



Shilpa's philosophy

Actor Shilpa Shetty, following an Enforcement Directorate raid at her residence, says, like waves, nothing is permanent in life

LEISURE | P2



Task force for SODC

State govt has formed a task force for formation of Southern Odisha Development Council (SODC), says CM Mohan Charan Majhi

DOWNTOWN | P3



Biden pardons son

US President Joe Biden says he pardoned his son, Hunter, who had earlier pleaded guilty to tax violations

INTERNATIONAL | P10



BWF nominates Nitesh

BWF nominates India's Paralympic champion Nitesh Kumar for the Men's 'Para-Badminton Player of the Year' honour

SPORTS | P12

SHORT TAKES

'Internet in all villages by 2025'

Bhubaneswar: Electronics and IT minister Mukesh Mahaling said Monday that the government will ensure Internet facilities are available in all villages of Odisha by March 2025. Mahaling said that there are 12,602 5G towers in the state as of now and a task force has been formed at the district-level to resolve the Internet problem in remote areas. "Steps are being taken to install new towers," he added. In remote villages of Odisha, students, at times, climb trees or go to hill-tops to get net connection.

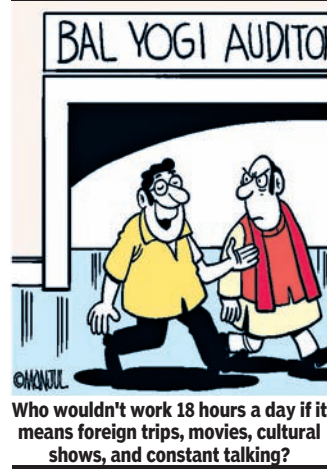
Oxford's Word of Year is 'brain rot'

London: Many of us have felt it, and now it is official: 'brain rot' is the Oxford Dictionaries' 'Word of the Year'. Oxford University Press said Monday the evocative phrase 'gained new prominence in 2024', with its frequency of use increasing 230 per cent from the year before. 'Brain rot' was chosen by a combination of public vote and language analysis by Oxford lexicographers. It beat five other finalists: 'demure', 'slop', 'dynamic pricing', 'romantasy' and 'lore'. P10

Parl impasse ends

New Delhi: The government and Opposition parties reached an agreement Monday to break the impasse in Parliament with dates announced for discussions on the Constitution in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. The Lower House will take up the discussion on the Constitution to mark its 75th year of adoption December 13 and 14, and the Upper House December 16 and 17, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju informed. P9

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Who wouldn't work 18 hours a day if it means foreign trips, movies, cultural shows, and constant talking?



PREPARING FOR D-DAY: Naval personnel carry out a full dress rehearsal Monday in Puri ahead of the 'Navy Day' show Wednesday

PHOTO YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

196 unruly docs to face heat

Doctors have been demanding safety and security at their work places for some time now. Matter reached a flashpoint with the rape and murder of a female doctor in Kolkata in August. There were nationwide protests, and doctors ceased work at many places, much to the distress of patients. At many hospitals, ugly scenes broke out with relatives of patients abusing and assaulting the medics. Amid the situation, doctors demanded laws that would provide them safety. But then what about the errant doctors? Those, who stay away from their jobs for extended periods, causing insurmountable pain to the patients and their near and dear ones? Shouldn't there be some binding 'code' for the doctors also to ensure that they meet their commitments and not shirk responsibilities? In Odisha, there are 196 such doctors who have been identified to have proceeded on prolonged leaves with some of their abstinence exceeding over a year. The Odisha health minister has promised strict action against them as per provisions under law while promising to fill up the 5,000-odd vacancies in various community health centres.



5,000

doctors' posts to be filled up as quickly as possible

■ OPSC to conduct the recruitment process soon

■ Ganjam district with 581 has the highest number of vacancies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 2: In a crackdown on errant doctors the Odisha government is contemplating action against those who have gone on extended leaves for a substantial amount of time. Giving this information Monday in the state Assembly, Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling also said that over 5,000 doctors' posts in state-run hospitals are lying vacant and the

government will try and fill them up as quickly as possible. While replying to a question by BJP MLA Tankadhar Tripathy, Mahaling informed that at present 196 doctors from various cadres including Odisha Medical Health Service (OMHS), Odisha Medical Education Service (OMES) and Odisha Homeopathic Medical Service (OHMS) are on leave for a prolonged period. "Action against these doc-

tors will be taken as per government provisions. Patients cannot suffer for their prolonged leaves and their absence," Mahaling said. Meanwhile replying to a query by Salipur MLA Prasanta Behera, the minister informed that more than 5,000 posts for doctors are lying vacant in community health centres (CHCs) across Odisha. "A total of 5,014 doctor posts of the sanctioned strength of 7,806 at 375 CHCs in all 30 districts of Odisha are lying vacant now," said the Minister. The highest number of 450 doctor posts of the sanctioned strength of 581 at 28 CHCs in Ganjam district is lying vacant, Mahaling said. As per the data revealed by the minister, a total of 1,114 specialist doctors' posts of the sanctioned strength of 1,500 at all 375 CHCs in the state are lying vacant. According to the Minister, 338 radiographer posts of the 655 sanctioned strength in the state is lying vacant as of January 1 this year. The Odisha government is taking steps to fill up the vacant posts of doctors and specialist doctors through the Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC), informed the minister in the House.

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 2: Even as the Congress and BJD members in the Odisha Assembly expressed concerns Monday over the acute scarcity of potato and the rising price of tuber in the retail market, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister, Krushna Chandra Patra assured that the situation will turn normal soon. He informed that 300 potato-laden trucks from Uttar Pradesh have already started arriving in different districts of Odisha. Meanwhile in an effort to control the hike in rates, the enforcement squad of the Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare department conducted raids at various markets in the Odisha capital and Cuttack following alleged sale of potatoes at ₹50 to ₹60 per kilogram. The officials warned shopkeepers if they continued to sell potatoes above the stipulated price, they would face action. The officials also directed shopkeepers to display rate charts. "Four trucks from West Ben-



Officials raid markets in the Odisha capital and Cuttack to prevent price hike

gal and one truck from Uttar Pradesh carrying potatoes arrived Monday morning. At present, we are selling potatoes at ₹38 per kg at wholesale rates," said Debendra Sahu, secretary of the Chhatra Bazaar Traders' Association in Cuttack. In the Assembly, the ruling BJP and the BJD and Congress traded barbs over the crisis. The issue was raised during the Zero Hour by Opposition Chief Whip Pramila Mallik, who held the state government 'responsible' for the potato scarcity in Odisha and rising prices. "The government has completely failed to control the price rise and provide essential items like potato to the people," Mallik said. MORE P3

2 convicts hoodwink cops, flee from court

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, Dec. 2: Two persons escaped from a local court here Monday after the judge convicted them for looting an ATM and sentenced them to seven years rigorous imprisonment. The two were among the five who were convicted for the crime. Those who escaped have been identified as Shakil Khan, 21 and Shah Rukh Khan, 27, both natives of Haryana. Police have formed a team and launched a manhunt to nab them. The incident occurred when the Chief Judicial Magistrate-cum-Additional Sessions Judge, Seema Tripathy was pronouncing the verdict. Both Shakil and Shah Rukh managed to hoodwink the cops on the court premises and fled.

Sources said that the incident dates back to the night of January 31, 2024, when an ATM near the Nabarangpur block office was looted. Fearing arrest, the accused set the ATM on fire. Nabarangpur police registered a case (FIR No. 60/24) and launched an investigation. Later, they arrested five persons during probe. The other accused were identified as Nikhil Kumar from Bihar and Jahul Khan and Fauji Khan from Haryana. Shakil and Shah Rukh were released on bail earlier. During Monday's hearing, however, all the five were present in court. CJM Tripathy, pronounced all five guilty and sentenced them to seven years of rigorous imprisonment, and slapped a fine of ₹2,000 on each of them. That is when the two fled.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Saint-Malo (France), Dec 2: Had he continued working aboard fuel-powered cargo ships, Yann Jourdan reckons he'd be earning perhaps four times what he now gets as captain of a sailboat which instead uses the wind's clean energy to transport goods across the Atlantic. But the hit to Jourdan's pay is buying him peace of mind. When his three-year-old son, Marcel, grows up, the burly French mariner wants to be able to explain what he did to make a dent in the shipping industry's huge carbon footprint. The international merchant fleet of more than 1,00,000 ships transports more than 80 per cent of global trade. But it's also responsible for more than

three per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Without a quick switch from dirty fuels to cleaner energies, its pollution is forecast to soar. Mariners pushing for wind power say investors used to view them as something of a joke. But as they pioneer a comeback for sail-powered cargo ships, they're having the last laugh. The cleanest of the new vessels spearheading wind's embryonic revival are almost pure-sail vessels like *Grain de Sail II*. Half the length of a soccer field and able to carry 350 tonne of goods in its holds, it uses its diesel engine only to maneuver in and out of port. "We want to not only reduce the carbon footprint, we want to kill it," said Jacques Barreau,



co-founder of the *Grain de Sail* firm with his twin brother, Olivier. They used profits from their chocolate-making and coffee-roasting business in western France to finance their first sail-powered cargo ship, *Grain de Sail I*. The speediest of *Grain de*

Sail II's four crossings so far to New York took 17 days, and just 15 days on the return trip to Saint-Malo. "It's a totally different way of sailing," Barreau said. He foresees a future with 'thousands of sailing cargo (vessels) like this one and even bigger versions'.

Wind-assisted systems to save fuel are also being fitted to engine-powered cargo ships, all the way up to the massive 340-metre long *Sea Zhoushan*. It transports iron ore and was built in China with five large spinning rotors on its deck that harness wind energy. When the ship entered service in 2021, Brazilian mining giant 'Vale' said it expects fuel savings of up to eight per cent on its 40-day voyages between Brazil and China. *Grain de Sail III* is already on the drawing board. The Barreau twins are working to finance a third boat, *Grain de Sail III*. It will be double the length of its predecessor and carry eight times more cargo, driving down costs. *Grain de Sail* hopes to have it in service by 2027.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You may be impetuous today, which may lead to unforeseen results. You may be in a hurry and complete work which has been pending for a long time. You will find the time to make long-term plans. Ganesha says you will rectify your past mistakes.

TAURUS
Ganesha is pleased to see that you have a bright day ahead. Your efforts are due to give the results you expect. If you are in a mood to achieve something more than usual, this is the day for it. You are not likely to be disappointed. You will be getting increasingly popular socially as well as professionally, and gaining the trust and support of one and all.

GEMINI
A day of conflicting emotions awaits you. Your personal and professional life will both be important. Hence you will experience anxious moments as you try to balance the demands made by both. However, the good news is you will succeed in your attempts and will do justice to all your duties, says Ganesha.

CANCER
You will love to stroll in a world of fantasy. Religious impact will prevail over you. You will charter your fantasy to a mysterious level. You will have communion with God at a temple, mosque or church. you will try to draw lessons from your experience.

LEO
You will exercise your will today and will be in the mood to soar like a free bird today. You will not be in the mood to listen to anyone. Work related travel will be beneficial. Guard against ego clashes in personal relationships, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Contemplating on past successes will help you gather the resources for achieving more of it in the near future. New contacts will help you make considerable headway on the road to success. Ganesha says your amiable nature will help you in getting along easily with people.

LIBRA
Ganesha says that you need to be more careful in your work field as your enemies or your competitors will try to pull you down today. You will have to be very careful in making business agreements or negotiations regarding give and take in the business. You will see your beloved grow distant from you today.

SCORPIO
Long pending task of getting your home renovated may begin today. There are a couple of object de art that have caught your eyes and you wish to decorate your home with those artefacts. You may even plan a small celebration to share your home's new look! A great day indeed.

SAGITTARIUS
Beauty therapies or a new hair do, pick one; makeover and personal grooming is on your mind. Once you decide to shop, nothing in the world can stop you. You have decided to de-stress yourself with shopping. Clothes and jewellery is what your wardrobe is awaiting for, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
Generally, it is difficult for you to maintain a cool head over your shoulders, especially during the stressful times. But, to everyone's surprise, you will display remarkable composure while dealing with challenges today, feels Ganesha. Family life will be smooth and it will enable you to fully concentrate on you career and increasing your efficiency level.

AQUARIUS
With no major highs or lows, you will have a balanced day today. You will handle everything with great efficiency and Ganesha gives you a pat on your back for that. Continue to work hard for the day as your efforts will get noticed and not only that, you will also understand the value of your hardships.

PISCES
Today will not find you in the best of spirits. You need to guard against being sad for the smallest of reasons. Pessimistic thoughts could creep in, owing to some external influences. You need to keep your will-power strong to remain positive. Increasing your awareness will help you see things with more truth and clarity, says Ganesha.



GOMEZ ON STRONGEST THINGS ONE CAN DO

Singer-actress Selena Gomez says showing vulnerability is one of the strongest things you can do. Gomez shared her struggles with the world in her 2022 documentary film *Selena Gomez: My Mind and Me*, and she has now said that she felt a little nervous about releasing the project.

JUDI DENCH'S PARROT CALLS HER BY EXPLICIT NAMES

English actress Judi Dench has shared a funny anecdote with regards to her parrot. The actress revealed that her parrot calls her explicit names, and the actress is cool with it.



Shilpa: Nothing in life is permanent

Mumbai: Following reports of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) raid at her and her husband Raj Kundra's residence, actress Shilpa Shetty is reflecting on the impermanence of life, through an Instagram post. While she doesn't directly address the recent news about raids, her words seem to offer a glimpse into her state of mind amidst the ongoing controversy.

Shilpa shared a video on Instagram Monday in which she is doing yoga. Alongside the video, she shared details about the technique, highlighting its benefits in alleviating stress and promoting overall well-being.

"The Spinal Wave Flow is a technique designed to release blockages in the spine and trigger a spinal wave. The goal of this movement is to create relief in the nervous system and encourage the body to release stressors. It also serves as a reminder that, like waves, nothing in life is permanent," Shilpa wrote as a caption of the video.

She added, "Be present in the moment, rise like a wave, but also flow like water."

The actor also posted an Instagram Story about starting the week on a positive note. She posted a picture about daily wins that one should strive for, from focusing on eating healthy, skincare, engaging in mental activities to expressing gratitude towards everything in life. "Starting the week right! Hope you are too," Shilpa wrote with the picture.



Elton John loses sight following eye infection

Los Angeles: Music icon and five-time Grammy winner Elton John has revealed that he has lost his sight following an eye infection. The singer said at a performance of *The Devil Wears Prada: The Musical* that he was only able to enjoy the show in an auditory manner, per the *BBC*. "I have lost my sight and I haven't been able to see the performance but I have enjoyed listening to it," he said on stage at the charity event for the Elton John AIDS Foundation held at The Dominion Theatre in London Sunday evening, reports *deadline.com*. According to the *Daily Mail*, he was assisted off stage by his husband David Furnish. "To my husband who's been my rock because I haven't been able to come to many of the previews," he added, according to the *Daily Mail*. He added: "It's hard for me to see it but I love to hear it and it sounded good tonight. Thank you for coming!"

Los

Angeles: Music icon

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Thank you for coming!"

IAN S

12th Fail actor Vikrant Massey calls it quits

The retirement of the 37-yr-old, who was honoured with Indian Film Personality of the Year at IFFI-24, leaves fans and fraternity in a state of disbelief with many asking him to rethink over his decision

Mumbai: Actor Vikrant Massey, who is basking in the success of his latest film *The Sabarmati Report*, has decided to call it quits in acting aged 37 and shared that he realised "it's time to recalibrate and go back home."

Vikrant, who will be seen in *Zero Se Restart* took everyone by shock after announced that he planned to step back from acting after 2025. He penned a note on Instagram, which read: "Hello, The last few years and beyond have been phenomenal. I thank each and every one of you for your indelible support. But as I move forward, I realise it's time to recalibrate and go back home. As a Husband, Father & a Son. And also as an Actor."

He said that 2025 will be one last time he will be seen.

The announcement garnered numerous reactions on social media from netizens as well as industry colleagues who expressed shock and disbelief over his decision with many asking him to rethink over the decision.

It was in 2013, when he made his debut in films with *Lootera*. The promising actor was then seen in film such as *Dil Dhadakne Do*, *Half Girlfriend*, *A Death In The Gunj*, *Chhapaak*, *Hasen Dilluba*, *12th Fail* and *Sector 36* among many others.



AGENCIES

Mallika channels her inner Pamela

Mumbai: Actress Mallika Sherawat channeled her inner Pamela Anderson as she had her *Baywatch* moment running on the beach in slow motion.

The *Khwahish* actress took to Instagram, where she shared a video running on the shallow waters towards the beach in slow motion. She is seen wearing a bikini and over it she sported a bright red cover-up.

"That's just how I roll #beachglam #sunkissedstyle #slowmotionvideo #slowmotion #cinematicvibes #cinematic #slowmw," she wrote as the caption.

Mallika added the title track of *Baywatch* as the background score to the video.

Baywatch was a television series about lifeguards who patrol the beaches of Los Angeles County, California, and Hawaii, starring David Hasselhoff.

Mallika, who was last seen on screen in *Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video* starring Rajkummar Rao and Triptii Dimri, stepped into cinema in 2002 with the film *Jeena Sirf Merre Liye*, where she was credited as Reema Lamba. Her journey to stardom began in 2004, when she got the title of a sex symbol courtesy her performance in the Emraan Hashmi-starrer *Murder*, a romantic thriller.

The actress was then seen in the West with movies such as *Hiss* and *Politics of Love*.

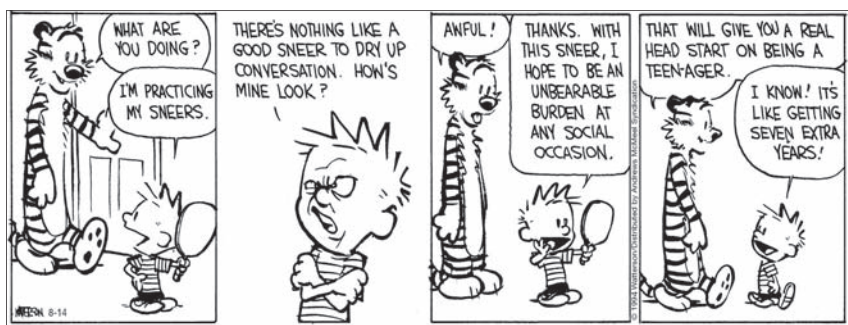


IAN S

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

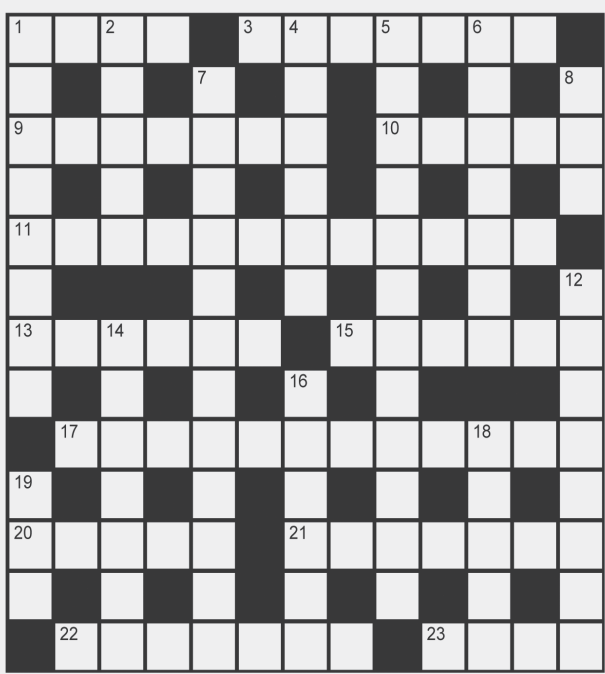


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

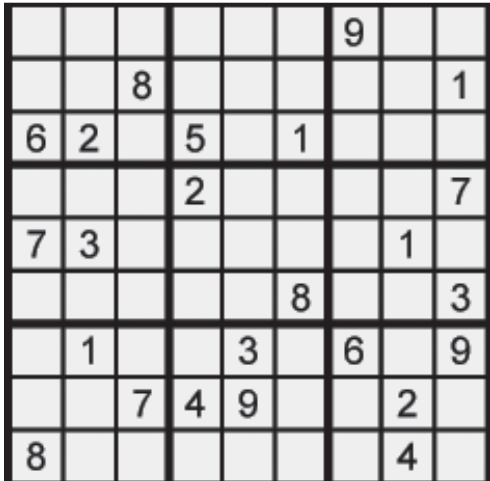
- Honeyed drink
- High-spirited horse
- Took it easy
- Cash in Norway
- Below ground
- Nanny (2,4)
- Hullabaloo
- U.S. Old West transport (7,5)
- Make into law

Down

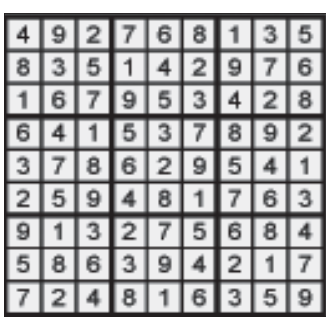
- Beryl variety
- Just say no
- Rancher's concern
- Sharpshooter
- Off-the-cuff (2-3)
- Equestrians
- Leavening agent (6,6)
- Tropical fruit
- Like some home-made aircraft
- Guided
- Port-of-Spain locale
- Fuel type
- Hudson Bay feeder
- Vineyard fruit
- Door opener

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

WARMING UP

Brisk business at roadside woollen garment shops as Bhubaneswar experiences a drop in temperatures, Monday



Oppn raises potato crisis



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 2: Opposition BJD and Congress members in the Assembly Monday expressed concerns over the acute scarcity and the rising price of potato in the retail market.

The issue was raised during the Zero Hour by Opposition Chief Whip Pramila Mallik, who held the state government ‘responsible’ for the scarcity and rising prices of potato in Odisha.

“The government has completely failed to control the price rise and provide essential items like potato to the people,” Mallik said. Stating that potato scarcity is felt regularly when neighbouring West Bengal stops supply, the BJD leader said that a kilogramme of potato is sold at ₹50 to ₹60. However, FS&CW Minister KC Patra claimed that the price of potato remained at ₹30 to ₹35 a kilogramme. “Where did the Minister get the potato at this price? Please give the address to people,” she said.

Stating that potatoes are poor man’s food, Congress Legisla-

ture Party (CLP) leader Rama Chandra Kadam alleged that the state’s BJP government has completely failed to meet the requirements of the people.

This apart, the Congress leader said that the price of all essential commodities has increased during the last five months after the BJP government assumed power in Odisha.

BJD’s Ganeshwar Behera alleged that the Minister has been misleading the people. He said that the Minister Sunday said that 300 trucks of potatoes are being imported from UP. But the fact remains that the government has no role in it. The traders are bringing these potatoes, Behera said.

BJD members Dhruba Charan Sahu and Goutam Buddha Das also came down heavily on the state government over the potato scarcity and price rise of the tuber. “The government has no plan to solve the matter even as the state is facing potato scarcity at regular intervals,” Das said, adding that a similar situation was created in July this year.

BJP member Siddhant Mohapatra, however, blamed the previous BJD government for the present potato crisis. “Had the previous BJD government properly implemented the potato mission, such a situation would not have arisen in the state,” the BJP MLA said.



COMMUTING WOES: Jayadev Vihar-Nandankanan Road in Bhubaneswar witnesses bumper to bumper traffic during evening peak hour, Monday

PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

Polavaram: BJD team to visit Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 2: Strongly opposing the change in the design of the Polavaram multi-purpose project in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, BJD Monday announced it will take the matter to Delhi.

A delegation of BJD would leave for Delhi Tuesday and meet top officials of the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Central Water Commission and Ministry of Tribal Affairs and submit a memorandum on the adverse impact of the Polavaram project on Odisha, said BJD coordination committee chairperson Debi Prasad Mishra. He said the party’s seven Rajya Sabha MPs will join the delegation in Delhi. He said party president Naveen Patnaik had earlier constituted a fact-finding committee on Polavaram dam which after visiting the impact zones submitted the report to him.

According to the committee, the project will have an adverse impact on the people of Malkangiri, Mishra said, adding that around 200 villages in Motu and Padi blocks of the district will be inundated. He said the Odisha government in 2007 had moved the Supreme Court alleging that impact assessment study was not made before allowing the project to be implemented by the Andhra Pradesh government.

Though the SC in 2022 directed the Centre to convene meetings between Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Chhattisgarh, no such meeting took place, he said.

6,368 CYBER FRAUDS IN 3 YEARS



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 2: As many as 6,368 cases of cyber frauds have been registered in the state during the last three years (2021 to 2023) wherein crooks swindled ₹125.63 crore from people, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who also holds the Home portfolio, told the Assembly, Monday.

Replying to a question from BJD legislator Prasanta Behera, Majhi said, “A total of 6,368 cyber fraud cases were registered in the state and 1,388 persons have been arrested during the period. The police were able to return only ₹2.77 crore to the victims.” Odisha Police has registered 2,037 cyber fraud cases involving cheating of ₹40.39 crore in 2021, of which, ₹27.56 lakh was refunded to the victims, he said.

In 2022, the cyber fraudsters duped victims to the tune of ₹37.28 crore, of which ₹97.30 lakh was returned to the victims. The police have registered a total of 1,983 cyber crime cas-

es in the year, Majhi stated.

The Chief Minister, in his statement, said cyber fraud to the tune of ₹47.94 crore was reported in 2,348 cases during 2023. Out of the total amount, ₹1.52 crore was returned to the victims.

The official data showed that a total of 425 people were arrested in 2021, while 441 were arrested in 2022 and 522 persons were nabbed for various cyber crimes in the last year, he told the House.

Task force formed for SODC: CM

The state government has constituted a task force, led by Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) Minister Nityananda Gond, for formation of Southern Odisha Development Council (SODC), Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi told the Assembly, Monday.

Majhi, who holds the Home portfolio, said the SODC will work towards ensuring development of the southern areas of the state.

“The task force will brainstorm on matters like selection of districts and blocks to be covered by the SODC and its working strategy. The task force will submit its report with the state government within 30 days of

The task force will brainstorm on matters like selection of districts and blocks to be covered by the SODC and its working strategy

its formation,” Majhi said.

Led by the SSEPD Minister, the task force has Commerce & Transport, and Steel & Mines Minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena, Fisheries and Animal Resources Development Minister Gokulananda Mallik, Nabarangpur MP Balabhadra Majhi and Kandhamal MP Su-

kant Kumar Panigrahy as its members, the CM said, adding that MLAs of Digapahandi, Malkangiri, Paralakhemundi, Phulbani and Pottangi are its other members.

The task force also has three ex-officio members. “Revenue Divisional Commissioner (Southern Division), RDC (Central Division) and Western Odisha Development Council Chief Executive Officer are the ex-officio members,” Majhi said.

Planning and Convergence department Special Secretary is its member convenor, he said. Earlier, the CM had announced formation of Northern Odisha Development Council (NODC)

'DGP/IGP meet a success despite terror threats'

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Monday said that the state government successfully hosted the 59th DGP/IGP conference here despite terror threats, and was looking forward to smoothly conducting Navy Day celebrations and Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas.

During a debate in the Assembly on the demand of grants of the Home department, which he heads, Majhi said, “Law and order is well under control. We have successfully hosted the all-India DGP/IGP conference for the first time in the state. A tight vigil was maintained amid terror threats.” Claiming that Maoist activities have significantly come down in the state, Majhi said six red rebels were killed and four arrested in the last four months and 24 of them surrendered before the police.

The Chief Minister said he has met Union Home Minister Amit Shah and sought a dedicated helicopter for anti-Naxal operations. He said 1,268 quintals of ganja and 11 kg of brown sugar have been seized in recent months.

The state government has also decided to raise six battalions of industrial security force in the state, Majhi said.

NATIONAL POLLUTION PREVENTION DAY

City generates 30 tonne plastic waste every day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 2: Of the 500-tonne of solid waste generated in the City every day, around 30-tonne constitutes plastic waste, a report by India Clean Air Network (ICAN) reveals. However, at the same time, the City faces critical challenges, including the absence of engineered landfill sites and unscientific waste handling practices, the report adds.

The environment body Monday released the report on ‘Urbanisation & Solid Waste Production: Environmental Implications’ pertaining to the Capital city-- during a press conference on the occasion of National Pollution Prevention Day to highlight the urgent health concerns posed by plastic pollution and microplastics.

The report states that Bhubaneswar faces significant challenges in managing nearly 500-tonne of daily solid waste. According to the report, the City’s average solid waste constitutes about 61.81 per cent bio-



STINKING WOES: Members of VSS Nagar Unnayana Parishad stage a dharna near Sainik School dumping yard in Bhubaneswar, protesting the foul smell emanating from the garbage hill at the TTS, even as the country observes National Pollution Control Day, Monday

OP PHOTO

degradables, 27.15 per cent inert material, 7.8 per cent plastic and leather, and 1.25 per cent metal and glass.

“The City’s growing waste management crisis is underscored by the challenges posed by key landfill sites and systemic inefficiencies,” the report states.

According to the findings, the Bandhwari Landfill has witnessed a significant increase in waste volumes, while the Tem-

porary Transit Station (TTS) near Sainik School continues to accumulate solid waste without adequate processing. Similarly, the Bhuasuni open dump relies on outdated practices, with waste being discarded in open heaps or small cement bins, further exacerbating environmental risks. The City also struggles with insufficient infrastructure for primary collection, storage, and transportation of waste. Commenting on

the situation, Mamata Panda, Senior Consultant and HoD, Paediatrics and Neonatology, Care Hospitals, said, “Children are particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of microplastics.”

Ajay Mittal, Co-Chairperson ICAN, said, “Plastic pollution and microplastics are silent intruders in our daily lives, impacting not just the environment but our health in profound ways.”

IMD predicts milder winter, fewer cold wave days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 2: India is set to experience a milder winter with fewer cold wave days, the weather office said Monday and forecast above-normal minimum temperatures during the season.

The forecast of a relatively warmer winter came after the country experienced the second warmest November since 1901, with the average maximum temperature clocking 29.37 degrees Celsius – 0.623 degree above the normal of 28.75 degrees for the season. “During this winter season (December 2024 to February 2025), above-normal minimum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country,” Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, Director General of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), told reporters here.

According to the forecast, the winter season was expected to witness fewer cold wave days than the normal of five to six.

During the season, above-nor-



mal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country, except most areas over south Peninsular India, where normal to below-normal maximum temperatures are likely, he said.

“Normally, we see five to six cold wave days during December to February over the cold core zone, which includes the northwest, central, east and northeast India. This year, we can expect two to four fewer cold wave days compared to

average,” Mohapatra said.

According to the IMD, a cold wave is considered if the minimum temperature (T-min) is less than the 10th percentile of the daily climatological value and the climatological daily T-min is less than 15 degrees Celsius. These conditions should be observed for three consecutive days for it to qualify as one cold wave event.

Mohapatra said the absence of western disturbances was the reason for a warmer November.

SEMICONDUCTOR TRAINING

Move to enhance skilling ecosystem

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 2: At a time when there is a growing need for a skilled workforce in the emerging semiconductor sector, Institute of Technical Education (ITE) & Education Services (ITEES), Singapore is contemplating to send a proposal to the state government for providing semiconductor and IT-ITeS training in the state.

This was revealed during a meeting of Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja and a delegation led by CEO of ITE-ITEES Suresh Natarajan at Lok Seva Bhawan here, Monday.

In the meeting, focus was laid on Information Technology (IT) & IT enabled Services (ITeS) sector and proposal for semiconductor training.

The meeting follows the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Singapore and his interaction with World Skill Centre interns regarding their international exposure for skill enhancement and the subsequent recent visit of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, along with Skill Development &



Technical Education (SD&TE) Minister Sampad Chandra Swain and the Chief Secretary to the island country.

With the state government’s strategic focus on fostering industrial growth and positioning the state as a hub for advanced manufacturing, the development of a skilled workforce in this sector has become a top priority. This aligns with the broader vision of creating a robust ecosystem under ‘Skilled in Odisha’ initiative, aimed at meeting the talent requirements of high-tech industries.

By investing in specialised

training programmes and forging industry partnerships, Odisha is poised to become a key player in the semiconductor value chain, contributing to the nation’s self-reliance in this crucial sector.

Apart from the Singapore delegation, Principal Secretary to SD&TE department NBS Rajput, Principal Secretary to Electronics & IT department Vishal Kumar Dev, chief skills officer of the state government and additional secretary to SDTE department-cum-COO of World Skills Centre Pinaki Patnaik were also present in the meeting.

The delegates expressed their satisfaction with the ongoing programmes and emphasised the need for continuous global partnerships to further enhance Odisha’s skilling ecosystem.

CEO of ITEES and chief skills officer of the state government emphasised on the need for training in IT-ITeS and semiconductor sector in the state. They also said that a proposal will be sent in this regard soon.



RAISING VOICE: Sanitation workers of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), under the banner of CITU, hold a demonstration in front of the civic body’s office in City, Monday, to press for fulfilment of their 17-point charter of demands including permanent jobs for all, abolition of outsourcing system and release of pending EPF money

OP PHOTO

WEATHER

BBSR

CTC

Max Temp

27.4°

25.0°

Min Temp

20.6°

19.2°

Humidity

84%

84%

Rainfall

Nil

Nil

FORECAST

Light to moderate rain very likely

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX	VARIATION		
SENSEX	80248.08	▲	445.29
NIFTY	24276.05	▲	144.95
DOLLAR	84.84	▲	0.18
EURO	89.47	▼	0.14
GOLD	₹76,245	▼	₹129
SILVER	₹88,860	▼	₹757

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

I, Jamil Moulabi (44), S/o Mohammed Salim of Khaja Street, 2nd Lane, P.S.- Berhampur Town, Berhampur, Ganjam. Declare by this Affidavit No. A-8671/ Dt. 30.11.2024 that now onwards I shall be known as Jamil Ahemmad as per my Aadhaar Card and PAN Card for all future purposes.

I, Banditarani Mishra, W/o Kranti Kumar Satpathy, Resident of Ward No.8, HIG-22/2, H.B. Colony, P.O./P.S.- Chandrasekharpur, Dist.- Khurda, Pin- 751016, Odisha declare by this affidavit No.73AA976635 dtd. 20.11.2024 that now onwards I shall be known as BANDITARANI SATPATHY for all future purposes.

Theatre actor held for eating live pig on stage



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar/Berhampur, Dec 2: A 45-year-old theatre actor playing the role of a demon in Ramayana was arrested after he ripped the stomach of a live pig on stage and ate its meat in Ganjam district, police said.

The incident sparked a statewide outrage and was condemned by ruling BJP members Babu Singh and Sanatan Bijuli in the Assembly Monday.

Besides the actor, identified as Bimbadhar Gouda, one of the organisers of the play that took place in Ralab village in Hinjili police station area November 24 was also arrested for cruelty to animals and violation of the Wildlife Protection Act.

Action was taken against the duo after videos of the incident went viral on social media, with animal rights activists also condemning it and calling for strong action against the accused.

“We are also looking for the

persons who displayed snakes in the theatre. They will also be arrested soon,” Berhampur Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Sunny Khokar said.

He, however, did not disclose the name of the arrested organiser. The state government, in a guideline issued in August last year, prohibited the public display of snakes, including by certified snake handlers.

“We have registered a case against the theatre actor who killed the pig and ate its meat in the theatre, and arrested him,” said Hinjili police station inspector-in-charge Srinibas Sethy said.

To attract audience, the theatre group displayed snakes while a demon ripped the stomach of a live pig with a knife, which was tied to a ceiling of the stage and ate some of the organs in full public view, he said.

A group of the villagers organised the theatre on the occasion of Kanjianaal Yatra in the village.

Addressing water scarcity & soil conservation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Dec 2: The Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) in Keonjhar district, supported by the Odisha Mineral Bearing Area Development Corporation (OMBADC), exemplifies a successful model of sustainable agricultural and water resource management.

The initiative addresses critical challenges of water scarcity and soil conservation in the mineral-rich and predominantly tribal district of Keonjhar.

Under the programme, OMBADC has facilitated the construction of 17 farm ponds and 238 water harvesting structures by FY 2023-24, benefiting over 2,300 farmers. Additionally, 24 check dams have been constructed across the district, providing irrigation facilities to farmlands and supporting the livelihoods of over 300 farmers.



These interventions have enabled year-round water availability for agricultural activities, promoting groundwater

recharge and mitigating soil erosion.

Beneficiaries such as Harihara Nayak from Telkoi Block and Ketaki Mohanta from Patna Block have shared how these projects have transformed their lives. “Previously, we were dependent

on rainfall for agriculture and faced a lot of difficulty. Since our village is located in a hilly area, rainwater would swiftly flow away leaving us high and dry. With support of OMBADC, I have constructed a water harvesting structure. With this reliable water source, I have been cultivating diverse crops like watermelon, pumpkin, mustard while also venturing into fish farming,” said Nayak.

Mohanta said, “With OMBADC’s support, I have built a farm pond in my fields. Using this water source, I am cultivating paddy and various vegetables. My family members actively assist me in agricultural activity. The income generated from farming helps me manage my household expenses and fund the education of my children.”

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 2: The state government will soon launch a programme for immunisation of girls against cervical cancer, Health and Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling has said recently.

The minister said the proposed programme will focus on girls studying in schools and colleges to ward off the threat of the disease.

The minister said the state government is working on a new scheme, combining the ‘Ayushman Bharat’ programme

and ‘Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana’, which would be rolled out in the next financial year.

‘Ayushman Bharat’ is a health insurance programme of the Centre while the main objective of ‘Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana’ is to provide free health services to the economically weaker citizens of the state. The proposed scheme would help people get free treatment in 27,000 hospitals in the country, he said.

The minister was addressing the first National Conference on International Radiology organised here recently at the SUM



The proposed immunisation programme will focus on girls studying in schools and colleges to ward off the threat of the disease

Ultimate Medicare.

Besides, the state government would recruit 250 radiographers to be stationed in government hospitals across Odisha, he said.

Dy CM: Govt supports IRRI branch in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 2: Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, who also holds the portfolio of Agriculture & Farmers’ Empowerment, and Energy, Monday said that the government fully supports establishment of a research branch of International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), based in Manila, Philippines.

Singh Deo said this while chairing a symposium on advancements in rice research held at Krushi Bhavan Auditorium here.

The event featured a keynote lecture by Yvonne Pinto, Director General of IRRI.

Agriculture and Farmers’ Empowerment department Principal Secretary Arabinda Kumar Padhee, welcomed Pinto and outlined the objectives of the conference, emphasising its focus on innovative approaches to rice research.



In his address, the Deputy CM reflected on the deep cultural and historical ties of rice cultivation in Odisha, spotlighting traditional varieties such as Koraput’s Kala Jeera rice, which have placed the state on the global rice map. He pledged comprehensive governmental support for establishing an IRRI research branch in Odisha, envisaging a collaborative initiative between the institute and the state government.

Pinto expressed gratitude for the state’s commitment to tackling challenges related to rice cultivation in Odisha’s

unique climatic conditions. She emphasised IRRI’s focus on addressing climate change, developing nutrient-rich rice varieties, and fostering an export-oriented market alongside a robust rice value chain.

Principal Secretary Padhee highlighted IRRI’s potential to drive transformational change in Odisha’s agricultural landscape. “Through science-based agricultural innovation, the IRRI can help combat hunger, poverty, and malnutrition, while ensuring sustainable practices in rice cultivation,” he noted.

Man shot over property dispute

POST NEWS NETWORK

Barang, Dec 2: A 48-year-old man, Santosh Kumar Panda, was severely injured after being abducted, assaulted, and shot by unidentified men near the Gandarpur riverbed under Nandankanan Police Station limits. The incident occurred Monday evening, leaving the victim hospitalised in critical condition.

Santosh, a resident of Barimunda village, was reportedly standing near Jaripatna Square when four men in an unregistered car forcibly abducted him. They took him to the riverbed, stripped, and brutally beat him before shooting him four times in the leg. Hearing the commotion, locals rushed to the scene but were threatened by the armed assailants, who then fled. Police suspect the attack




stemmed from a Rs 5 crore property dispute. Santosh had recently filed a court case alleging fraudulent acquisition of his relatives’ land in Kalyanpur. Sources say the attackers had warned him to drop the case and even offered him money to stay silent, but he refused.

Nandankanan Police have launched an investigation, with initial findings pointing to a planned assault related to the property conflict. Authorities are confident the suspects will be identified soon.

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Bank of India
Zonal Office: Baripada
Bank Of India Building, Lal Bazaar, In front of MKC School, PIN-757001

POSSESSION NOTICE
[Rule-8(1)] of Security Interest
(Enforcement) Rules-2002

Whereas, the undersigned being the **Authorised Officer** of the **Bank of India, Jaleswar Branch** 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 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices calling upon the Borrower/ Mortgagee in the loan account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest & expenses thereon within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Mortgagee and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **possession** of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrower/ Mortgagee in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the **Bank of India, Jaleswar Branch** for an amount mentioned below with interest & expenses thereon. **The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.**

JALESWAR BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower/Mortgagee	Liabilities due as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession	Description of the Immovable Property
Borrower/Mortgagee: Mr. Gopal Krushna Das, S/o.: Mahendra Das, A/ PO.; Sugo, P.S.: Jaleswar, Dist.: Balasore, PIN-756084	₹15,51,636.52 as on 30.08.2024 + interest & expenses thereon	10.09.2024 / 29.11.2024	Equitable Mortgage of Land & Building, sheds & structures standing thereon situated at Mouza: Sugo, Tahasil: Jaleswar, Khata No.: 517/214, bearing Plot No.: 1090/2213/2217, KISSAM:

Gharabari, measuring area: Ac.0.070 Dec, standing in the name of **Mr. Gopal Krushna Das**, Bounded by North: Banamali Patra, South: Own, East: Shyam Sundar Kar, West: Road


Place: Baripada, Date: 02.12.2024

Authorised Officer, Bank of India

“

Delight is the secret. Learn of pure delight and thou shalt learn of God

SRI AUROBINDO



France In Knots

France, one of the founding states of the International Criminal Court (ICC), has dealt a harsh blow to the ICC by issuing a cryptic statement that it would grant immunity to the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu if he visits France. This announcement could be interpreted by Israel as a kind of carte blanche to continue the war in Gaza. The ICC recently issued the arrest warrant against Netanyahu for war crimes and crimes against humanity in the context of the war in Gaza. The announcement of the French Foreign Ministry undermines both the authority of the international judicial body and the arrest warrant itself. France clarified its position on the arrest warrant only after several confusing comments first stating it “will comply with its international obligations” and then insisting that one of the ICC rules allows immunity to such actions to non-member States. The French Foreign Ministry stated Israel enjoys such immunity as it is not an ICC member.

The French position could be considered of being double standard in relation to ICC since it has not accorded such immunity to Russian President Vladimir Putin against whom the ICC had also issued an arrest warrant months back. By France’s logic, Putin should also be given immunity and not arrested if he sets his foot on French soil as Russia too is not an ICC member. The convoluted arguments of France have already evoked sharp reactions from both the European Union and Amnesty International. The EU’s foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the arrest warrant is “binding” and should be implemented. Amnesty International termed France’s position as “deeply problematic” and urged it to state that anyone subject to an ICC warrant will be arrested and surrendered to the Court if they find themselves in French jurisdiction. A cornerstone principle of the ICC Statute, it emphasised, is that no one is above the law, including heads of state sought for arrest.

Similarly, Andrew Strohlein, European media director at Human Rights Watch, said on X that it was “shocking nonsense from France.” No one, he wrote, gets immunity from an ICC arrest warrant because they are in office — “not Netanyahu, not Putin.”

Now, the question is why France has adopted such a controversial stance by interpreting provisions in the ICC Statute to suit its interests. The answer is President Emmanuel Macron does not want to throw away the advantage of getting a measure of international prestige by being one of the key players of the hard-fought ceasefire agreement between Israel and Lebanon he and US President Joe Biden announced a few days back. France’s announcement of granting immunity to Netanyahu is being interpreted by experts in the backdrop of recurring tensions between the French and Israeli governments, following weeks of negotiations to secure the ceasefire in Lebanon. When the final stretch of these talks was being held in the last week of November, the ICC’s announcement of the arrest warrant was made. This strained the often acrimonious exchanges between Macron and Netanyahu so much that the latter reportedly asked the French President over the phone to deride the international court’s decision. Highly placed sources disclosed to the media that Netanyahu iterated a threat he had made in recent months to challenge France’s mediation efforts in Lebanon and exclude it from the committee overseeing a potential ceasefire. Of course, both Beirut and Washington disapproved of Netanyahu’s purported threat and insisted, instead, on keeping Paris on board.

This was apparently because the US and Lebanon calculated the presence of France in the ceasefire negotiations would accord respectability and acceptance of the process in the eye of the international community.

However, by trying to do a balancing act, France has shown itself in a poor light. This is particularly sad when it has all the wherewithal needed to participate in the ceasefire process.



Yuen Yuen Ang

THE POLYCRISIS IS PARALYSING ONLY FOR THOSE WHO ARE ATTACHED TO THE OLD ORDER

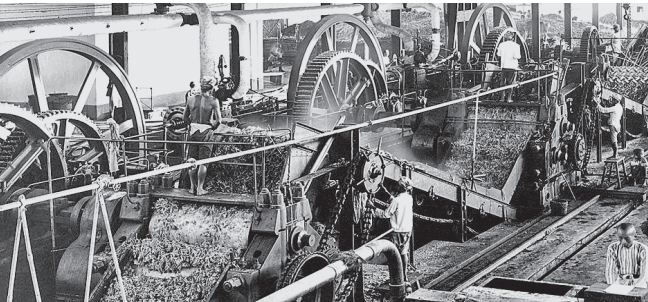
The term “polycrisis” has become a buzzword of the 2020s. It refers to the interconnected nature of the threats facing humanity today, from global warming, pandemics, and extreme inequality to democratic erosion and armed conflict. With few solutions on offer, experts and policymakers have reacted to this confluence of crises with dread and doom.

One typical response is to lament our many problems, draw up fancy diagrams depicting how the world could collapse, and conclude vaguely that the goal is not to present a fatalistic perspective despite predictions of a “ghastly future.” Few doubt that a disrupted world needs systemic changes, yet, in practice, elite institutions and donors reward piecemeal solutions. In 2019, the Nobel Prize in economics went to three economists for their method of breaking down global poverty into “smaller, more manageable” problems that can be tackled one micro-intervention at a time.

The reason conversations about the polycrisis always seem to hit a dead end is straightforward: they fail to recognise the industrial-colonial paradigm that has led to our crises in the first place.

Warning about the polycrisis, the World Economic Forum listed the “Top Ten Risks” that keep rich-world elites up at night. This framing reinforces the industrial mindset of “risk” (a potential future problem) and control. But we are facing uncertainty (unknown possibilities, which can be good or bad) – a concept distinct from risk – which should motivate adaptation and learning.

Likewise, given the elitist, Western-centric nature of the conventional wisdom resulting from this mindset, proponents cannot imagine solutions emerging from non-elites and places outside Europe and North America. China leads the world in renewable energy. African firms “innovate under the radar” with limited resources. Indigenous activists demonstrate ways to heal damaged eco- and



The reason conversations about the polycrisis always seem to hit a dead end is straightforward: they fail to recognise the industrial-colonial paradigm that has led to our crises in the first place

social systems by replacing the logic of extractive capitalism with the value of reciprocity.

In orthodox development thinking, the period beginning with the Industrial Revolution in England is seen as the Age of Progress – one that has raised billions of people’s living standards to previously unimaginable levels. But notwithstanding all the laudable achievements of modern science and technology, “progress” must be qualified. After all, we are heirs to the Age of Domination, characterised both by industrialisation (human domination over nature) and by colonialism (Western domination over everyone else).

The polycrisis instills fear in global elites because it exposes the limits of both forces, and the mental models that lay behind them. Industrialisation promoted a mechanical worldview, or what Esther Duflo, one of the 2019 Nobel laureate economists, dubbed “thinking in machine mode.” Viewed this way, even complex, dynamic natural and social systems are treated as mechanical objects (like a toaster), implying that outcomes can be determined simply by finding “the button that will get the machine started” – the singular root cause of the issue. The adaptive, multi-causal qualities inherent to complex systems (like forests) are regarded as annoying complications to be purged.

The colonial worldview acccompanies the mechanical

mindset. Although formal colonies no longer exist, global institutions emerged in an era when they did. The twentieth century was a period of Western domination, with American and European men exercising monopoly power in designing the rules of the global order and dictating intellectual canons. The animating assumption in development circles was that Western capitalist democracies exemplify the end point of human evolution, and the rest of the world only needs to “catch up” and assimilate.

I see three opportunities for new thinking, research, and action. First, we should replace machine-mode thinking with the paradigm of an “adaptive political economy.” This approach recognises a basic fact: the natural and social worlds are not complicated objects (like toasters), but rather complex systems (like forests). Complex systems comprise many moving parts that are constantly adapting, learning, and connecting with one another within the context of a larger emergent order. Imposing mechanical models on such systems is misleading, if not destructive.

Studying how complex systems work, especially in the Global South, can help us derive new insights and solutions in a world distorted by machine-fetishism and rarified narratives about Western growth. My own work studying economic development as

a non-linear (co-evolutionary) process in China and Nigeria finds that institutions suited to an early stage of development usually look and function differently from those suited to mature economies. People can repurpose normatively “weak” institutions to build new markets, but only if they are not locked into the one-size-fits-all template celebrated in mainstream economics.

Second, an adaptive paradigm must incorporate an inclusive and moral dimension. This means replacing the colonial logic of assimilation with the pithy maxim: “use what you have.” Every day in developing countries, people are improvising and creatively using whatever is available to them to solve problems. The farmer Aba Hawi inspired a new social movement in Ethiopia when he revived traditional conservation techniques to regenerate the land. Similarly, China’s development since the 1980s was the result of “directed improvisation,” rather than top-down planning (which failed miserably under Mao).

Third, rather than oscillating between the two extremes of unfettered markets and command-and-control economies, governments in the twenty-first century should be directing adaptive processes. This involves coordinating and motivating a decentralised network of actors, discovering but not predetermining successful outcomes, and making ample use of experimentation and bottom-up feedback – actions that go beyond the scope of traditional industrial policies.

The polycrisis is paralysing only for those who are attached to the old order. For those who are not, it offers what I would call a “polytunity” to usher in new paradigms that invert the way we think about the development process, the sources of solutions, and the role of the state.

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

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WISDOM CORNER

“What’s money? A man is a success if he gets up in the morning and goes to bed at night and in between does what he wants to do

BOB DYLAN

“Never permit a dichotomy to rule your life, a dichotomy in which you hate what you do so you can have pleasure in your spare time. Look for a situation in which your work will give you as much happiness as your spare time

PABLO PICASSO

“Society as a whole benefits immeasurably from a climate in which all persons, regardless of race or gender, may have the opportunity to earn respect, responsibility, advancement and remuneration based on ability

SANDRA DAY O’CONNOR

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1927: First Laurel & Hardy movie released. Putting Pants on Philip, a short silent film starring the comedy duo marked the beginning of a long partnership.
- 1947: Tennessee Williams’s A Streetcar Named Desire premiered on Broadway, starring Jessica Tandy, Kim Hunter, and Marlon Brando; the latter two appeared in the 1951 film adaptation.
- 1967: Christiaan Barnard of South Africa performed the first human heart transplant, at Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town.
- 1984: On this day in 1984, a gas leak from a Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India, spread over a populated area, resulting ultimately in 15,000 to 20,000 deaths and leaving some half million survivors with chronic medical ailments.

LOL

PARROT ON PLANE

On reaching his plane seat a man is surprised to see a parrot strapped in next to him. He asks the stewardress for a coffee where upon the parrot squawks "And get me a whisky you cow!" The stewardess, flustered, brings back a whisky for the parrot and forgets the coffee. When this omission is pointed out to her the parrot drains its glass and bawls "And get me another whisky you idiot". Quite upset, the girl comes back shaking with another whisky but still no coffee.



Unaccustomed to such slackness the man tries the parrot’s approach "I’ve asked you twice for a coffee, go and get it now or I’ll kick you". The next moment, both he and the parrot have been wrenched up and thrown out of the emergency exit by two burly stewards. Plunging downwards the parrot turns to him and says "For someone who can’t fly, you complain too much!"

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

When home is not safe

Home is the place we imagine family members to be safe. It is supposed to offer a sanctuary where they are accepted, nurtured and loved. But home turns out to be a hell when it becomes unsafe for women, stressful for men and perilous for children.

A report, Femicides in 2023: Global Estimates of Intimate Partner/Family Member Femicides by UN Women and UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), reveals that femicide—the grisliest form of violence against women and girls remains unescapable globally.

Data from the UNODC reveals that globally, 85,000 women and girls were killed in 2023. About 60% of these homicides were committed by an intimate partner or a family member. The data shows that 140 women and girls die every day at the hands of their partner or a close relative, which means one woman or girl is killed every 10 minutes.

The report pointed out, “Even though men and boys

account for the vast majority of homicide victims, women and girls bear the brunt of violence in the private sphere.”

Even estimates published by WHO indicate that about 1 in 3 women worldwide have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.

Similarly, the National Crime Records Bureau’s annual report 2023 reveals a traumatic surge in crimes against women in India. The report detailed a substantial escalation in reported crimes against women, soaring from 3,71,503 cases in 2020 to 4,45,256 cases in 2022. The majority of crimes against women under the IPC were of cruelty by husband or his relatives (31.4%) followed by abduction (19.2%), assault with intent to outrage modesty (18.7%), and rape (7.1%).

Likewise, globally it is estimated that up to 100 crore children aged 2–17 years, have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence or ne-

glect in 2021.

On the other hand, the theme of International Men’s Day, 2024 “Positive Male Role Models” reflects the significance of nurturing open conversations about men’s mental health and creating caring, cordial and supportive environments where men can thrive.

In 2021, the global rate of suicide deaths for men was 12.3 per 1 lakh population, more than double the rate for women, which stood at 5.9 per 1 lakh population. In India, a total of 1,70,294 suicides were reported during 2022. Of them 122,724 were males, 48,172 females and 28 transgenders.

Men account for 71.8% of all suicide victims. The rates are particularly high among men aged 18–59. Across the country, a man commits suicide every 4.45 minutes while a woman every 9 minutes. Again, data shows that the rate of suicide among married men is three times that of married women.

In countries around the world, women are more likely to be diagnosed with depres-

sion and to attempt suicide, but the male suicide rate is several times higher because of communication gap. Women communicate their problems and share emotions and feelings with others easily, while men fail to do so and tend to bottle them up and get entangled in a vicious cycle of over-thinking and anxiety which triggers mental disturbances and despondency. For generations, many societies have pictured men to be strong, dominant, assertive and not admit they are struggling and vulnerable or failing to manage a family. Men’s hesitancy to seek help is often rooted in societal expectations of masculinity and male chauvinism.

At the same time, violence against women and girls is not inevitable—it is preventable if society addresses gender discrimination and ensures gender equity.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist. Views are personal.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 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

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Leveraging influence

Sir, This refers to “Trump threatens BRICS,” Orissa Post, Dec 2. US President-elect Donald Trump’s statement to BRICS countries to impose 100% tariffs if the group would replace the US dollar is unrealistic, and India should focus on developing a workable local currency trading system. The tariffs of this scale would harm the American consumers as it would push prices on imports, disrupt global trade, and risk retaliation from key trading partners. Trump’s threat to impose 100% tariffs on countries adopting a BRICS currency is unrealistic and more symbolic than practical. For India, the prudent approach is to focus on making local currency trading workable by establishing a transparent and open currency exchange. It is this sort of US actions that have pushed many countries to seek alternatives to the US dollar. The US has a history of leveraging its influence over global financial systems, such as the SWIFT network, to impose unilateral sanctions. India’s best interests lie neither in the domination of the US dollar nor in fully adopting a BRICS currency at this stage, no single country, including the US, can unilaterally dictate global economic policies without facing repercussions.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

War crimes

Sir, The International Criminal Court’s (ICC) order to arrest Myanmar’s military leader General Min Aung Hlaing is a significant step against the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of crimes against humanity. It must be remembered that the military actions against the Rohingya had displaced nearly a million people in Myanmar in 2017. The survivors had endured intense suffering. This move by the ICC sends a powerful message that rank or title does not provide immunity. The ICC’s action follows after carrying out years of thorough investigation. The action is commendable as it shows that the survivors who are subjected to brutal persecution are not ignored. In spite of the practical hurdles, the ICC’s action gives hope to oppressed people across the world.

Venu GS, KOLLAM



MAINSTREAMING MAOISTS

TIME WILL TELL IF EFFORTS OF COPS, K'TAKA GOVT WILL PAY OFF

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, Dec 2: Following the recent encounter with Naxal leader Vikram Gowda (44) in the Kabbinala forest region of Hebri taluk in Udupi district, Karnataka, the Anti-Naxal Force (ANF) has intensified combing operations in the area. This has forced the remaining Maoists to retreat deeper into the forests of neighbouring Kerala.

There has been no trace of Maoist teams led by Mundagaru Latha and those associated with Vikram Gowda during the encounter, including Sundari and others, who managed to escape.

Police have claimed that the Maoists aimed to expand their base in Karnataka following the increased focus on the implementation of the Kasturirangan Committee's report.

The Kasturirangan Committee on the Western Ghats, was formed in 2012 to examine the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) report, also known as the Gadgil Committee report.

The committee was tasked with balancing the needs of conservation and sustainable development in the Western Ghats, a region of high ecological sensitivity.

Authorities also revealed that the Maoist teams had been visiting homes and holding meetings with locals, exploiting their fear of eviction from forest areas and the fringes of the forest regions.

Acting on Intelligence inputs and the recovery of weapons, the police gathered information about Vikram Gowda's movements, ambushed him, and shot him dead in an encounter November 19.

Speaking to IANS, senior advocate Dinesh Hegde Ulepad, who has extensively traveled



through the forests of the Western Ghats, rejected the notion that the Kasturirangan report triggered the Maoist movement in the region.

He emphasised that locals are being forced to live in appalling conditions.

"I have traveled extensively here. Even today, locals are forced to carry the sick for kilometres to reach hospitals. The forest department does not allow the construction of roads, and if local tribes attempt to build one, they face legal action. They are prohibited from touching honeycombs on trees, an activity they have practiced for thousands of years," he stated.

"Where will the locals go if they are threatened by the police? There are many fundamental questions surrounding the issue. Following the encounter, there is panic. The entry of police forces itself raises significant concerns among local tribes. There was no significant Naxal activity in the region until now. We don't know where this development will lead," Ulepad added.

Muneer Katipalla, a CPI-M State Committee Member and social activist, maintained that the Kasturirangan report has

caused anxiety and concern among people living on the fringes of the forest.

He stated that the Naxal movement in Karnataka has reached its final stages.

"For the past 15 to 16 years, the Naxal movement has been weakening in the state. Since the encounter of Saketh Rajan in 2005, there have been no new recruits, and those already in the movement have become inactive. Most of them are Adivasis living under abominable conditions," he stated.

Katipalla explained that while the Kasturirangan report has pushed locals into a state of panic, any resulting movement would not necessarily be a Maoist one.

"Naxalism emerged in the state 25 years ago, and I have observed it closely. The government is not practicing what it preaches. There is a significant gap between words and actions. In my opinion, the government has taken an extreme step to suppress any people's movement," he opined.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Home Minister G. Parameshwara have appealed to the Maoists to lay down arms and surrender, encouraging

them to accept the rehabilitation package offered by the government.

Internal Security Division DGP Pronab Mohanty has issued a stern warning, stating that surrender is the only option left for the Maoists.

Karnataka is home to one of the largest forest covers in the country.

Experts have warned that opposition to the Kasturirangan Committee's recommendations could have disastrous consequences for the ecologically-fragile Western Ghats.

The report proposes that 37 per cent of the total area of the Western Ghats, about 60,000 square kilometres, should be declared an eco-sensitive area (ESA).

The Karnataka government has rejected the Kasturirangan Committee report and opposed its recommendations, fearing that its implementation could hinder development in the region.

The classification of 56,826 square kilometres of the Western Ghats region, including areas in Karnataka and other states, under the Kasturirangan Committee's recommendations by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests has sparked significant opposition in the state.

Police claim that the Maoists are attempting to exploit the insecurity of farmers and residents in these areas, who fear eviction following the implementation of the report.

Authorities had earlier gathered Intelligence that the team led by Vikram Gowda and Mundagaru Latha was visiting families living on the fringes of forest areas and conducting meetings.

It is to be seen whether the efforts of the police and the government will result in bringing the Maoists to mainstream.



Women walk under umbrellas amid rains triggered by Cyclone Fengal, in Mysuru, Karnataka Monday PTI PHOTO

₹6.5 crore prize challenge to create digital work opportunities for 1 million women

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Dec 2: Two Bangalore-based companies, The Nudge Institute and Mphasis, have announced a 'Digital Naukri Challenge', Monday to create digital work opportunities for 1 million women by 2030.

With a prize purse of Rs 6.5 crore and a duration spanning 20 months, the challenge invites tech startups and innovators to unlock gainful employment opportunities for more women in India, said Deepa Nagraj, Senior Vice President & Global Head-ESG, Sparkle Innovation Ecosystem, and Communications, Mphasis.

The companies have collaborated with Manthan, a Government of India platform for research and innovation to promote collaborations at scale, a press release issued by The Nudge Institute said.



By bridging the digital divide and unlocking opportunities at scale, this initiative showcases how collective efforts can create an inclusive future, where technology drives progress and transforms lives, said Sapna Pothi, Director, Strategic Alliances, Principal Scientific Adviser, GoI, who has also played a vital role in the development of Manthan.

"While female workforce participation is rising, data shows that women remain concentrated in a few low-productivity sectors, highlighting

the need to close solution gaps. At Mphasis, we're committed to supporting initiatives that drive real change," the release quoted Deepa Nagraj as saying.

According to her, India's female labour force participation rate is only 37 per cent.

In urban India, for instance, the labour force participation rate for single women aged 25-29 is 60 per cent, as compared to an abysmal 20 per cent among their married counterparts. Interestingly, at least a third of housewives have expressed an interest in formal employment, added Nagraj.

Kanishka Chatterjee, Director, The Nudge Prize, said, "This is the most ambitious challenge we've ever launched. The untapped potential of millions of homemakers and aspiring women, eager to break free and actively participate in this economy, is nothing short of inspiring."

NGT FOR SPECIALISED HEALTHCARE IN UP'S SILICA MINING AREAS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 2: The National Green Tribunal has directed the Uttar Pradesh government to immediately provide specialised healthcare facilities in areas where private leaseholders conducted silica sand mining.

The green body was hearing a plea on widespread illegal silica sand mining in pockets of Prayagraj district, including Shankargarh, Pervaizabad, Lalapur, Bankipur, Janwa and Dhara. The petition claimed the unauthorised mining conducted without observing proper extraction mechanisms endangered people's health, causing various diseases including Silicosis, a long-term lung ailment triggered by inhaling large amounts of crystalline silica dust.

In an order dated November 29, a bench of National Green Tribunal (NGT) Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava directed 12 private leaseholders to pay compensation for violating environmental norms, while 14 of them were ordered to pay fines for the illegal extraction of groundwater at silica washing plants.

"The state of Uttar Pradesh and the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) in consultation and coordination with the concerned departments shall take immediate steps to provide specialised healthcare facilities in the areas where silica sand mines are being operated by mining leaseholders," said the bench also comprising directed member Justice Sudhir Agarwal and expert member A Senthil Vel.

The tribunal also directed the authorities concerned to immediately make arrangements for the "necessary medical infrastructure for prevention and treatment of the affected workers".

It also directed the CPCB to prepare detailed guidelines which were to be followed and observed by the statutory regulators concerned while granting permission or consent for silica sand mining and silica sand washing plants.

The Maha Kumbh Mela-2025, the largest religious congregation on the Earth held once every 12 years, is scheduled to take place in Prayagraj from January 13 to February 26 with an estimated 45 crore devotees expected to arrive

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Prayagraj, Dec 2: Ahead of the upcoming Maha Kumbh Mela, the Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government in a landmark decision has declared the Maha Kumbh area in Prayagraj as a new district.

The decision, taken Sunday, which led to the formation of the new Maha Kumbh Mela district, was made to streamline the management and administration of the upcoming Kumbh Mela, ensuring smooth operations for the grand religious event scheduled for January 2025. The newly formed



district will be known as Maha Kumbh Mela.

The intention behind this decision was expressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during Magh Mela 2024, before the Mahakumbh 2025 event.

Prime Minister Modi is set to visit Uttar Pradesh December 13 to review the prepara-

tions for Mahakumbh 2025 and inaugurate major development works.

This step has been taken to smoothly manage the special event of Kumbh Mela and conduct administrative work in a better manner.

"I, Ravindra Kumar Mandad, District Magistrate, in continuation of the instruc-

tions given in the Government's letter dated November 25, 2024, exercising the powers conferred under Section 2 (th) of the Uttar Pradesh Prayagraj Mela Authority, Prayagraj Act, 2017, hereby issue a notification to declare Mahakumbh Mela District for the organisation of Mahakumbh 2025," said the official government order.

The order further stated, "The boundary of the Mahakumbh Mela District will be as follows. The area of the revenue villages and the entire parade area described in Annexure-I will be included in the Mahakumbh Mela District area."

In the Maha Kumbh Mela district, the Mela Adhikari, Kumbh Mela, Prayagraj, will have the powers of Executive Magistrate, District Magistrate and Additional District Magistrate and will have the right to exercise all the powers of the Collector and to perform all the functions of the Collector by appointing an Additional Collector in the said district. This order will come into force with immediate effect, the order read further.

The Maha Kumbh is expected to be a milestone in the promotion of Indian culture.

Eco-friendly vehicles, luxury tent city to cater to devotees

PRAYAGRAJ: The Uttar Pradesh government Monday said it is set to transform next year's Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj into an eco-friendly and world-class event by introducing app-based e-vehicle services and a luxury tent city for the millions of devotees expected from across the globe. The initiatives are aimed at combining convenience, sustainability and cultural vibrancy for the estimated 45 crore visitors to the world's largest religious congregation beginning next month, officials said. Additionally, a 'Pink Taxi' service operated by female drivers will ensure safety and comfort for women devotees, the statement said. To complement the eco-friendly travel options, the Uttar Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (UPSTDC) is setting up a luxury tent city at Sector 20 in the Maha Kumbh Mela area, it said. Over 2,000 Swiss cottage-style tents with five-star standards will offer accommodation to the devotees from January 1 to March 5, the statement said. With extensive transport arrangements, including 7,000 buses, 550 shuttle services, and 3,000 trains (1,000 additional), the government aims to ensure seamless movement for the devotees, the statement said.

Controversy erupts over Bhoota Kola, popularised by 'Kantara'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Dec 2: A controversy has erupted over Bhoota Kola, the famous folk dance form of Karnataka. Recently, a user on X shared a clip of the dance, which was popularised by the Rishab Shetty-starrer 'Kantara'.

The video posted on X shows the dance being performed on a stage with a chief guest who was invited for a local event.

The controversy stemmed from the objection of Kannadigas over the use of the dance form and the culture associated with it being used as a source of entertainment.

One user wrote, "We been saying to mangalorean representatives no one is speaking up now!! @AshokRaistate @vedavyasbjp @CaptBrijesh @KotasBJP @utkhader Can we stop daivaradane being innvolve in movies/stage/shows/street like



these? Its been like years this is repeatedly happening and still why everyone is silent here? Isn't daivaradane an integral root of tulunadu? Then why Performance on street/stage/shows/movies are still allowed by the government? Is that the

source of entertainment? We all had a vision that mangalorean politicians will sort this out but no one uttering a word! Please keep political party in side and speak for tulunadu now! and daivaradane (sic)".

Another user wrote, "This is

just mockery of a culture (sic)".

A third user wrote, "It's our tradition and it is supposed to be performed with utmost devotion and it has its own places. These are not to be performed on stage. Please respect the religious sentiments of people".

Meanwhile, 'Kantara', which was written and directed by Rishab Shetty, and produced by Vijay Kiragandur, under Hombale Films, starred Rishab in dual roles. The film is set and was filmed in Keradi in coastal Karnataka, where principal photography began in August 2021.

The film turned out to be a major commercial success and emerged as the second highest-grossing Kannada film of all time after 'K.G.F: Chapter 2', which was released in the same year a few months apart.

It was also 2022's fourth highest-grossing film in India. The film has been a favourite of not just audience but also the authorities as it was also featured at the 54th IFFI Indian panorama section, where it won the Silver Peacock - Special Jury Award.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. A-661
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF, WATER RESOURCES
SECHA SADAN, BHUBANESWAR
Email Address: cemecw.eicwr.od@gmail.com
e-Procurement Notice - Bid Identification No. - CEM/MDB-01/2024-25
1. Name of the Work : Mechanical Gate Works
2. No. of Works : 01 (One)
3. Category of Executors : SSI Units registered under DIC/NSIC/MSME for Irrigation Shutters/Hydro Mechanical Gates
4. Bid Identification No. : CEM/MDB - 01/2024-25
5. Tender Value : Rs.33.70.409.00
6. Period of Completion : 02 (Two) Calendar Months
7. Date & time of availability of bid documents in the portal : From Dt.04.12.2024 (10.00 A.M.) to Dt.16.12.2024 (5.30 P.M.)
8. Last date/time for receipt of bid in the portal : Dt.16.12.2024 (upto 5.30 P.M.)
9. Date and place of opening of : Dt.17.12.2024 (12.00 Noon onwards in the O/o. the undersigned
10. Date and place of opening of Financial Bid : To be intimated to the qualified bidders after evaluation of Technical Bid
11. Name of the Officer Inviting Bid : Chief Engineer, Mechanical, O/o. the E.I.C., Water Resources, Odisha, Bhubaneswar
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any further issue of Addendum/Corrigendum/cancellation notice shall be uploaded in the aforesaid website only.
Sd./- Chief Engineer, Mechanical
O/o. Engineer-in-Chief, Secha Sadan, Bhubaneswar
OIPR-32520/11/0017/2425

of the day **note**

Delhi people never witnessed such times of chaos and Jungle Raj all around. Anybody can murder anybody. When it was known that those who killed one member of the family, could kill someone else, why was no action taken to stop them?

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | AAP SUPREMO

Fertility rate in many parts of the country has fallen below 2.1 which deserves a debate, just like in the past when an explosive rate of population growth had led to family planning measures

CHIRAG PASWAN | UNION MINISTER

Trade restrictions to Bangladesh would be tightened in phases crippling the country's dependence on essential commodities from India

SUVENDU ADHIKARI | WEST BENGAL'S LOP IN ASSEMBLY

SHORT TAKES

Three women killed in road accident

Tumakuru (Karnataka): Three women died and several people were injured when a bus crashed into a divider on the Chikkanahalli flyover in Sira Taluk here in the early hours of Monday, police said. They said the bus carrying about 30 passengers was heading towards Bangalore when the accident occurred at around 4.30 am. Three women died on the spot, police said, adding that the injured were admitted to a hospital, police added.

Man held for stealing ₹1 cr


Kannur (Kerala): Kerala police arrested the neighbour of a trader in connection with the theft of over ₹1 crore and 267 sovereigns of gold from the latter's residence in Kannur district about two weeks ago. The accused, Lijeesh (45), was taken into custody Saturday by an investigation team formed to probe the case, the police said. His arrest was recorded Monday after he confessed to his crime Sunday evening during interrogation. Lijeesh, a Gulf returnee, carried out the theft by breaking the window of the house in Valapattanam.

Teenage student ends life at shooting academy

Bhopal: A 17-year-old student of a government-run shooting academy in Bhopal allegedly committed suicide at the institute, police said Monday. The boy, Yatharth Raghuvanshi, allegedly shot himself with the practice gun at the academy Sunday evening, Ratibad police station in-charge Ras Bihari Sharma said, adding no suicide note was found. The student, resident of Ashok Nagar district in Madhya Pradesh, was staying in a hostel of the shooting academy in the state capital Bhopal, he said.

2 held for cheating bizman of ₹18 cr

Mumbai: Police have arrested two persons for allegedly duping a businessman of nearly ₹18 crore by illegally selling him a land owned by the Maharashtra government's agency CIDCO in Navi Mumbai, an official said Monday. The role of some officials of the City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) and Revenue department is also under the scanner for allegedly helping the accused in the crime, he said.



As students, you are the torchbearers of the future in science and technology. It is essential for you to grasp the remarkable innovations and advancements taking place in these fields today

S SOMANATH | ISRO CHAIRMAN

CIVIL SERVICES COACHING TEACHER AVADH OJHA JOINS AAP

Civil services coaching teacher and motivational speaker Avadh Ojha joined the Aam Aadmi Party Monday in the presence of party chief Arvind Kejriwal and senior leader Manish Sisodia. Ojha said he is aligned with the party's ideology focused on the future of children and termed the development of education his biggest ambition



SC refuses to relax GRAP-4 curbs

Observing the Delhi-NCR faced a similar situation every year between October and December, the bench proposed to go into all aspects that cause air pollution and find a permanent solution

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 2: The Supreme Court Monday refused to relax the emergency measures under Stage 4 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) dealing with air pollution in the national capital unless a consistent downward trend was noticed in the AQI level.

Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih further directed the chief secretaries of NCR states to appear before it through video-conferencing December 5 to inform whether or not any subsistence allowance was paid to the construction workers who went without work owing to the restrictions.

Observing the Delhi-NCR faced a similar situation every year between October and December, the bench proposed to go into all aspects that cause air pollution and find a permanent solution.

The bench highlighted the "complete lack of coordination" among stakeholders including the Delhi government, Delhi police, Municipal Corporation of Delhi and pollution control committee in implementing the restrictions.

"What we propose is, we will



look into your suggestions, but today we will not permit relaxations unless you show us a clear downward trend," said the bench.

The apex court said it would hear the parties December 5 on whether or not to relax the GRAP 4 restrictions.

"We will examine the AQI (air quality index) levels Thursday (December 5) and find out whether there is any downward trend," it said.

"There is hardly any implementation of stage 4 of GRAP to deal with air pollution in the national capital," remarked the bench, questioning the Delhi government on the number of officers deployed by it to implement the restrictions, especially banning trucks from

The apex court said it would hear the parties December 5 on whether or not to relax the GRAP 4 restrictions

entering the national capital.

The Delhi government, represented by senior advocate Shadan Farasat, said it would look into allegations of non-compliance of the GRAP restrictions.

The apex court was hearing a matter over measures to curb air pollution in the Delhi-NCR.

The bench during the hearing noted the revelation of "very shocking things" from

the reports filed by advocates appointed as court commissioners to conduct inspection at entry points.

The reports indicated to the bench that the court commissioners risked their lives besides facing threats in order to discharge their duties.

Referring to one such court commissioner's predicament, the bench asked the police to file a report setting out its action taken.

"We cannot allow the members of the Bar to get subjected to risk as the report indicates that some of them have been subjected to threats," it said.

The bench enquired if the court commissioners wanted to continue with the work and asked those desiring to continue to send emails to the nodal officer appointed by the Delhi police.

The police personnel, including armed guards, be given to court commissioners while discharging their duties, directed the top court.

"We make it clear that it is the responsibility of Delhi police to ensure that members of the Bar who are acting as court commissioners are adequately protected," it said.

'No voter should be excluded': SC seeks EC stand over enhanced voter limit

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Monday sought the Election Commission's response on a PIL challenging its decision to increase the maximum number of voters from 1,200 to 1,500 at every polling station, saying no elector should be excluded. While asking the poll panel to clarify its stand, a bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjay Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar said, "We are concerned. No voter should be excluded." The bench therefore directed senior advocate Maninder Singh, representing the poll panel, to file a short affidavit explaining the rationale behind the decision to increase the number of voters per polling station.

1984 anti-Sikh riots: Court to hear case against Jagdish Tytler Dec 9

New Delhi: A Delhi court Monday fixed December 9 for the recording of statements of two former police officials as witnesses in a 1984-anti Sikh riots case against Congress leader Jagdish Tytler. Special CBI Judge Jitendra Singh deferred the hearing after being informed that the witnesses were not in a position to depose Monday. The judge November 23 summoned the witnesses -- Ravi Sharma and Dharam Chand. "It is submitted by the public prosecutor for the CBI that the witnesses, who are present in the court, have stated to him that they are not in a position to depose today... As the witnesses are not being examined by the prosecution today, the matter stands adjourned," the judge said, posting the case December 9.

Badlapur sexual assault case: HC raps CID for taking lightly probe

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court Monday came down heavily on the state Crime Investigation Department (CID) for taking "lightly" the probe into the killing of Badlapur school sexual assault case accused in a shootout. Stressing the need for a fair investigation in all cases, a division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Prithviraj Chavan said the conduct of the CID in the present case raises doubt and a wrong inference that it does not want to provide all information to the magistrate conducting inquiry into the shootout. The accused, Akshay Shinde (24), was arrested in August for allegedly sexually assaulting two minor girls at a school in Badlapur area of Maharashtra's Thane district. He was killed by police in a shootout September 24.

Excise policy case: Delhi HC asks ED to reply to Manish Sisodia's plea

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court sought the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) response Monday on a plea moved by AAP leader Manish Sisodia challenging a trial court's order taking cognisance of a chargesheet filed in a money-laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy scam. Justice Manoj Kumar Ohri issued a notice to the ED and fixed Sisodia's plea December 20, when a similar petition filed by Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal is also listed for further proceedings. The former Delhi deputy chief minister sought the high court's direction to set aside the trial court order on the ground that the special judge took cognisance of the chargesheet in the absence of any sanction for the prosecution of Kejriwal, a former Delhi chief minister, who was a public servant when the offence was allegedly committed.

Coastal Shipping Bill introduced in Lok Sabha



The Bill seeks prohibition of trade in the coastal water without licence by vessels other than Indian vessels and permitting Inland vessels to engage in coastal trading subject to certain conditions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 2: A Bill that seeks to promote coastal trade and encourage the participation of Indian-flagged vessels owned and operated by Indian citizens for national security and commercial needs was introduced in the Lok Sabha Monday.

Union Ports, Shipping and Waterways minister Sarbananda Sonowal introduced the Bill amid noisy protests by opposition members over the recent violence in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal and the Adani issue.

The Bill seeks prohibition of trade in the coastal water without licence by vessels other than Indian vessels and permitting Inland vessels to engage in

coastal trading subject to certain conditions.

It also seeks to empower the Director-General to issue licence after taking into consideration certain factors including citizenship of the crew and building requirements of the vessel so as to create major jobs for India seafarers and to promote ship building in India.

The Bill seeks to create a National Database of coastal shipping so as to ensure transparency of procedures and aid in information sharing.

It provides preparation of a National Coastal and Inland Shipping Strategic Plan for development, growth and promotion of coastal shipping.

According to the Bill, no licence granted shall be suspended, revoked or modified, unless the licence has been given a reasonable opportunity of being heard.

Coastal shipping in India holds great potential owing to vast coastline of around 7,500 km and proximity to important global shipping routes. It has been recognised that maritime transportation, particularly coastal shipping is cheaper compared to other modes of transportation.

The regulation of the coastal maritime sector in India lacks uniformity. Non-mechanised vessels engaged in coastwise trade are governed by the Coasting Vessel Act, 1838 which only provides for registration of such vessels.



Farmers and Kisan Ekta Sangh members break police barricades during their protest march demanding expansion of minimum support prices (MSP) and other benefits to other produces, in Noida, Monday

PTI PHOTO

Farmers' 'Delhi Chalo' march stopped in Noida

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Noida, Dec 2: Farmers from different parts of Uttar Pradesh demanding adequate compensation for their lands acquired by the government marched towards Delhi Monday but were stopped at the Noida-Delhi border where they sat on a dharna.

The farmers said if their demands were not met within seven days, they would again march towards Delhi.

Raising slogans of "Bol Kisan, Halla Bol", the protesting farmers gathered at the Mahamaya flyover the Dadri-Noida link road and began their 'Delhi Chalo' march around 11:30 am.

Massive traffic snarls caused inconvenience to commuters crossing the Delhi-Noida borders as police set up multiple layers of barricades and deployed heavy security to stop the march, which coincided with Parliament's Winter Session.

Bumper-to-bumper traffic

was witnessed at Noida's Chilla border for several hours as the protesters, waving banners and flags of various farmer groups, crossed the initial barricades.

They were finally stopped near Dalit Prerna Sthal, around a kilometre from the Chilla border, an entry point to Delhi, where senior police officers tried to pacify them. Traffic on the stretch resumed around 6 pm after the protesting farmers gave a week's time to fulfil their various

demands, including the payment of land acquisition dues, as mandated by the Land Acquisition Act, 2013.

In a statement, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) -- an umbrella organisation of 12 farmers' bodies -- said the farmers had decided to stay at Dalit Prerana Sthal for the time being following assurances from the authorities that the chief secretary would meet to "discuss and settle their demands".

TOXIC LEGACY

4 decades on, children carry pain, suffering of Bhopal gas disaster

On the intervening night of December 2-3, 1984, the highly toxic MIC gas leaked from the Union Carbide plant, killing 5,474 people and maiming more than five lakh others

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Dec 2: Bhopal resident Sharda Yadav's life is confined to one room where she looks after her two sons, in their mid and late 20s, who are congenitally disabled, a disorder linked to exposure of their father to a deadly gas that leaked from Union Carbide's plant here 40 years ago.

Like Sharda Yadav, Abdul Saeed Khan, an ex-Union Carbide employee, is also living with his twin sons born with congenital disability, which a senior doctor attributed to "genetic mutation" among victims of the world's biggest industrial disaster which occurred when

methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas leaked from the US firm's pesticide plant.

According to the WHO, congenital disorders can be defined as structural or functional anomalies that occur during intrauterine life. Also called birth defects, congenital anomalies or malformations, these conditions develop prenatally and may be identified before or at birth, or later in life.

Children with such disorders suffer from disabilities like cerebral palsy, intellectual developmental disabilities, Down's syndrome and muscular dystrophy.

Sharda Yadav, mother of



Vikas (27) and Aman (25), told PTI on Monday that her husband, Sanjay, is a gas tragedy survivor.

She said her first son Vikas was born with mental and physical disabilities. However, the family was hopeful her second son Aman would be born healthy, but their hope was

belied. He, too, was born like his elder brother, she said.

Dr DK Satpathy, former head of the forensic department at Bhopal's Gandhi Medical College (GMC), informed that the gas leak has caused long-term impact on future generations of those affected by the disaster

The gas leak has caused long-term impact on future generations of those affected by the disaster due to genetic mutation, which works at the cell level

For example, if two gas victims get married, their child will be born with deformity

Some may have brain defects, some cannot move their hands and legs and this mutation works at the tissue level

due to genetic mutation, which works at the cell level.

For example, if two gas victims get married, their child will be born with deformity. Some may have brain defects, some cannot move their hands and legs. This mutation works at the tissue level, Satpathy explained.

Activist Rashida Bee, president of the Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Stationery Karmchari Sangh, an organisation of wom-

en survivors, runs a rehabilitation centre for such children.

She said an institute run by her organisation admits children with deformities from one day to 12 years for various kinds of therapies.

At present, there are 1,350 children in the centre, Rashida Bee informed.

Therapies like speech, physio and education of such children cost Rs 1,600 per day, but some parents are so poor that they can't pay even Rs 16 for these facilities, she said.

Thousands of children born to gas affected couples have died in absence of proper and timely treatment, Rashida Bee said.

On the intervening night of December 2-3, 1984, the highly toxic MIC gas leaked from the Union Carbide plant, killing 5,474 people and maiming more than five lakh others.

of the day

quote

We have allocated 50 acres of land to the Karnataka State Cricket Association for building an international cricket stadium. This initiative will contribute to the region's economic growth and overall development

SIDDARAMAIAH | CM, KARNATAKA

Mosque committees can collaborate and implement effective ways to tackle drug addiction in every area

MIRWAIZ UMAR FAROOQ | HURRIYAT CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN

There could be political differences but public welfare works must be prioritised in India's federal democratic set up for the welfare of all

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | UNION MINISTER

POST

OF THE DAY

More taxes means government spending your money. Less taxes means people spending their money. People spending their money is more efficient and useful for the economy. It is also enjoyable. People are better spenders than government. To revive animal spirits and increase consumption, government should cut tax rates - both income tax and GST.

@dmuthuk

SHORT TAKES

SSDF stages anti-B'desh protest in Jammu

Jammu: The Shiv Sena Dogra Front Monday staged a protest in Jammu against the alleged violent attacks on Hindus and temples in Bangladesh, demanding closure of the neighbouring country's embassy in India. The Shiv Sena Dogra Front (SSDF) also urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene in the matter to ensure safety of the minority Hindus in Bangladesh. Led by SSDF Chairman Ashok Gupta, scores of party workers raised slogans against the neighbouring country besides burning an effigy of Muhammad Yunus, head of Bangladesh's interim government.

Haryana reshuffles 44 IAS officers

Chandigarh: In a major bureaucratic reshuffle, the Haryana government has transferred 44 IAS officers with immediate effect. According to a government order dated December 1, Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) of Medical Education and Research Department Sumita Misra, a 1990-batch officer, has been posted as ACS, Home, Jails, Criminal Investigation and Administration of Justice Departments, relieving Anurag Rastogi of the charge. Rastogi will continue to hold the charge of ACS, Finance and Planning departments.

Yaba tablets worth ₹36 crore seized

Guwahati: Yaba tablets worth ₹36 crore were seized in Assam's Silchar Monday and one person was arrested, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. "Acting on credible intelligence, @cacharpolice conducted a special operation in Silchar today, intercepting two vehicles and apprehending an individual," Sarma posted on X. The search led to the recovery of 12 packets containing 1,20,000 Yaba tablets, valued at ₹36 crore, he said.

The construction of the Delhi-Dehradun expressway, which will drastically reduce the travel time between the two cities, is in its final stages

PUSHKAR SINGH DHAMI | CM, UTTARAKHAND

MAHA GOVT FORMATION: BJP APPOINTS NIRMALA, RUPANI AS CENTRAL OBSERVERS

The BJP Monday named Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and former Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani as Central observers for its Maharashtra legislature party's meeting, where the MLAs will elect their leader who is likely to be the state's next chief minister



GOVT, OPPN BREAK IMPASSE IN PARL

The Lower House will take up the discussion on the Constitution December 13 and 14, and the Upper House December 16 and 17

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 2: The government and Opposition parties reached an agreement Monday to break the week-long impasse in Parliament with the dates announced for a discussion on the Constitution, to mark its 75th year of adoption, in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.

The Lower House will take up the discussion on the Constitution December 13 and 14, and the Upper House December 16 and 17, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said following a meeting Speaker Om Birla held with floor leaders of different parties.

Opposition parties had demanded discussions in both Houses of Parliament to mark the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution by the Constituent Assembly.

Rijiju told reporters that all parties have agreed to allow Parliament to function from Tuesday, and both Houses will take up their listed agenda items. He expressed confidence that Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha will function smoothly from Tuesday.

Following back-channel talks, the breakthrough was achieved at the meeting chaired by Birla and attended by Gaurav Gogoi of the Congress, DMK's T R Baalu and TMC's Kalyan Banerjee among others besides Rijiju and his deputy in the ministry Arjun Ram Meghwal.

Several Opposition leaders, who attended the meeting, also echoed Rijiju's views about Parliament functioning smoothly from Tuesday.



Asked about other issues being raised by the Opposition such as the Sambhal violence and the unrest in Manipur, Rijiju said Birla has made it clear that any matter can be raised in line with the rules, while requesting parties to allow Parliament to function smoothly.

Sources said the Samajwadi Party may be allowed to raise the Sambhal issue and the TMC the events in Bangladesh following the deposition of the Sheikh Hasina government.

The Congress has been persistent in raising the issue of indictment by US prosecutors of Adani Group chairperson Gautam Adani and other company officials on bribery and fraud charges. This coupled with vociferous opposition protests over matters such as the Sambhal violence and Manipur unrest have resulted in constant adjournments of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha

since the Winter Session began November 25.

However, some other Opposition parties, especially the TMC, have not attached the same priority to the Adani row and want Parliament to discuss a host of different issues, including unemployment, price rise and the Centre's alleged discrimination against opposition-ruled states in fund allocation.

The TMC has skipped opposition meetings on formulating the INDIA bloc's joint strategy during the session.

A TMC source said his party cannot be there just to stamp its approval on the Congress' agenda.

The Congress and many of its allies have also been vocal in targeting the ruling BJP for its alleged attack on the Constitution under the government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

15 CISF personnel booked for assaulting doc, 2 others in Mumbai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 2: Police have registered a case against 10 to 15 CISF personnel for allegedly assaulting a doctor, his brother and another person in a road rage incident in Maharashtra's Navi Mumbai township, officials said Monday.

The accused personnel of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) have been issued notices in connection with the incident which took place at 10.15 pm November 29, they said.

Some buses were ferrying the CISF personnel to their quarters in Navi Mumbai's Kharghar area from Mumbai airport.

While moving towards Sector 36 in Kharghar, a speeding bus came dangerously close to a car between Utsav Chowk and Central Park, an official said.

The car owner, who is a doctor by profession and also local functionary of a political party, chased the bus and asked its driver to stop the vehicle, he said.

The car owner objected to the bus driver's rash driving following which an argument broke out.

By the time, five-six CISF personnel stepped out of the bus, confronted the doctor and allegedly assaulted him, the official said.

Some CISF personnel also allegedly hit the doctor's brother and friend and broke the windshield of his car, he said.

Later, the doctor lodged a complaint against the CISF personnel at Kharghar police station.

The complainant also claimed that some of the CISF personnel involved in the attack were under the influence of alcohol, but fled after the incident, the official said.

SAMBHAL VIOLENCE

Cong workers scuffle with police in Lucknow

A large police contingent had been deployed and barricades put up since Sunday night around the Congress office in Lucknow's Mall Avenue area



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow/Sambhal (UP), Dec 2: Scores of Congress workers jostled with police personnel and tried to scale barricades outside the party office in Lucknow Monday as a party delegation led by its Uttar Pradesh unit chief Ajay Rai was prevented from leaving for Sambhal, which has been made out of bounds by administration after the November 24 violence.

Amid high drama, Rai, who took the driver's seat in his car with senior party leader PL Punia next to him, could not leave for the "fact-finding" visit even as scuffles broke out between the cops and the slogan-shouting party workers, who tried to clear the way for their leaders.

Rai drove the car to some distance inside the Congress office complex but it was stopped by the police at the gate. After this, he sat on a dharna outside the party office along with Congress workers, Punia said.

A large police contingent had been deployed and barricades put up since Sunday night around the Congress office in Lucknow's Mall Avenue area to prevent Rai and others from leaving for Sam-

bhal, which was hit by violence during protests against a court-ordered survey of a mosque.

The Congress slammed the BJP government, saying it was trying to hide its failure with its "anti-democratic" actions. Rai, who had spent the night at the Congress office along with several party workers, later said the party delegation will visit Sambhal when prohibitory orders are lifted.

The BJP hit back with deputy chief ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak accusing Congress and Samajwadi Party leaders of going to Sambhal for "political tourism". They alleged that the Opposition wanted to spoil the "peaceful" atmosphere in the district.

Speaking to reporters after being stopped from going to Sambhal, Rai said, "The administration has told me that prohibitory orders are in place (in Sambhal) till December 10. I had told them that our party (delegation) would go there. The administration said that before December 10, they will let us know. And, the day the prohibitory orders are lifted, the Congress delegation will definitely go to Sambhal."

Akal Takht issues religious punishment for SAD chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Dec 2: The Sikh clergy at the Akal Takht Monday pronounced 'tankhah' (religious punishment) for Sukhbir Singh Badal for the "mistakes" committed by the Shiromani Akali Dal and its government in Punjab from 2007 to 2017, directing him to perform as a 'sewadar' and clean utensils and shoes at the Golden Temple in Amritsar.

Pronouncing the order from the 'faseel' (podium) of the Akal Takht in Amritsar, Jathedar of the highest temporal seat of the Sikhs, Giani Ragbir Singh, also directed the working committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) to accept the resignation of Sukhbir Badal as party chief, besides forming a committee to hold elections for the post of SAD president and office-bearers within six months.

The Jathedar further announced to withdraw the title of 'Fakhre-e-Qaum' bestowed upon former chief minister late



Parkash Singh Badal, father of Sukhbir Badal.

The five Singh Sahibans (Sikh clergy) also pronounced religious punishment for other Sikh leaders who served as ministers in the Akali Cabinet during 2007 to 2017.

Giani Ragbir Singh said Sukhbir Badal, who was on a wheelchair because of a fractured leg, and rebel leader Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa have been asked to sit outside the Golden Temple wearing the dress of 'sewadar' for one hour each for two days.

They will also perform the service of 'sewadar' at Takht Kesgarh Sahib, Takht Damdama Sahib, Darbar Sahib at Muktsar and Fatehgarh Sahib for two days each.

Agartala security breach deeply regrettable: India

The MEA says action taken to step up security for all Bangladesh missions across India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 2: India Monday described as "deeply regrettable" an incident of breach of the premises of the Bangladesh consulate in Agartala by a group of people protesting the arrest of Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das in the neighbouring country.

The comments by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) came hours after the protesters reportedly barged into the assistant high commission of Bangladesh and allegedly resorted to vandalism.

The MEA said consular properties should not be targeted under any circumstances and that the government is beefing up security at the Bangladeshi missions in India.

In Agartala, thousands of people took out a massive demonstration near the Bangladeshi mission protesting the arrest of Das as well as attacks on the Hindu community in Bangladesh.

"The incident earlier to-



day of the breach of premises at the Bangladesh Assistant High Commission in Agartala is deeply regrettable," the MEA said. It is understood that the Bangladesh high commission in New Delhi is lodging a protest over the "breach" at its mission in Agartala.

In its statement, the MEA said the government is taking action to step up security for the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi and other

missions of the country in India. "Diplomatic and consular properties should not be targeted under any circumstances," it said.

"The government is taking action to step up security arrangements for the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi and their deputy/assistant high commissions in the country," it said.

In a statement in Dhaka, the Bangladesh foreign ministry

said it "deeply resents" the "violent demonstration and attack by a large group of protesters of the Hindu Sangharsh Samiti" on the premises of the assistant high commission.

The protesters were allowed to enter the premises by "breaking down the main gate", it alleged. It said the protesters "vandalised the flag pole, desecrated the national flag of Bangladesh and also damaged properties inside the assistant high commission".

The Bangladesh foreign ministry further alleged the local police personnel "in charge of protecting the premises were found not to be active in containing the situation".

It said "attack" on the mission violates the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and called upon the Indian counterpart to initiate a "thorough investigation" into the incident, prevent any further acts of violence against Bangladesh's missions and ensure the security of Bangladeshi officials.

Karnataka IPS officer, en route to first posting, dies in accident

HARSH BARDHAN HAD CLEARED THE CIVIL SERVICES EXAMINATION IN HIS MAIDEN ATTEMPT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Singrauli (MP), Dec 2: IPS officer Harsh Bardhan, who died in a road accident in Karnataka while on his way to take up his first posting, had cleared the civil services examination in his maiden attempt, sources close to his family said Monday.

The last rites will be performed in Bihar, said the father of the 26-year-old deceased who is posted as SDM in Madhya Pradesh.

The accident occurred Sunday evening when the tyre of the police vehicle carrying the IPS officer burst in Hassan taluk, resulting in the driver

losing control at the wheel and the vehicle hitting a house and a tree, police said.

Harsh Bardhan succumbed to his injuries in a hospital.

He was a 2023-batch IPS officer of the Karnataka cadre and hailed from Madhya Pradesh, police said.

Soon after getting news of the tragic accident, his father Akhilesh Singh rushed to Karnataka to collect the mortal remains of his son.

"I and other family members have left for Karnataka to collect his mortal remains," Singh, posted as Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) in Devsar town of Singrauli district, told PTI.



The last rites will be performed in Saharsa, the home district of the officer, in Bihar as per the wishes of the family, he said. Harsh Bardhan had

cleared the civil services examination in his maiden attempt, family sources said.

The IPS officer had recently completed his four-week

The IPS officer had recently completed his four-week training at the Karnataka Police Academy in Mysuru

training at the Karnataka Police Academy in Mysuru, police said.

According to Karnataka Police, Harsh Bardhan was on his way to Hassan to join duty as a probationary Assistant Superintendent of Police in Holenarasipur.

"The news of the untimely

death of 2023 batch Karnataka cadre IPS Shri Harsh Bardhan, a resident of Madhya Pradesh, in a road accident while returning to his first posting in Hassan district after completing training from the Karnataka Police Academy is extremely sad and unfortunate," Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav tweeted on X.

The departure of a young officer of the Indian Police Service in this manner is definitely a loss for the nation. I offer my deepest condolences to the bereaved family and pray to Baba Mahakal to grant salvation and peace to the departed soul, he added.

of the day quote

Our leaders have an agreement to hold meetings once a year. This time, it's our turn. We received Mr Modi's invitation and we will certainly consider it positively

YURY USHAKOV | KREMLIN AIDE, RUSSIA

Any intrusion into the West Philippine Sea, of our EEZ, of our baselines is very worrisome

Ferdinand Marcos | PRESIDENT, THE PHILIPPINE

We live on the front lines of climate change impact. We are witnesses to the destruction of our lands, our livelihoods, our culture and our human rights

Ralph Regenvanu | CLIMATE CHANGE ENVOY, VANUATU

SHORT TAKES

Deadliest month for security forces in Pak

Islamabad: At least 245 people, including 68 security personnel, were killed in a series of terrorist attacks and clashes across Pakistan in November, said Dawn, citing a report by the Islamabad-based think tank, the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), released Sunday. The casualties included 127 terrorists and 50 civilians. November ranked as the second deadliest month of the year, following August, which saw 254 deaths, including 92 civilians, 108 terrorists, and 54 security personnel. In terms of security personnel casualties, November was the deadliest month of 2024, surpassing October, which saw 62 security force deaths.

China gives \$20mn to Nepal after Oli's visit

Kathmandu: The Nepal government has accepted projects worth \$20 million as grant assistance from China ahead of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's first official visit to the country after assuming office for the fourth time. Minister for Information and Communication Prithvi Subba Gurung talking to media persons Sunday said the Council of Ministers meeting wished for the success of the prime minister's China visit and also decided to accept projects worth \$20 million equivalent to Nepalese Rs 2.70 billion as grant assistance from China. Besides, the Cabinet also decided to accept 300 million Chinese Yuan (\$4.13 million approximately) equivalent to Nepalese Rs 5.60 billion worth projects proposed by the government of China, according to government spokesperson Gurung.

B'desh reels under dengue outbreak

Dhaka: Bangladesh witnessed another deadly month of dengue outbreak in November as it recorded nearly 30,000 cases and 173 deaths. Of the total, 29,652 cases were reported in November, the official data of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) showed. Xinhua news agency reported. After reporting an additional 882 dengue fever cases in the last 24 hours Sunday, the dengue tally in Bangladesh has reached 92,351 so far this year since January. Bangladesh logged 1,705 dengue-related deaths in 2023, marking the highest annual death toll. In comparison, there were 281 dengue-related deaths reported in 2022 and 179 in 2019.

Biden takes U-turn, pardons son

White House had said repeatedly that Biden would not pardon or commute sentences for Hunter, a recovering drug addict who became a target of Republicans, including President-elect Donald Trump

REUTERS

Washington, Dec 2: US President Joe Biden said Sunday he had pardoned his son, Hunter Biden, a reversal after pledging to stay out of legal proceedings against the younger Biden who pleaded guilty to tax violations and was convicted on firearms-related charges.

"Today, I signed a pardon for my son Hunter. From the day I took office, I said I would not interfere with the Justice Department's decision-making, and I kept my word even as I have watched my son being selectively, and unfairly, prosecuted," the president said in a statement.

"No reasonable person who looks at the facts of Hunter's cases can reach any other conclusion than Hunter was singled out only because he is my son," Biden said in a statement

released shortly before leaving for a trip to Africa.

The grant of clemency said Biden had granted "a full and unconditional" pardon to Hunter Biden for any offenses in a window from January 1, 2014, to December 1, 2024.

Hunter Biden faced sentencing for the false statements and gun convictions this month. In September he pleaded guilty to federal charges of failing to pay \$1.4 million in taxes while spending lavishly on drugs, sex workers and luxury items. He was scheduled for sentencing in that case December 16.

"I have admitted and taken responsibility for my mistakes during the darkest days of my addiction - mistakes that have been exploited to publicly humiliate and shame me and

my family for political sport," Hunter Biden said in a statement Sunday, adding he had remained sober for more than five years.

"In the throes of addiction, I squandered many opportunities and advantages ... I will never take the clemency I have been given today for granted and will devote the life I have rebuilt to helping those who are still sick and suffering."

Republicans criticise move "Does the Pardon given by Joe to Hunter include the J-6 Hostages, who have now been imprisoned for years? Such an abuse and miscarriage of Justice!" Trump said in a post on his Truth Social site, referring to those convicted for storming the US Capitol January 6, 2021, after Trump



Germany will remain Ukraine's strongest supporter in Europe

OLAF SCHOLZ | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

PANDA SCULPTURE TOUR

Thousands of giant panda sculptures will greet residents and tourists starting Saturday in Hong Kong, where enthusiasm for the bears has grown since two cubs were born in a local theme park. The 2,500 exhibits were showcased in a launch ceremony of PANDA GO! FEST HK, the city's largest panda-themed exhibition, at Hong Kong's airport Monday



THREATS & ACCUSATIONS

ICC chief lashes out at US, Russia

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Hague, Dec 2: The president of the International Criminal Court lashed out at the United States and Russia for interfering with its investigations, calling threats and attacks on the court "appalling".

"The court is being threatened with draconian economic sanctions by another permanent member of the Security Council as if it was a terrorist organisation," Judge Tomoko Akane, in her address to the institution's annual meeting, which opened Monday.

Akane was referring to remarks made by US Senator Lindsey Graham, whose Republican party will control both branches of Congress in January, and who called the court a "dangerous joke" and urged Congress to sanction its prosecutor. "To any ally, Canada, Britain, Germany, France, if you try to help the ICC, we're going to sanction you," Graham said.

This marks the first time the global court of justice calls out a sitting leader of a major Western all.

Graham was angered by an announcement last month that judges had granted a request from the court's chief prosecutor Karim Khan to issue arrest warrants for Israeli PM, his former defence minister and Hamas' military chief for crimes against humanity in connection with the nearly 14-month war in Gaza.



It is clear that Hunter was treated differently. The charges in his cases came about only after several of my political opponents in Congress instigated them to attack me and oppose my election. In trying to break Hunter, they've tried to break me - and there's no reason to believe it will stop here. Enough is enough

JOE BIDEN | US PRESIDENT

I have admitted and taken responsibility for my mistakes during the darkest days of my addiction - mistakes that have been exploited to publicly humiliate and shame me and my family for political sport

HUNTER BIDEN

Does the Pardon given by Joe to Hunter include the J-6 Hostages, who have now been imprisoned for years? Such an abuse and miscarriage of Justice!

DONALD TRUMP | US PRESIDENT-ELECT

claimed falsely that he had won the 2020 election.

"Joe Biden has lied from start to finish about his family's corrupt influence peddling activities," said Representative James Comer, chair of the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

The president, whose son Beau died of brain cancer in 2015, said his opponents had sought to break Hunter with

selective prosecution.

He said people were almost never brought to trial for felony charges for how they filled out a gun form, and said others who were late in paying taxes because of addiction but paid them back with interest and penalties, as his son had, typically received non-criminal resolutions to their cases.

In August 2023, lawyers for Hunter Biden said prosecutors had reneged on a plea deal that would have resolved the tax and firearms charges. The president said in his statement Sunday that the plea deal "would have been a fair, reasonable resolution of Hunter's cases."

Biden said he had made his decision to pardon over the weekend. The president, his wife, Jill Biden, and their family including Hunter, spent the Thanksgiving holiday in Nantucket, Massachusetts, and returned to Washington Saturday night.

"Here's the truth: I believe in the justice system, but as I have wrestled with this, I also believe raw politics has infected this process and it led to a miscarriage of justice - and once I made this decision this weekend, there was no sense in delaying it further," Biden said. "I hope Americans will understand why a father and a President would come to this decision."

Syrian rebels continue swift advance

The stunning advance by fighters that Turkey supports was a huge embarrassment for Syrian Prez and it comes at a time when his allies — Iran and groups it backs and Russia — are preoccupied with their own conflicts

AGENCIES

Ankara, Dec 2: The recent rapid advance by opposition fighters in Syria across the country's north and toward the south, a large-scale evacuation began from Aleppo Monday, according to a Syrian rebel official. After initially withdrawing from some areas, Syrian government forces appeared to be regrouping over the weekend and launched counterattacks, including airstrikes on rebel positions.

General Mazloum Kobane Abdi, the commander of a Syrian Kurdish rebel group, said in an X post his forces were in communication with "all actors" in Syria to secure safe passage for civilians and fighters out of Aleppo and into



Kurdish controlled parts of the country further east. Kurdish rebel groups are not allied with the rebels leading the offensive, and many feared the outbreak of inter-rebel clashes.

The lightning assault against the Syrian government is being led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), an Islamist group based in northwestern Syria's Idlib province, posing the most significant challenge to the rule of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in over a decade. The forces are now in control of much of Aleppo, Syria's second largest city, and have moved toward the central city of Hama.

Syrian government forces launched fresh airstrikes on Idlib and Aleppo Monday, killing at least 12 civilians including children and wounding at

least 42 others, according to the White Helmets, a civil defense group in Syria. The group posted statements to X with images of the aftermath.

The rebel offensive in northern Syria began last week after Hezbollah and Israel agreed to a cease-fire in Lebanon. While the fighting in Lebanon did not directly involve Syria, the conflict there left two of Assad's key backers, Hezbollah and Iran, significantly weakened.

"Keep in mind that for many years the Syrian government has been engaged in a civil war backed by three main players: Iran, Russia and Hezbollah. All three of those players have been distracted and weakened by conflicts elsewhere," US national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Sunday.

SUSPENSION OF EU TALKS

Georgian Prez seeks Europe help as she defies her govt

More than 200 people have been detained after four nights of protests in the Georgian capital

REUTERS

Tbilisi, Dec 2: Georgia's president, locked in a standoff with her own government, appealed to European countries Monday to confront what she described as a Russian attempt to impose control on her nation.

President Salome Zourabichvili was speaking after a fourth night of clashes between protesters and police after the governing Georgian Dream party announced last week that it was suspending talks on joining the European Union.

Critics saw that as confirmation of a Russian-influenced shift away from pro-Western policies and back towards Moscow's orbit, something the ruling party denies.



"We want our European destiny to be returned to us," Zourabichvili, who has personally remonstrated with riot police, told France Inter radio. "This is the revolt of an entire country."

Zourabichvili, whose powers are mainly ceremonial, said Russia, already at war in Ukraine, was conducting a "hybrid strategy" against Georgia and other countries such as Moldova and NATO and EU member Romania.

"There is a very strong need for very clear moral and political support" from Europe, said the 72-year-old president, who was born in France to Georgian parents and once served as French ambassador to Georgia.

Brain rot: Oxford University Press word of year

'Brain rot' was chosen by a combination of public vote and language analysis by Oxford lexicographers. It beat five other finalists: demure, slop, dynamic pricing, romantasy and lore

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Dec 2: Many of us have felt it, and now it's official: "brain rot" is the Oxford dictionaries' word of the year.

Oxford University Press said Monday the evocative phrase "gained new prominence in 2024", with its frequency of use increasing 230 per cent from the year before.

Oxford defines brain rot as "the supposed deterioration of a person's mental or intellectual state, especially viewed as the result of overconsumption



Oxford defines brain rot as "the supposed deterioration of a person's mental or intellectual state, especially viewed as the result of overconsumption of material (now particularly online content) considered to be trivial or unchallenging"

of material (now particularly online content) considered to be trivial or unchallenging".

The word of the year is

intended to be "a word or expression that reflects a defining theme from the past 12 months".

"Brain rot" was chosen by a combination of public vote and language analysis by Oxford lexicographers. It beat five other finalists: demure, slop, dynamic pricing, romantasy and lore.

While it may seem a modern phenomenon, the first recorded use of "brain rot" was by Henry David Thoreau in his 1854 ode to the natural world, "Walden".

Oxford Languages President Casper Grathwohl said that in its modern sense, "brain rot speaks to one of the perceived dangers of virtual life, and how we are using our free time".

"It feels like a rightful next chapter in the cultural conversation about humanity and technology. It's not surprising that so many voters embraced the term, endorsing it as our choice this year," he said.

Last year's Oxford word of the year was "rizz", a riff on charisma, used to describe someone's ability to attract or seduce another person.

Collins Dictionary's 2024 word of the year is "brat" – the album title that became a summer-living ideal.

of the day

Quote

As the GST rates are applicable over and above the insurance premium, if the GST rate is reduced, it is expected to benefit the policyholder directly especially in a competitive market with many insurers as the cost of insurance will reduce to that extent

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

Consumption waste is not going to make the world a better place to live in and the world will have to reflect on lifestyles and a circular economy

PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

Numbers are lower than what our potential is but not alarming...GDP growth will be much higher in the third and fourth quarter

AJAY SETH | ECONOMIC AFFAIRS SECRETARY

SHORT TAKES

EPFO invests ₹34,208cr in ETFs

New Delhi: Retirement fund body EPFO has invested ₹34,207.93 crore in exchange traded funds (ETFs) during the April-October period this fiscal year, Parliament was informed Monday. According to a written reply to Lok Sabha by Minister of State for Labour & Employment Shobha Karandlaje, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) had invested ₹57,184.24 crore in the ETFs. The total corpus of various funds managed by EPFO was ₹24.75 lakh crore as on March 31, 2024, including debt investments of ₹22,40,922.30 crore and ₹2,34,921.49 crore in ETFs. The minister told the House that the EPFO does not invest directly in any of the individual stocks in the equity market. The EPFO regularly invests in equity markets through ETFs replicating BSE-Sensex and NSE NIFTY-50 indices, she stated.

SBI plans to open 500 new branches

New Delhi: The State Bank of India (SBI) is planning to open 500 new branches across India during the current financial year, Parliament was informed Monday. Of this, 135 new branches have already been opened till October 31, 2024, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha. Currently, the endeavour of the government is to ensure availability of a banking outlet (bank branch/ business correspondent/ India Post Payments Bank) within 5 kilometres of all inhabited villages in the country, he said. Availability of banking outlets is monitored by a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based app, namely, Jan Dhan Darshak (JDD) app, he said.

India's power consumption up

New Delhi: India's power consumption rose 5.14 per cent to 125.44 billion units (BU) in November as compared to the year-ago month. In November 2023, power consumption was 119.30 GW, as per the government data. The highest supply in a day (peak power demand met) also rose marginally to 207.42 GW in November 2024 from 204.56 GW in the year-ago period. The peak power demand touched an all-time high of about 250 GW in May this year.



It's a beginning of a new era for Skoda, because with this car (Kylaq), we are becoming a true volume player in India

PETR JANEBA | SKODA AUTO INDIA BRAND DIRECTOR

98.08% OF ₹2,000 BANKNOTES RETURNED

The Reserve Bank Monday said 98.08 per cent of the ₹2,000 banknotes have been returned to the banking system, and only ₹6,839 crore worth such notes are still with the public. The total value of ₹2,000 banknotes in circulation, which was ₹3.56 lakh crore at the close of business May 19, 2023, has declined to ₹6,839 crore at the close of business November 29, 2024, RBI said.



Manufacturing growth falls to 11-month low



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 2: India's manufacturing sector growth fell to a joint 11-month low of 56.5 in November, restricted by competitive conditions and inflationary pressures amid a softer increase in factory orders, a monthly survey said Monday. The seasonally adjusted HS-BC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell from 57.5 in October to 56.5 in November, signalling a softer improvement in the health of the sector. However, the pace of growth remained above its long-run average.

In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"India recorded a 56.5 manufacturing PMI in November, down slightly from the prior month, but still firmly within expansionary territory," Pran-
jul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC said.

Bhandari further noted that strong broad-based international demand, evidenced by a four-month high in new export orders, fuelled the Indian manufacturing sector's continued growth. At the same time, however, the rate of output

expansion is decelerating due to intensifying price pressures.

On the domestic macroeconomic front, the latest government data released on Friday showed India's economic growth slowed to a near two-year low of 5.4 per cent in the July-September quarter of this fiscal due to poor performance of manufacturing and mining sectors as well as weak consumption.

According to the survey, the expansion in sales and output in the manufacturing sector during November was largely supported by positive demand trends, though firms indicated that growth was somewhat restricted by competitive conditions and price pressures.

"Goods producers experienced a weaker, albeit still robust, upturn in new business intakes during November," the survey said, adding that growth was "stymied by fierce competition and price pressures".

On the price front, Indian goods producers increased their selling prices to the greatest extent since October 2013. Survey participants suggested that additional outlays on freight, labour and materials had been shared with clients.

"Input prices for a variety of intermediate goods — including chemicals, cotton, leather, and rubber — rose in November, while output prices soared to an 11-year high as rising input, labour, and transportation costs were passed on to consumers," Bhandari said.

India's retail inflation soared to a 14-month high of 6.21 per cent in October —above the RBI's tolerance band, mainly on account of rising food prices. It was 5.49 per cent in September.

The RBI, which is mandated by the government to contain inflation at 4 per cent (+/- 2 per cent) has projected retail inflation to be 4.5 per cent in the current fiscal year.

Although price pressures curbed domestic sales to a certain extent, the growth of new export orders gained momentum.

"The rate of expansion in international demand was the best seen for four months, with panellists reporting gains from Bangladesh, mainland China, Colombia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Nepal, the UK and the US," the survey said.

With demand conditions remaining favourable, Indian manufacturers continued to scale up production. Accordingly, for the ninth month in a row, factory employment in India increased during November.

Going ahead, business optimism has increased by predictions that marketing efforts and new product releases will bear fruit. Recent capacity expansion efforts and forecasts of demand strength also underpinned upbeat forecasts for output in 2025.

The HSBC India Manufacturing PMI was compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to purchasing managers in a panel of around 400 manufacturers.

Govt scraps windfall tax on domestic crude, fuel exports

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 2: The government Monday scrapped 30-month old windfall profit tax on domestically-produced crude oil and on export of jet fuel (ATF), diesel and petrol following a decline in international oil prices.

Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary tabled a notification in Rajya Sabha scrapping the levy on crude oil produced by firms like state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and exports of fuels done by companies like Reliance Industries Ltd.

The notification rescinded June 30, 2022 order and withdrew levy of special additional excise duty (SAED) on production of crude oil (which is refined into fuels like petrol and diesel) and on export of aviation turbine fuel (ATF), diesel and petrol, he said.

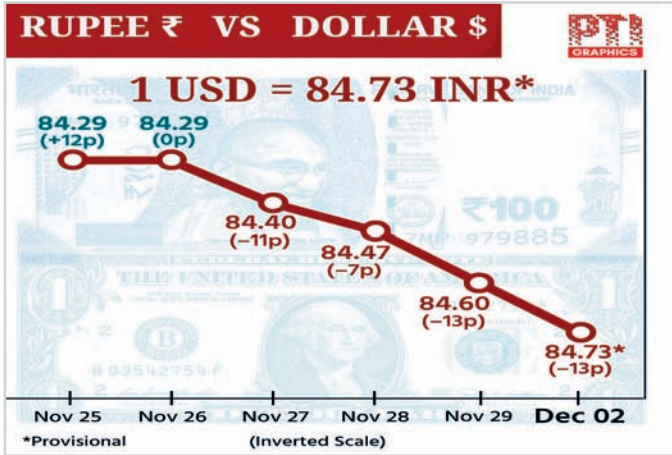


Alongside, the road and infrastructure cess (RIC) levied on export of petrol and diesel has also been withdrawn.

India first imposed windfall profit taxes July 1, 2022 joining a growing number of nations that tax super normal profits of energy companies. At that time, export duties of ₹6 per litre (USD 12 per barrel) each were levied on petrol and ATF and ₹13 a litre (USD 26 a barrel) on diesel.

A ₹23,250 per tonne (USD 40 per barrel) windfall profit tax on domestic crude production was also levied. The tax rates were reviewed every fortnight based on average oil prices in the previous two weeks.

Rupee hits all-time low



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 2: The rupee depreciated 12 paise to close at an all-time low of 84.72 against the US dollar Monday, on disappointing macroeconomic data and broad strength of the American currency in the overseas markets.

Forex traders said Asian currencies were down after Trump Rhetoric on BRICS currency, as the move may further strengthen the greenback.

US President-elect Donald Trump Saturday threatened a 100 per cent tariff on the BRIC bloc of nations if they act to undermine the US dollar.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.59 and touched the lowest level of 84.73 against the greenback during intra-day trade. The unit ended the session at an all-time low of 84.72 against the dollar, registering a fall of 12 paise over its previous close.

Friday, the rupee plunged 13 paise to settle at a fresh all-time low of 84.60 against the US dollar.

Traders said disappointing macroeconomic data and persistent foreign fund outflows also dented investor sentiments.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on strong dollar and FII outflows. A recovery in crude oil prices

may also weigh on the rupee. Donald Trump's tariff threat may further strengthen the greenback," said Anuj Choudhary -- Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan.

However, positive domestic markets may support the rupee at lower levels. Traders may take cues from US ISM manufacturing PMI data, Choudhary said, adding that USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of ₹84.50 to ₹84.95.

"The rupee is in a state of weakness... To keep it competitive, the RBI would be more than happy to contain the strength, and was a dollar buyer on 16th and 17th during the MSCI inflows when the rupee rose to 84.23," Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said.

"It must have recouped some of the dollars it had sold amounting to USD 48 billion to date as the reserves fell to USD 656 billion on the previous Friday. The data from GDP was bad for the previous quarter but the current quarter seems better than last quarter as in infrastructure output grew 3.1 per cent while manufacturing PMI for November was still in expansion mode at 56.5," he said, adding that the rupee's range for Tuesday is expected to be 84.60-84.80.

75% OF GST REVENUE COMES FROM 18% SLAB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 2: About 70-75 per cent of GST revenues collected in 2023-24 fiscal year came from the 18 per cent slab, while just 5-6 per cent came from the 12 per cent bracket, Parliament was informed Monday.

Only 6-8 per cent of the FY24 goods and services tax (GST) revenues were from the 5 per cent slab, while the highest tax slab of 28 per cent contributed 13-15 per cent to the revenues in the last fiscal year.

Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary shared the details of the proportion of GST collected (excluding compensation cess and other payments) under various tax slabs in 2023-24 in the Lok Sabha. The GST Council has constituted a six-member Group of Ministers (GoM), under Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary, to suggest rationalisation of GST rates as well as merger of

slabs to increase GST revenues.

Currently, GST is a four-tier tax structure with slabs at 5, 12, 18, and 28 per cent. Under GST, essential items are either exempted or taxed at the lowest slab, while luxury and demerit items attract the highest slab. Luxury and sin goods attract cess on top of the highest 28 per cent slab.

The average GST rate has fallen below the revenue neutral rate of 15.3 per cent, prompting the need to start discussions on GST rate rationalisation. The committee headed by former chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian on possible tax rates under GST was of the view that the Revenue Neutral Rate (RNR) should be between 15 and 15.5 per cent.

Based on current data of GST returns as available with Goods and Service Tax Network, the average GST rate for 2023-24 was 11.64 per cent, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in reply to a separate question in Lok Sabha.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 2: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended higher Monday amid buying in blue-chip stocks Reliance Industries, Infosys and HDFC Bank along with a firm trend in the US markets.

Recovering the early lost ground, the BSE benchmark Sensex climbed 445.29 points or 0.56 per cent to settle at 80,248.08. During the day, it hit a high of 80,337.82 and a low of 79,308.95.

The NSE Nifty surged 144.95 points or 0.60 per cent to 24,276.05.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, UltraTech Cement, JSW Steel, Adani Ports, Tech Mahindra, Titan, Maruti, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Steel and Reliance Industries were the biggest gainers.

NTPC, Hindustan Unilever, Kotak Mahindra Bank, IndusInd Bank and Larsen & Toubro were among the laggards.

"Markets started the week



on a positive note, rising over half a per cent despite mixed signals. The session opened weak on disappointing GDP data but saw a recovery as select heavyweight stocks across sectors gained momentum," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

The BSE midcap jumped 1.05 per cent and smallcap climbed 0.84 per cent.

Uber rolls out Asia's first water transport service in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Dec 2: Tourists visiting the iconic Dal Lake will now enjoy a hassle-free travel experience with the launch of Uber's first water transport service in Asia, aptly named 'Uber Shikara'.

This innovative initiative aims to combine technology with tradition, allowing travellers to pre-book shikara rides through the popular ride-hailing app.

The service was launched by Prabhjeet Singh, President of Uber India and South Asia, who booked the inaugural shikara ride via the app.

"Uber Shikara is our humble attempt to blend technology and tradition, enhancing accessibility and uplifting tourism in the breathtaking landscape of Kashmir," Singh stated.

An Uber spokesperson said this service marks a significant milestone for the company, as it is the first water transport offering in Asia, following similar services in select European countries like Venice, Italy.

Initially, Uber has partnered with seven local shikara owners, with plans to expand the fleet based on user demand. Rides will be available at government-regulated rates, ensuring fair pricing for tourists.

The seven shikaras are stationed at Nehru Park, an island park located in the heart of Dal Lake. Importantly, Uber will not charge any fees to its shikara partners, ensuring that the full fare goes directly to the boat operators, the company officials said.

Ruchika Tomar, Director of Communications at Uber, ex-



pressed her excitement about the launch, emphasising the importance of shikara rides for both local and international tourists.

"Anyone who comes to Srin-

nagar must experience a shikara ride, which is a timeless activity on every traveller's bucket list. Our service brings together the magic of technology and Kashmir's traditional

charm, providing a seamless experience for travellers," she said.

Wali Mohammed Bhat, President of the Shikarawala Association, highlighted the benefits of this initiative for both tourists and shikara operators.

"With Uber Shikara, tourists will no longer need to bargain, and they will enjoy standardised pricing. The shikara riders are happy with this development, as it will enhance their livelihoods," Bhat remarked.

Kunanidi Mahanta from Odisha echoed similar sentiments, noting that the convenience of online booking is a significant advantage for tourists.

"This service will not only make it easier for visitors to book rides ahead of time but will also provide a reliable source of income for shikara

riders," Mahanta said.

Each Uber Shikara ride can accommodate up to four passengers and is available for one-hour bookings daily between 10 am and 5 pm. Rides can be scheduled from 12 hours up to 15 days in advance.

Bhat anticipates an increase in participation from local shikara owners, stating, "With around 4,000 shikaras operating in Dal Lake, we expect more operators to join Uber, enhancing the overall experience for tourists while boosting business for shikara operators."

Uber has previously established its presence in Srinagar with cab services, and now, with the introduction of Uber Shikara, it aims to revolutionise the way tourists experience the enchanting waters of Dal Lake.

SOCCKER SHOCKER

56 KILLED AS FOOTBALL MATCH TURNS BATTLEFIELD

At least around 56 people were killed in a stampede during a clash between fans following a controversial referee decision

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Conakry, Dec 2: Dozens of people were killed Sunday in clashes between fans at a football match in N’Zerekore, Guinea’s second largest city, hospital sources told AFP, describing scenes of mass carnage. “There are bodies lined up as far as the eye can see in the hospital. Others are lying on the floor in the hallways. The morgue is full,” one doctor said on condition of anonymity be-

cause he was not authorised to speak to the media. He said “there are around 56 dead”, with bodies filling the local hospital and morgue. Another doctor said there were “dozens of dead”. Videos circulating on social media, which AFP was unable to immediately verify, showed scenes of chaos in the street outside the match and numerous bodies lying on the ground. Angry demonstrators also



vandalised and set fire to the N’Zerekore police station, according to witnesses.

“It all started with a con-

tested decision by the referee. Then fans invaded the pitch,” a witness told AFP, asking that his name be with-

Major disasters in football stadiums

Oct 2022, Indonesia: At least 125 people died and more than 320 were injured after a football match in East Java involving Arema FC and Persebaya Surabaya. Arema FC supporters invaded the pitch at Kanjuruhan Stadium in Malang following a 3-2 defeat and police fired tear gas, triggering a crush and suffocation.

Jan 2022, Cameroon: At least eight people died and 38 were injured in a crush at the Yaounde Olembe Stadium in Cameroon before the host country's Africa Cup of Nations last-16 game against Comoros.

Feb 2012, Egypt: Fans rioted at the end of a match between rivals Al-Masry and Al-Ahly in the city of Port Said. At least 73 people were killed and more than 1,000 injured, and the Egyptian league was suspended for two years.

March 2009, Ivory Coast: At least 19 people were killed during chaos at Abidjan's Felix Houphouet-Boigny stadium before a World Cup soccer qualifying match against Malawi.

May 2001, Ghana: Around 126 people were killed in a crush at Accra's main soccer stadium when police fired tear gas at rioting fans in one of Africa's worst soccer disasters.

held for safety reasons. Local media said the match

was part of a tournament organised in honour of Guinea's

junta leader, Mamadi Doumbouya, who seized power in a 2021 coup and has installed himself as president. Such tournaments have become common in the West African nation as Doumbouya eyes a potential run in presidential elections expected next year and political alliances form. Guinea has been led by the military since soldiers ousted President Alpha Conde in 2021. It is one of a growing number of West African countries, including Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, where the military has taken power and delayed a return to civilian rule.

Pujara pitches for Bumrah as skipper

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 2: Cheteshwar Pujara feels pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah possesses all the qualities of being a good skipper and India should look at him as long term captaincy candidate once Rohit Sharma steps down.

In the absence of regular skipper Rohit, Bumrah led an under-pressure Indian team to their most dominant win in Australia.

“He is (a viable long term captaincy option) without any doubt,” Pujara said on ESPN Cricinfo.

“The way he has showed that in difficult circumstances when we had a tough series at home and when you are playing a first Test match in Australia and to put up a show like that.”

“I think he has the capability of leading the team and he’s a team’s man. You look at him he never only talks about himself, he talks about the team, the other players. What advice

he would give,” he added. India were handed a 0-3

I think he has the capability of leading the team and he's a team's man. You look at him he never only talks about himself, he talks about the team, the other players

CHETESHWAR PUJARA | TEST VETERAN, INDIA

home series loss by New Zealand, which also considerably dented their hope of making their third consecutive World Test Championship Final.

An all-format bowler, Bumrah produced a mesmerizing opening spell as Australian batters had no answer to Indian’s quality in their own back-

yard. “There are times when players don’t need advice and he accepts it,



he says that.. if there is an experienced player he will keep quite. That is the sign of a good captain. He is very down to earth, very friendly with players in the dressing room and eager to help and he is good person to chat with. Even outside of cricket he has a humble personality,” Pujara said.

Bumrah will relinquish captaincy as Rohit Sharma returns for the second

Test which is a pink ball fixture in Adelaide, starting December 6.

Pink-ball Test can be unpredictable, says Steve Smith

Adelaide: The rampaging Indian team aside, a Pink-ball Test brings with it its own set of challenges, but Australian batter Steve Smith is “focused” on taking them all head on in the game beginning here Friday. Australia will enter the day/night match -- second of the five-match series -- trailing, following a heavy defeat in the opener at Perth. Smith and Marnus Labuschagne, the two batting mainstays of the Australian team, were dismissed cheaply for low scores in the first Test, which Australia lost by 295 runs. “Pink ball, it can be challenging at different times of the day or night depending on where you bat and the situation of the game and the ball and all those kind of things,” Smith was quoted as saying in a Star Sports video. “So just being really switched on. The pink ball can be a little bit unpredictable at times. So yeah, just being really focussed,” he added. Australia skipper Pat Cummins also spoke on the challenges of playing a Pink-ball Test, but felt the basics remain the same. “I think all the basics are the same really. You know sometimes the game goes on different paces as the ball gets older and softer but it’s Test cricket,” Cummins said.

SHORT TAKES

Pranavi sees career best performance

Malaga: Indian golfer Pranavi Urs registered her best pay day as she finished third in the season-ending Andalucia Costa del Sol Open de España on the Ladies European Tour (LET) here. Playing in her first year on the LET, Pranavi rounded off the week with four-under 68 to total 14-under and sole third. Pranavi picked up 42,000 euros and rose to 17th on the LET Order of Merit. “I couldn’t have asked for a better week. Well, I could if I had won, but I was close yesterday until the 13th hole. I know where I can potentially be and how well I can play under pressure. I think I handled that situation pretty well yesterday, so it was a good week overall,” she said.

ITTF Mixed Team WC: India lose to China

Chengdu: India suffered to its second straight group stage loss in the ITTF Mixed Team World Cup after being blanked 8-0 by the hosts China Monday. In Sunday’s Group 1 opening match of the competition’s first stage, the Indian team, without the experienced campaigners like Manika Batra, Sreeja Akula, Sharath Kamal and Sathiyan Gnanasekaran, lost 3-8 to the United States. India are now at the bottom of the group standings, behind top seeds China, Australia, and the USA, after suffering back-to-back defeats.

India beat Japan in Under-19 Asia Cup

Sharjah: Mohamed Amaan led from the front with an unbeaten century, while KP Karthikeya and opener Ayush Mhatre made fifties to hand India a comfortable 211-run victory over minnows Japan in the Under-19 Asia Cup here Monday. Amaan slammed an unbeaten 122 off just 118 balls, a knock studded with only seven boundaries, after India were invited to bat. Besides Amaan, Karthikeya made 57 off 49 balls with the help of five fours and one six, while Mhatre’s fiery 29-ball 54-run knock featured six boundaries and four hits over the fence.

International University Bilateral Cricket Series inaugurated at KIIT



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 2: The International University Bilateral Cricket Series was inaugurated Monday at the KIIT cricket stadium. Organised collaboratively by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), KIIT University, and the Odisha Cricket Association, the series was inaugurated by KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta.

For the first time, KIIT University is hosting such a bilateral cricket series, with India and Australia participating. Selected players from various universities in India and Australia are competing in the series. The schedule includes three T20 matches December 2 and 3, followed by a one-day

match December 5. KIIT is providing accommodation and hospitality for all players, coaches, and officials.

The inaugural ceremony was graced by prominent dignitaries, including Professor Baljit Singh Sekhon, Joint Secretary (Sports) of AIU; David Anton Sambood, Executive Member of the International University Sports Federation and Chair of University Sports Australia; and Dr Gaganendu Dash, DG, Sports at KIIT.

India won the toss and elected to bowl first. Australia posted a total of 149 runs in 19.4 overs. In response, India scored 144 runs in their allotted 20 overs, losing 7 wickets in the process. Australia won the match by five runs.

Verstappen maintains winning streak

F1 champion sees ninth win of the year, wins action-packed Qatar Grand Prix after Lando Norris penalised

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lusail, Qatar, Dec 2: From a smashed mirror and crashes to unusually severe penalties, there were plenty of hazards at the Qatar Grand Prix.

Max Verstappen steered clear of them all to follow up his Formula 1 drivers’ title with his ninth win of the year Sunday.

Lando Norris, Verstappen’s closest title rival until he secured the championship last week in Las Vegas, was trying to overtake the Dutch driver for the lead until he was dropped to the back of the field by a penalty for failing to slow for yellow warning flags.

Verstappen, who secured his fourth consecutive title in Las



Vegas last week, has won two of the last three races but hadn’t won in dry conditions since June. “It was a lot of fun out there,” Verstappen said. “Very happy. It’s been a while in the dry to be this competitive. Very proud of everyone within the team.”

Verstappen disposed of another rival off the line, beating George Russell into the first corner. The Mercedes driver had been elevated to pole position in Verstappen’s place after a contentious dispute in qualifying that got Verstappen a one-place penalty for driving too slowly.

WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

Gukesh, Liren look to end hat-trick of draws

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Singapore, Dec 2: Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh and defending champion Ding Liren will be aiming to break the deadlock after three consecutive draws when they square off in the seventh round of the World Chess Championship here Tuesday, having stayed on equal footing for most part of the interesting showdown.

Hailed as the favourite to win by many chess pundits, the 18-year-old Gukesh, who is the youngest ever challenger to the title, has not been able to really show his class and has often depended on the Chinese to play safe or make mistakes in decent positions. The two are currently locked at three points each.

If game one was a wake-up call for Gukesh after a loss with white pieces, the second game was a confidence-booster for the Indian as Liren barely did anything and allowed an easy draw.

Gukesh won the third game but only after Liren miscalculated from what may have been a promising position.

In the fourth game Gukesh played solidly again when Liren gave nothing away out of



an irregular opening and it was again a draw.

At this point, it was clear that Liren was banking on Gukesh to make mistakes.

Game five saw Gukesh fighting for the initiative yet again and went too far as he came under threat in the resulting endgame. Liren yet again failed to spot them and it was another draw. The sixth game of many world championship matches have massive history and this time too, it was not disappointing for the fans.

In the last World championship, Liren had beaten Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia in the sixth game and back in 1972, Bobby Fischer had beaten Boris Spassky in what is a favourite of many chess fans across the world even today.

The next three games where in Gukesh will play with two whites and a solo black is perhaps the best opportunity for the Indian to go ahead in the match and put pressure.

WFI allows Railways wrestlers to represent their states in Nationals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 2: The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) will allow the Railways’ wrestlers to represent their respective states at the upcoming National Championship after the departmental side opted not to send entries for the annual meet, a decision which the parent body will discuss at its AGM.

One of the crucial affiliated bodies of the WFI, Railways Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) has been represented by several reputed wrestlers in the past but no team was selected for the Nationals, starting December 6 in Bangalore, since the national federation remains suspended. As many as 81 men’s wrestlers, including both freestyle and Greco Roman, are attached with the Railways. A coaching camp for these wrestlers is currently underway in Kapurthala, but the trials to select teams for the Nationals were not conducted, leaving the athletes baffled.

“There is no fault of these wrestlers, why should they suffer and lose a crucial year. Their progress in career depends on performance in the Nationals since the top performers get an opportunity to represent the country in future,” a WFI official told PTI.

Sindhu set to tie knot

New Delhi: Two-time Olympic medallist shuttler PV Sindhu will tie the knot December 22 in Udaipur. The former world champion, who ended a long title drought with victory at the Syed Modi International in Lucknow Sunday, will marry Hyderabad-based Venkata Datta Sai, who is an executive director at Posidex Technologies. “The two families knew each other but it was only a month ago that everything was finalised. This was the only possible window as her schedule will be hectic from January,” Sindhu’s father, PV Ramana, told PTI. “So that is the reason the two families decided to have the marriage ceremony on December 22. The reception will be held in Hyderabad on December 24. She will start her training soon after as the next season is going to be important.” The wedding-related events will begin December 20.