark a change in its policy toward China which remained aligned with western allies.

Most countries avoid high-level public interactions with Taiwan and its President, not wishing to provoke China, the world's second largest economy. "Czech President-elect Pavel ignored China's repeated attempts to dissuade him and our repeated representations," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning Mao told reporters.

"He has persisted in stepping on China's red line, seriously interfering in China's domestic affairs and hurting the feelings of the Chinese people."

In 2016, U.S. President-elect Donald Trump also spoke by phone with Tsai, setting off a storm of protest from Beijing.

Taiwan's democratically-elected government strongly objects to Beijing's claims that it is part of "one China", saying the People's Republic of China has never governed the island and has no right to speak on its behalf globally or decide

its future.

"NEGATIVE IMPACT" Beijing regularly criticises visits by foreign lawmakers to the island, but a call between a head of state and Tsai is rare and likely seen as a graver affront by Beijing. "Before his election, Pavel publicly stated that the 'one China' principle should be respected, yet now he has gone back on his words," Mao added.

"China once again urges the Czech Republic to...take immediate and effective measures to eliminate the negative impact of this incident and avoid irreparable damage to China-Czech relations," Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala said on Tuesday the Czech Republic maintained the policy of "one China" despite having good relations with Taiwan.

"Czechia respects and holds its own one-China policy," Fiala said in a statement. "As a sovereign country we decide ourselves who we have calls with and who we will meet." Pavel angered China just days after his election victory. He takes office in March, replacing President Milos Zeman, who has sought to foster the country's ties to China in the past decade.

The centre-right government, has also sought developing relations with Taiwan, which is a growing business partner, since taking office in 2021. In 2020, the Czech Senate leader visited Taiwan in a move that also angered Beijing. Mao said on Tuesday China had lodged "stern representations" with the Czech side.

PRAGUE ANGERS BEIJING WITH TAIWAN PHONE CALL
CONVERSATION WAS DIPLOMATIC BREAKTHROUGH FOR ISLAND
BEIJING WARNS OF 'IRREPARABLE DAMAGE' TO BILATERAL TIES



Flamingos are seen at the Vjosa-Narte Protected area in Vlora, Albania

REUTERS

Families search for loved ones after mosque blast kills 100

The attack, in the Police Lines district, was the deadliest in a decade to hit this restive, northwestern city near the Afghan border and comes amid a surge in violence against the police. No group has claimed responsibility

REUTERS

Peshawar, Pakistan, Jan 31: Distraught relatives thronged hospitals in Pakistan's Peshawar on Tuesday to look for their kin a day after a suicide bombing ripped through a crowded mosque in a heavily fortified area of the city, killing 100 people, mostly policemen.

The attack, in the Police Lines district, was the deadliest in a decade to hit this restive, northwestern city near the Afghan bor-

der and comes amid a surge in violence against the police. No group has claimed responsibility.

"My son, my child," cried an elderly woman walking alongside an ambulance carrying coffins, as rescue workers stretched wounded people to a hospital emergency unit. At least 170 people were wounded in the blast, which demolished the upper storey of the mosque as hundreds of worshippers performed noon prayers. Riaz Mahsud, a senior local gov-



ernment official, said the casualty toll was likely to rise as workers searched through the debris just over 24 hours later. "So far, 100 bodies have been

brought to Lady Reading Hospital," spokesman for the largest medical facility in the city, Mohammad Asim, said in a statement.

Authorities say they do not know how the bomber managed to breach the military and police checkpoints leading into the Police Lines district, a colonial-era, self-contained encampment in the city centre that is home to middle- and lower-ranking police personnel and their families.

Given the security concerns in Peshawar, the mosque was recently built to allow police to pray without leaving the area. Defence minister Khawaja Asif said the bomber was in the first row in the prayer hall when he struck.

The attack is the deadliest in Peshawar since twin suicide bombings at All Saints Church killed scores of worshippers in September 2013, in what is the deadliest at-

tack on Pakistan's Christian minority. Peshawar sits on the edge of the Pashtun tribal lands, a region mired in violence for the past two decades. The most active militant group in the area is the Pakistani Taliban, also called Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an umbrella group for Sunni and sectarian Islamist factions opposed to the government in Islamabad.

The TTP denied responsibility for Monday's bombing, though it has stepped up attacks since withdrawing from a peace deal with the government last year. The bombing took place a day before an International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission arrives in Islamabad for talks on a stalled \$7 billion bailout.

of the day quote

As India's economic recovery advances, amidst the continuing global uncertainties and risks, the fiscal glide path illuminates the path for fiscal policy. That will ensure more significant fiscal space for policy action in uncertain times

V ANANTHA NAGESWARAN
CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISOR

With an estimated 220 GW of solar capacity required by the end of the decade, India needs significant manufacturing capacity ramp up

PRİYADARSHINI SANJAY | MD, MERCOM INDIA

We delivered an all-round performance in 3Q FY 2023. Overall sales grew by 9 per cent and we witnessed a sharp sequential uplift in underlying volume growth

SUDHIR SITAPATI | MD AND CEO, GCPL

Q3 RESULTS

IOC returns to black

New Delhi: Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's largest oil firm, Tuesday reported returning to profitability in the December quarter after losses in the preceding six months from holding fuel prices despite a rise in cost. Standalone net profit of Rs 448.01 crore in October-December 2022 compared with Rs 5,860.80 crore net earnings in the same period of previous fiscal, and a loss of Rs 272.35 crore in the preceding July-September 2022 period, according to a company's stock exchange filing. IOC and other state-owned fuel retailers did not revise the price of petrol, diesel and cooking gas LPG starting April despite a rise in cost. This led to back-to-back quarterly losses. In case of IOC, the loss totalled Rs 2,265 crore in the April-September period.

Sun Pharma net profit surges 5%

New Delhi: Sun Pharma Tuesday said its consolidated net profit increased 5 per cent to Rs 2,166 crore in December quarter 2022-23, helped by robust sales across domestic as well as US market. The Mumbai-based company had logged a net profit of Rs 2,059 crore in the year-ago period. Total revenue from operations rose to Rs 11,241 crore in the period under review from Rs 9,863 crore in the year-ago quarter, Sun Pharmaceutical Industries said in a statement. The company said its India formulation sales rose 7 per cent year-on-year to Rs 3,392 crore in the third quarter over the same period of last year. Similarly, the US formulation sales rose to \$422 million, up 6 per cent as against the year-ago period, it added.

Godrej Consumer profit rises 3.55%

New Delhi: Godrej Consumer Products Ltd Tuesday reported a 3.55 per cent rise in consolidated profit after tax at Rs 546.34 crore in the third quarter ended December 31, 2022. The company had posted a consolidated profit after tax of Rs 527.6 crore in the same period last fiscal, Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) said in a regulatory filing. Consolidated total revenue from operations during the quarter under review stood at Rs 3,598.92 crore as against Rs 3,302.58 crore in the year-ago period, it added. Total expenses were higher at Rs 2,969.52 crore as compared to Rs 2,714.32 crore in the same quarter a year ago, the company said.



I think this is an enormous milestone...Over 100 years ago, and during the World War I, it was the brave Indian soldiers who helped liberate the city of Haifa. And today, it's very robust Indian investors who are helping to liberate the port of Haifa

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU | PM, ISRAEL

INDIGO'S 1ST WIDE-BODY PLANE

IndiGo said it will start operating wide-body Boeing 777 on Delhi-Istanbul route from February 1. IndiGo so far has been operating only narrow-body all-economy airbus planes. This is for the first time in its over 16 years of operations that the Gurugram-headquartered airline will have twin-aisle planes in its fleet



IMF slashes India's growth in '23

THE OUTLOOK FOR THE GLOBAL ECONOMY IS GROWING SLIGHTLY BRIGHTER AS CHINA EASES ITS ZERO-COVID POLICIES AND THE WORLD SHOWS SURPRISING RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF HIGH INFLATION, ELEVATED INTEREST RATES AND RUSSIA'S ONGOING WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Jan 31: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Tuesday said it is expecting some slowdown in the Indian economy next fiscal year and projected the growth to 6.1 percent from 6.8 percent during the current fiscal ending March 31.

The IMF Tuesday released the January update of its World Economic Outlook, according to which the global growth is projected to fall from an estimated 3.4 percent in 2022 to 2.9 percent in 2023, then rise to 3.1 percent in 2024.

"Our growth projections actually for India are unchanged from our October Outlook. We have 6.8 percent growth for this current fiscal year, which runs until March, and then we're expecting some slowdown to 6.1 percent in fiscal year 2023. And that is largely driven by external factors," Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, Chief Economist and Director, Research Department of the IMF told reporters here.

"Growth in India is set to decline from 6.8 percent in 2022 to 6.1 percent in 2023 before picking up to 6.8 percent in 2024, with resilient domestic demand despite external headwinds," said the IMF's World Economic Outlook update. According to the report, growth



Another relevant point here is that if we look at both China and India together, they account for about 50 percent of world growth in 2023. So a very significant contribution. I want to say, we had a positive view on India in our October forecast. That positive view is largely unchanged

PIERRE-OLIVIER GOURINCHAS | CHIEF ECONOMIST AND DIRECTOR (RESEARCH DEPARTMENT), IMF

INDIAN GROWTH DOWNGRADED TO 6.1% IN 2023 FROM 6.8% IN 2022
CHINA'S ECONOMY TO GROW 5.2% IN 2023
US' GROWTH WILL SLOW TO 1.4% IN 2023
19 NATIONS THAT SHARE EURO CURRENCY TO RISE 0.7%
RUSSIA TO REGISTER 0.3% GROWTH IN 2023
BRITISH ECONOMY WILL SHRINK 0.6% IN 2023

in emerging and developing Asia is expected to rise in 2023 and 2024 to 5.3 percent and 5.2 percent, respectively

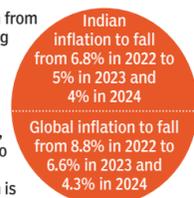
GLOBAL GROWTH TO FALL FROM 3.4% IN 2022 TO 2.9% IN 2023
GROWTH IN EMERGING AND DEVELOPING ASIA TO RISE IN 2023 AND 2024 TO 5.3% AND 5.2%, RESPECTIVELY

tively, after the deeper-than-expected slowdown in 2022 to 4.3 percent attributable to China's economy.

China's real GDP slowdown in the fourth quarter of 2022 implies a 0.2 percentage point downgrade for 2022 growth to 3.0 per cent - the first time in more than 40 years with China's growth below the global average. Growth in China is projected to rise to 5.2 percent in 2023,

INFLATION EXPECTED TO FALL

Inflation in India is expected to come down from 6.8 percent in the current fiscal year ending March 31 to 5 percent the next fiscal, and then drop further to 4 percent in 2024, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said Tuesday. According to the World Economic Outlook update released by the IMF Tuesday, about 84 percent of countries are expected to have lower headline (consumer price index) inflation in 2023 than in 2022. Global inflation is set to fall from 8.8 percent in 2022 (annual average) to 6.6 percent in 2023 and 4.3 percent in 2024 -- above pre-pandemic (2017-19) levels of about 3.5 percent, it said. In advanced economies, annual average inflation is projected to decline from 7.3 percent in 2022 to 4.6 percent in 2023 and 2.6 percent in 2024 -- above target in several cases. In emerging markets and developing economies, projected annual inflation declines from 9.9 percent in 2022 to 8.1 percent in 2023 and 5.5 percent in 2024, above the 4.9 percent pre-pandemic (2017-19) average, the IMF said. In low-income developing countries, inflation is projected to moderate from 14.2 percent in 2022 to 8.6 percent in 2024 -- still high, but close to the pre-pandemic average, it further said.



reflecting rapidly improving mobility, and to fall to 4.5 percent in 2024 before settling at below 4 percent over the medium term amid declining business dynamism and slow progress on structural reforms.

For advanced economies, the slowdown will be more pronounced, with a decline from 2.7 percent last year to 1.2 percent and 1.4 percent this year and next. Nine out of 10 advanced economies will likely decelerate, Gourinchas said.

The US' growth will slow to 1.4

percent in 2023 as Federal Reserve interest-rate hikes work their way through the economy. Euro area conditions are more challenging despite signs of resilience to the energy crisis, a mild winter; and generous fiscal support, he said.

"With the European Central Bank tightening monetary policy, and a negative terms-of-trade shock -- due to the increase in the price of its imported energy -- we expect growth to bottom out at 0.7 percent this year," Gourinchas wrote.

BIZ BUZZ

Vedanta raises \$250mn via Sustainability Linked Loans

New Delhi: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, has raised \$250 million through Sustainability Linked Loans (SLL) from reputed international banks, for financing its capex initiatives and reducing carbon footprint. SLL are debt where a portion of the interest rate is linked with the borrower's ability to meet sustainability targets. The loans were granted on the basis of specific performance parameters for decarbonization and safety, which the company aims to meet by deploying these funds towards capital expenditure. This will fuel the company's growth journey as well, including achieving a higher degree of backward integration and production of value-added aluminium products. The lenders include some of the largest international banks from the Middle East and Far East like Mashreq Bank, First Abu Dhabi Bank, Qatar National Bank QPSC, CTBC Bank and others, all of whom have newly started term lending relationships with the Vedanta Group through this facility. This is Vedanta Group's first such SLL and sets the ball rolling on the company's aspirations to invest in green growth. This serves as a positive reinforcement of the company's endeavours to decarbonize its operations. For instance, Vedanta Aluminium has reduced its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions intensity by 24% in FY 2022 from 2012 baseline. It was also India's largest consumer of renewable energy in the previous fiscal at 3 billion units, which was used to produce India's first low carbon 'green' aluminium by the company, branded 'Restora'.



Core sector growth at 3-month high of 7.4%



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: Production of eight infrastructure sectors rose at a three-month high of 7.4 per cent in December 2022 against 4.1 per cent in the same month of previous year on a better show by coal, fertiliser, steel, and electricity segments, according to the official data released Tuesday.

Crude oil output, however, contracted by 1.2 per cent in December last year. The production of eight key sectors rose by 5.7 per cent in November 2022.

The growth rate of eight infrastructure sectors -- coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement and electricity -- stood at 8 per cent in April-December this fiscal as against 12.6 per cent during the same period last fiscal.

The production of coal rose by 11.5 per cent, fertiliser by 7.3 per cent, steel by 9.2 per cent, and electricity by 10 per cent in December 2022 compared to a year ago.

Core sector or key infrastructure industries, which have a 40.27 per cent weight in the overall index of industrial production (IIP), also have a bearing on industrial production data.

Centre's fiscal deficit touches nearly 60% of full-year target

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: The government's fiscal deficit as of end-December touched 59.8 per cent of the full-year Budget Estimate on subdued growth in revenue collections, according to finance ministry data released Tuesday.

In actual terms, the fiscal deficit -- which is the difference between expenditure and revenue -- was Rs 9,92,976 crore during the April-December period of 2022-23. In the corresponding period last year, the deficit was 50.4 per cent of the Budget Estimates (BE) of 2021-22.

The government has budgeted fiscal deficit at Rs 16.61 lakh crore or 6.4 per cent of the GDP in the current financial year ending March



2023. The deficit is funded by market borrowing.

As per the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) data, the net tax revenue at Rs 15.55 lakh crore was 80.4 per cent of BE 2022-23. During the corresponding period of 2021-22, the net tax revenue was 95.4 per cent of that year's BE.

GST collection at ₹1.55 lakh cr in Jan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SECOND HIGHEST-EVER

Mumbai, Jan 31: The GST collection in January surged to over Rs 1.55 lakh crore, the second highest-ever mop-up, the finance ministry said Tuesday.

"The gross GST revenue collected in the month of January 2023 till 5:00 PM on 31.01.2023 is Rs 1,55,922 crore of which CGST is Rs 28,963 crore, SGST is Rs 36,730

crore, IGST is Rs 79,599 crore (including Rs 37,118 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is Rs 10,630 crore," the ministry said.

The revenues in the current financial year up to January 2023 are 24 per cent higher than the GST revenues during the same period last year.

Non-tax revenue was at Rs 2.14 lakh crore or 79.5 per cent of BE. In the last fiscal, the collection by December was 106.7 per cent of BE.

The central government's total expenditure during April-December works out to be 71.4 per cent of BE of 2022-23, lower than 72.4 per cent of BE in the year-ago period.

Capital expenditure stood at Rs 4.89 lakh crore or 65.4 per cent of BE at end-December. The capex was 70.7 per cent of BE during the corresponding period last fiscal.

As per the CGA data, the central government's total receipts, including non-tax revenue, stood at Rs 18.25 lakh crore or 79.9 per cent of the current year's BE. In the year-ago period, the total receipts had touched 89.1 per cent of BE 2021-22.

GLOBAL GOLD DEMAND SOARS TO A DECADE-HIGH IN 2022

Central banks added a whopping 1,136 tonne of gold worth some \$70 billion to their stockpiles in 2022, by far the most of any year since 1967

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 31: Global gold demand grew 18 per cent annually to touch 4,741 tonne in 2022, the highest since 2011, mainly driven by strong quarter four (October-December) demand and hefty central bank-buying, the World Gold Council (WGC) said in a report Tuesday.

The total demand during 2021 was 4,012.8 tonne, according to WGC's annual 'Gold Demand Trends' report.

Annual central bank demand more than doubled to 1,136 tonne in 2022, up from 450 tonne in the previous year and to a new 55-year high.

Purchases in the fourth quarter last year alone reached 417 tonne, bringing the total for the second half of 2022 to more than 800 tonne, the report stated.

We will likely see jewellery consumption remain resilient, bolstered by a release of pent-up demand as China re-opens, but possibly dragged down by the squeeze on consumer spending if there is a more severe downturn. While there are several possible outcomes, gold has a precedent for performing well in turbulent economic times, highlighting its value as a long-term, strategic asset

LOUISE STREET | SENIOR MARKETS ANALYST, WGC

Investment demand (excluding over the counter) in 2022 was up 10 per cent against the previous year, mainly due to a notable slowdown in exchange-traded fund



(ETF) outflows and strong gold bar and coin demand.

Gold bars and coins continued to hold favour with investors in several countries, which helped to offset weakness in China. Total European gold bar and

Jewellery demand softened slightly in 2022, down 3 per cent at 2,086 tonne, largely driven by the marked drop in Chinese annual jewellery demand, down 15 per cent, as consumer activity was curtailed by ongoing Covid-19 lockdowns for most of the year.

The gold price rally in the fourth quarter also contributed to the annual decline in jewellery demand. Meanwhile, the report stated

that the total annual supply in 2022 was up by 2 per cent at 4,755 tonne and remained above the pre-pandemic levels.

In fact, the mine production increased to 3,612 tonne -- a four-year high. Street further said that in 2023, economic forecasts are pointing to a challenging environment and a likely global recession which could lead to a role reversal in gold investment trends

India's gold demand dips marginally

India's overall gold demand remained resilient and witnessed a marginal decline of 2.92 per cent in 2022 at 774 tonne notwithstanding a sharp increase in prices, and the outlook for this year looks bullish, the World Gold Council (WGC) said in a report Tuesday. Total jewellery demand in India for 2022 was down by 2 per cent at 600.4 tonne as compared to 610.9 tonne in 2021 and in the value terms it was up by 4 per cent at Rs 272,810 crore as against Rs 261,150 crore in the previous year. Similarly, the total investment demand during the year was down by 7 per cent at 173.6 tonnes in comparison to 186.5 tonnes in 2021, said the report. In value terms, gold investment demand witnessed a decline of 1 per cent at Rs 78,860 crores from Rs 79,720 crores in 2021. Total gold recycled in India in 2022 increased by 30 per cent at 97.6 tonnes as compared to 75.2 tonnes in 2021.

EYES ON TOP ORDER 'Tour games in India irrelevant'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, Jan 31: India's young top order will be under pressure to deliver in the series-deciding third T20 International against New Zealand here Wednesday.

It would be fair to say the trio of Shubman Gill, Ishan Kishan and Rahul Tripathi has not made their opportunities count in the absence of Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and KL Rahul.

After the game Wednesday, India don't play a T20I for a long time, leaving the younger crop to make a statement before the focus shifts to the five-day format.

Kishan has not been able to find rhythm in his batting since his double hundred in Bangladesh while the turning ball has troubled Gill, who has not been able to replicate his ODI form in the shortest format. Tripathi, too, has wasted chances that have come his way in the absence of regular number three Kohli. If it hadn't been for Suryakumar Yadav and Hardik Pandya, India would have struggled to chase down 100, Sunday.

The surfaces in the series have attracted a lot of attention and it remains to be seen if the players get to negotiate another turning track at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

In the bowling department, Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav playing together has helped India build the pressure on the opposition. With the pitch offering a huge amount of turn, it was surprising that Chahal was used only for two overs after he dismissed opener Finn Allen.

After struggling with no-balls, Arshdeep Singh was back to his frugal best in Lucknow and that should



Ishan Kishan and Shubman Gill would be eager to end their poor run of form and give India a good start in the series-deciding third T20I against NZ, Wednesday

THE SQUADS

INDIA: Hardik Pandya (C), Suryakumar Yadav (vc), Ishan Kishan (wicketkeeper), Shubman Gill, Prithvi Shaw, Deepak Hooda, Rahul Tripathi, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Umran Malik, Shivam Mavi and Mukesh Kumar.

NEW ZEALAND: Mitchell Santner (C), Finn Allen, Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway (wk), Dane Cleaver (wk), Jacob Duffy, Lockie Ferguson, Benjamin Lister, Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips (wk), Michael Rippon, Henry Shipley, Ish Sodhi and Blair Tuckner.

give him a lot of confidence going into the decider. With the series on the line, Pandya is unlikely to change the playing eleven despite clamour for inclusion of Prithvi Shaw, who made a national comeback with this series.

New Zealand, on the other hand, will be expecting more from their middle order. Sensing an opportunity to win a rare series in India. The Blackcaps will be highly motivated for the challenge.

Glenn Phillips has not been at his destructive best but trust him to play a match-winning knock on Wednesday ODI series sensation Michael Bracewell too is due for a game-changing knock. Number three Mark Chapman will also be looking to make a significant contribution.

New Zealand used as many as eight bowling options in the previous game with four spinners bowling their full quota of overs.

More than 200 runs were scored in the last T20I played here almost two years ago and, after the low-scoring affair in Lucknow, fans would be hoping that normal service is restored.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, Jan 31: Former Australia skipper Steve Smith says his team is better off training on its own rather than playing tour games on "irrelevant" Indian pitches ahead of the four-Test Border-Gavaskar series.

Australia have decided not to play a single tour game in India during the month-long Test series, primarily due to the hosts serving up green tops for practice matches and spinning tracks for the actual games.

Smith, who won the country's best men's player award for the fourth time in his career Monday, said nets sessions would benefit his side more than the tour games.

The 18-member squad, led by Pat Cummins, had a pre-series camp on spin-friendly tracks in Sydney and will have a week-long stint in Bengaluru before the first

Test in Nagpur from February 9.

"We normally have two tour games over in England. This time we don't have a tour game in India," Smith was quoted as saying by news.com.au Monday ahead of the team's departure to India.

"The last time we went (to India) I'm pretty sure we got served up a green top (to practice on) and it was sort of irrelevant. Hopefully, we get really good training facilities where the ball is likely to do what it's likely to do out in the middle, and we can get our practice in," said Smith, who beat Travis Head and David Warner to win the Allan Border medal Monday.

Australia have been criticised for not including tour games, which are an integral part of a long series, in their itinerary. But Smith said rigorous nets sessions will help spinners train better.

"We're better off having our own nets and getting spinners in

and bowling as much as they can." Smith, whose side had lost the series 1-2 when it toured India in 2017, indicated a lot of thinking had into the decision.

"We'll wait and see when we hit the ground. I think we've made the right decision to not play a tour match. Like I said, last time they dished up a green top for us (in a tour game) and we barely faced any spin, so it's kind of irrelevant."

The Australians had a training session in Sydney last week on pitches that had significant cracks to replicate Indian conditions.

"It's (the Test series in India) certainly huge. I don't know if it's (winning in India) the final frontier. I've never won there, I've been there twice (for Tests), it's always difficult playing there. We've got some challenges in front of us, but the guys are ready for it," added Smith.



Lucknow curator sacked for preparing poor pitch



Mitchell Santner, Suryakumar Yadav and Hardik Pandya share a light moment while studying the pitch ahead of second T20I in Lucknow

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: The curator of the Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow has been removed from his job after preparing a "shocker of a pitch" for the second T20I against New Zealand.

Though India won the game Sunday with a ball to spare, skipper Hardik Pandya did not mince his words, calling the Lucknow wicket a "shocker". New Zealand were restricted to 99 for eight and India had a hard time chasing the small target on a turning track.

"The curator has been removed and replaced by Sanjeev Kumar Agarwal who is a very experienced curator. We will turn things around in a month.

"A lot of domestic cricket was already played on all the centre wickets ahead of the T20I and the curator should have left one or two strips for an international game. The surface was overused and due to the bad weather, there was not enough (time) to prepare a fresh wicket," a UPCA source told this agency.

Agarwal, who has prepared pitches in Bangladesh in the past before being removed in October last year, has been tasked to set things right as far as pitch-making is concerned. He will work closely with veteran BCCI curator Taposh Chatterjee, said the source.

The T20I series decider will be played in Ahmedabad Wednesday. Hardik has not been happy with the surfaces on offer so far in the series.

"To be honest, it was a shocker of a wicket. Both the games we have played on so far. I don't mind difficult wickets. I am all up for that, but these two wickets are not made for T20. Somewhere down the line, the curators or the grounds that we are going to play in should make sure they prepare

Warner wary of Test's future

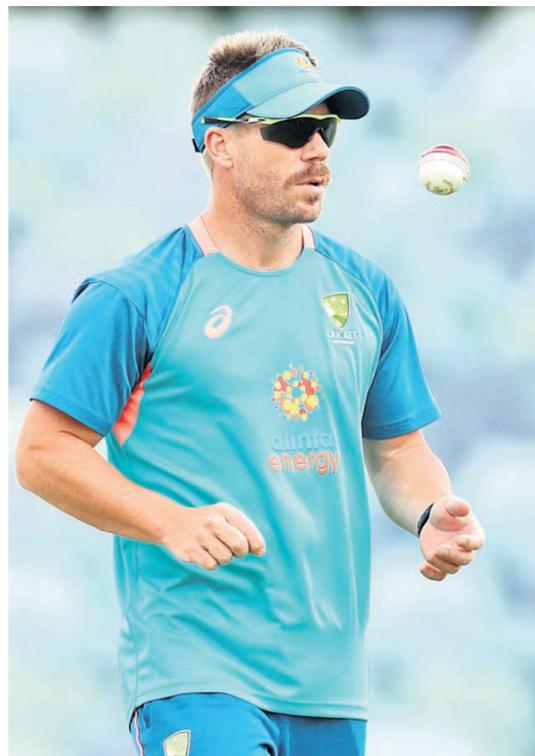
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Sydney, Jan 31: Veteran Australia opener David Warner has expressed his feeling of being scared over the future of Test cricket, and wants emerging players to play more of the longer format instead of focusing on lucrative franchise T20 leagues.

"I've got this little bit of scaredness (sic) about what's going to happen in the next 5-10 years with where cricket is actually heading. I'd love for guys who are coming through to actually play red-ball cricket because that's the legacy that you should want to leave behind," Warner said at the Australian Cricket Awards.

Warner first came into reckoning due to his performances in T20s before debuting in Test cricket and now having 101 caps in the format. But many Australian cricketers like Tim David, Chris Lynn and Marcus Stoinis have had lucrative T20 contracts all over the world instead of carving out a career in Test cricket.

"Playing in the Test arena is amazing and it's a true test of cricket and how good you measure up to the greats of the game. At the end of the day, everything comes with financial rewards. If you aspire to get a central Australian contract, then you're going to be rewarded."



Babita joins oversight committee



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: Commonwealth Games gold medalist wrestler Babita Phogat has joined the oversight committee formed to probe the various allegations against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

Formed by the Sports Ministry, the oversight committee is carrying out an enquiry into the allegations of sexual misconduct, harassment, intimidation, financial irregularities and administrative lapses of the WFI and its chief.

The allegations were levelled by prominent grapplers such as Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia, Sakshi

Malik and Ravi Dahiya.

"Former wrestler Babita Phogat has been added to the panel of the Oversight Committee formed by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to undertake the day-to-day administration of the Wrestling Federation of India," the ministry said in a statement.

Babita is the sixth member of the oversight committee, being headed by legendary boxer MC Mary Kom, and includes former wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt, former shuttler Trupti Murgunde, Radhica Sreeman and Rajesh Rajaogopalan, ex-CEO, Target Olympic Podium Scheme.

Sports Minister Anurag Thakur had earlier this month announced the formation of the committee to investigate the charges against the WFI chief and also manage the day-to-day affairs of the sports body.

The tussle between the agitating grapplers and the WFI ended after the athletes called off their protest following assurances from the government.

However, Bajrang, Vinesh, Sarita Mor and Sakshi, who staged a sit-in protest at Jantar Mantar for three days demanding the sacking of the WFI president, had also expressed disappointment that they were not consulted before the formation of the committee.

ASIAN TEAM C'SHIPS India clubbed with Malaysia, UAE, Kazakhstan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 31: India have been handed a decent draw after being placed alongside Malaysia, UAE, and Kazakhstan in Group B at the Asia Mixed Team Championships scheduled to be held in Dubai, February 14-19.

A total of 17 teams will fight for honours at the continental championships and the draw for the same was unveiled on Tuesday at the Dubai Sports Council in presence of double Olympic medalist PV Sindhu.

The prestigious event, which will be returning after the last edition was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, will be held at the Dubai Exhibition Centre.

Defending champions China, Korea, Singapore and Uzbekistan are clubbed in Group A, while Group C comprises Indonesia, Thailand, Bahrain, Syria and Lebanon and Japan, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong and Pakistan are drawn in Group D.

All the teams in the group will compete in round robin format with the top two teams advancing to the knockout stage. Each tie will comprise 2 singles and 3 doubles matches.

Deepti climbs to 2nd in T20I bowlers chart

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Jan 31: India all-rounder Deepti Sharma has climbed to second spot and has the top position - currently occupied by England's Sophie Ecclestone - in her sights in the latest ICC T20I bowling rankings announced Tuesday.

The 25-year-old off-spinner, who is leading the wicket-taker's list in the ongoing Women's T20I Tri-series in South Africa with nine scalps, has reduced the England left-arm spinner's lead to just 26 rating points.

Deepti (737 points) moved up one spot, while South African left-arm spinner Nonkululeko Mlaba, who has picked four wickets in the Tri-series, also climbed a spot to occupy the third place with 732 points.

If the duo continues their form, they could take Sophie's top spot ahead of the Women's T20 World Cup, scheduled in South Africa from February 10. India and South Africa will square off in the T20I Tri-series final in East London Thursday. India left-arm spinner Rajeshwari Gayakwad also improved her rank four places and is currently 14th on the list of T20I bowlers.



There was a lot of movement inside the top-10 among bowlers this week, with Australia pacer Megan Schutt (up six places to fifth) and England seamer Katherine Sciver-Brunt (up two spots to sixth) also gaining spots.

Australia right-hander Tahlia McGrath maintained a healthy buffer at the top in the T20I batting rankings, with classy South Africa top-order performer Laura Wolvaardt among the biggest movers behind her. Laura improved four places to ninth.