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MYANMAR: GENERALS UNDER FIRE

WORLD 9

ISRAELI AIRSTRIKES ON GAZA RESUME AFTER TRUCE ENDS

MONEY 10

NIFTY HITS LIFETIME HIGH, SENSEX JUMPS 493 POINTS

BHUBANESWAR, SATURDAY DECEMBER 2, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹4



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INDIA BEAT AUSTRALIA BY 20 RUNS
12 SPORTS

Modi proposes India as host for COP33 in 2028

PTI ■ DUBAI

Asserting that the world does not have much time to correct the mistakes of the last century, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday announced a "Green Credit Initiative" focused on creating carbon sinks through people's participation and also proposed to host the UN climate conference in 2028, or COP33, in India.

Addressing the high-level segment for heads of state and governments during the UN climate conference (COP28) here, Modi called for a planet proactive and positive initiative and said the Green Credits Initiative goes beyond the commercial mindset associated with carbon credits.

"It focuses on creating carbon sinks through people's participation and I invite all of you to join this initiative," he said, stressing the world does not have much time to correct the mistakes of the last century.

This initiative is similar to the Green Credit Programme, notified domestically in October. It is an innovative market-based mechanism designed to reward voluntary environmental actions in different sectors by individuals, communities and the private sector.

Asserting that India has presented a great example to the world of striking balance between development and environment conservation, the Prime Minister said, India is among the only few countries in the world on track to achieve its Nationally Determined Contributions or the national



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with UAE President and Ruler of Abu Dhabi HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan during the COP28 in the UAE on Friday

India will bring back its soldiers from Qatar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is exerting all possible efforts to repatriate eight former Indian Navy personnel who were sentenced to death in Qatar last month, stated Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar on Friday.

"We are working closely to ensure that their interests are taken care of," Admiral Kumar mentioned during a media briefing. "The Government of India is making exhaustive efforts to ensure their safe return," he affirmed.

Detailed report on P4

action plans to restrict global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the guardrail to avoid worsening of the impact of the changing climate.

Modi was the only leader to join COP28 President Sultan Al Jaber on the stage along with the UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Steill at the opening plenary.

"Over the past century, a small section of humanity has indiscriminately exploited nature. However, the entire humanity is paying the price for this,

especially people living in the Global South," he said.

"Thinking only about our own interests will only lead the world into darkness," the prime minister added.

Modi's statement came in the context that the poor and developing nations bear the brunt of extreme climate events such as floods, droughts, heat/cold waves as a result of changing climate due to historic carbon emissions by the richer countries that have led to increased global warming.

The Prime Minister called for maintaining a balance between mitigation and adaptation and said that energy transition across the world must be "just and inclusive."

He also called rich countries to transfer technologies to help developing nations combat climate change.

Modi has been championing the Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE movement), which he had announced at the Glasgow COP in 2021, urging countries to adopt planet-friendly living practices and move away from deeply consumerist behaviour.

Citing a study by the International Energy Agency, Modi said, "This approach (LiFE) can reduce carbon emissions by 2 billion tonnes." He called on the countries to work together and be decisive against the climate crisis.

"We shall cooperate with each other and shall support each other. We need to give all developing countries our fair share in the global carbon budget," said the Prime Minister.

If India's proposal to host

COP33 is accepted, it would be the next big global conference in the country after the G20 Summit earlier this year.

India hosted COP8 in New Delhi in 2002 where countries adopted the Delhi Ministerial Declaration which called for efforts by developed countries to transfer technology and minimise the impact of climate change on developing countries.

Rich nations should completely reduce their carbon footprint "well before" 2050, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday while calling on the world to deliver a concrete outcome on finance to help developing and poor nations combat climate change.

Climate science defines carbon budget as the amount of greenhouse gases that can be emitted for a given level of global warming (1.5 degrees Celsius in this case).

Developed countries have already consumed more than 80 per cent of the global carbon budget, leaving developing and poor countries with very little carbon space for the future. Modi highlighted that India is home to 17 per cent of the world's population, but its share of global carbon emissions is less than 4 per cent.

"India is one of the very few economies in the world that is on track to achieve its NDC targets," he said.

India achieved its emissions intensity-related targets 11 years ahead of the committed time frame and non-fossil fuel targets nine years ahead of schedule.

Bengaluru hit by bomb threat

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Sixty-eight private schools in and around the city on Friday received emails warning of bomb threat on their premises, triggering panic among the staff and parents, police said. The school authorities immediately alerted police, who reached the institutions concerned with the bomb disposal squads and anti-sabotage check teams, they said, while indicating the bomb threat could be a hoax.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said he has asked police to seriously investigate the e-mail and its source, and provide adequate security to schools and temples as a precautionary measure.

State Home Minister G Parameshwara said the message had come from an email id "kharijites@beebie.Com," saying bombs have been placed in the schools in Bengaluru and threatened to kill children and staff.

"We are seriously verifying it and its source. I have spoken to the Commissioner and officials and have given the necessary instructions and verification on whether it is true or hoax and measures to be taken accordingly. We will verify as to who is behind it and if there is an involvement of any terrorist organisation, and take measures accordingly. For now, it cannot be said who is behind it. The message in the email asks people to convert and other things-it will be verified," he told reporters.

Among 68 schools which received the bomb threat, 48 of them are located within the city while the rest are in Bengaluru Rural limits, police added. The students and staff were immediately evacuated from the school premises, police said, adding no suspicious objects were found yet and prima facie, it looks like a hoax message. City Police Commissioner B Dayananda said bomb detection and disposal squads were sent to all these schools, and most likely it seemed to be a hoax. "Earlier also similar threat letters and emails had come to schools and they were found to be a hoax for mischief and police had identified those behind it. Police are verifying today's mails too...Officials and personnel have gone to all these spots. I appeal to people not to worry, as most likely all these are hoax calls (mails)," he said.

Another senior officer said the police teams have not found any suspicious objects on any of the school premises. "Prime facie, it appears to be a hoax message. We are also in the process of registering a case in this regard and a thorough investigation is underway." Students had already reached schools when they got to know about the email threat. Panic-stricken parents rushed from their respective offices and homes to get their children back home safely.

In Keonjhar 8 killed, 12 injured as van rams into parked truck

Victims, members of two families, were coming for Tarini darshan

PNS ■ KEONJHAR

Eight persons were killed and 12 others critically injured when a van by which they were travelling rammmed into a stationary truck on National Highway-20 near Balijodi in Keonjhar district, just a few kilometers from the Maa Tarini temple in the wee hours of Friday.

The van with 20 persons on board was on its way to the Maa Tarini shrine in Ghatagaon from Digapahandi in Ganjam when the mishap occurred. The travellers had to have darshan of the goddess.

While seven passengers of the van died on the spot, one other succumbed in the hospital.

As per reports, the deceased



and the injured were from two families from Podamari in Digapahandi. Some deceased were relatives of former Rajya Sabha MP Renubala Pradhan.

The injured were initially admitted to the Ghatagaon hospital. Later, they were shifted to the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack after their conditions deteriorated.

While the exact reason behind the accident was yet to be ascertained, it was suspected that the driver who was speeding on the highway lost

sight of the parked truck and hit it from the rear.

The accident was so severe that the van turned into a mangled heap.

Ghatagaon SDPO Surashan Gangai, who reached the spot, said, "The members of two families from Digapahandi were on their way to have Maa Tarini's darshan. The van came at a high speed and hit a parked truck from behind. We will take steps to stop trucks from parking on the road."

Expressing grief over the

accident, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced an ex-gratia of Rs 3 lakh for the next of kin of each deceased. The amount will be provided from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

Besides, the CM also declared free treatment for the injured persons.

Ironically, the serious accident took place on the first day of the 'Zero Fatality Week' being observed by the State Government for embracing safety driving practices and safer roads.

UGC directs campuses to showcase nation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The craze for selfies among youngsters will now be part of the curriculum on institutional campuses as the Centre has prepared guidelines for universities and colleges to highlight the country's progress. Selfie points will be established within the campus, allowing students, staff, and visitors to take selfies with achievements as background in various formats, including 3D images.

The national university regulator, University Grants Commission (UGC), has directed universities and colleges nationwide to set up selfie points at strategic locations on campuses to raise awareness among youngsters about India's achievements in various fields. The institutions can only install selfie points following approved designs in 3D layouts shared by the Ministry of Education. A UGC official stated that the



themes for the selfie points encompass a broad spectrum of national initiatives, such as "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat," and the major thrust areas of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

"These selfie points will not only serve as a source of pride but also enlighten every citizen about the transformative initiatives that have propelled India's growth on the global stage. Students and visitors should be encouraged to capture and share these special moments on social media platforms, fostering a sense of collective pride," said University Grants Commission (UGC) Secretary Manish Joshi. "There is a unique opportuni-

ty to harness the energy and enthusiasm of youngsters, molding their minds with inspiration drawn from India's progress in diverse fields. The selfie points in these institutions will emerge as a dynamic and engaging place to instill a sense of national pride and awareness among youngsters and inspire future generations," added the official.

The Education Ministry has been undertaking various initiatives at both secondary and higher education levels to generate patriotic, cultural, and nationalist awareness in recent years. Initiatives such as Tamil Kashi Sangam have been connecting the student community between southern and northern India. Other programs aim to bridge the gap between the northeastern states and the central and southern parts of the country as part of academic progression. The Prime Minister's Scheme

for Mentoring Young Authors (YUVA), aligned with the vision of a Global Citizen and as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, is training young authors below 30 years to promote reading, writing, and the book culture in the country, projecting India and Indian writings globally.

Another program, the India@75 Series, documents the contributions of various personalities, the making of new dynamic cities, historic events, and other socio-cultural, political, economic ideas and themes that have shaped India into a mature, independent, strong nation post-1947. The series focuses on imparting these ideas in a reader-friendly manner to young readers (12+) of the country, standing on four conceptual pillars: People, Places, Events, and Themes.

The publication of a set of 75 books on freedom fighters is also part of the series.

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Rs 220-cr cocaine seized from ship in Paradip

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The Odisha police, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and custom officials on Thursday night seized 22 packets of cocaine worth a market value of Rs 220 crore from a cargo ship anchored at the Paradip Port.
According to customs officer Madhab Chandra Mishra, the cocaine packets were recovered from the ship MV Debi.
"We had concrete intelligence inputs about cocaine being carried in the ship. During raids, we found it was hidden under a magnate plate," said Mishra.
The seized contraband, weighing about 20 kilograms, was sent for testing to the State Forensic Laboratory in Bhubaneswar. Later, the test results revealed that the "pow-



der-like" substance in the form of cakes was indeed cocaine and was being smuggled.
As per reports, the ship arrived at Paradip from Indonesia's Gresik port and was scheduled to depart for

Denmark carrying steel plates from Odisha.
However, a crane operator first noticed some suspicious packets in the vessel and informed the authorities who came with a dog squad and

seized the packets.
At first, the packets looked like an explosive device. But after the officials scanned the packets, it was revealed that it was drugs concealed in small rectangular packets.



Congress workers led by AICC observer A Chella Kumar and PCC president Sarat Pattanayak are on their Tulashi Yatra to Puri in support of their demands, including opening of all four doors of the Jagannath Temple. *Pioneer photo*

In Angul Man gets 10-yr RI for raping woman doc

PNS ■ ANGUL
The Angul Additional District and Sessions Judge on Friday sentenced a person to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) for raping a woman doctor two years ago in the district.
The judge convicted accused Sukanta Behera (35) under Sections 376 (1) and 450 of IPC.
The court also imposed a penalty of Rs 25,000 on him. Non-payment of the penalty would invite a jail term for additional one year.
As per the case records, the woman doctor, posted at Chhendipada Community Health Centre (CHC) in Angul, had ordered dinner

from a nearby hotel on June 29, 2021. Sukanta, the son of the hotel owner, had gone to the official quarters of the woman doctor to deliver the food.
Finding her alone, Sukanta had raped the woman and threatened her not to reveal the incident to anyone.
The victim had lodged an FIR in this regard with the Chhendipada police. Subsequently, police registered a case and arrested the accused.
Angul Additional District and Sessions Judge Biranchi Narayan Mishra convicted the accused after examining at least 11 witnesses and other evidence of the case, said Public Prosecutor Pradeep Kumar Das.

CM launches 5th edition of Eco-Retreat

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
At 3 more locations
Eco-Retreat 2023-24, Odisha's much-awaited glamping event, is back, this time in a much bigger way. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik virtually inaugurated its 5th edition at three more locations, Konark, Sonapur and Bhitarkanika on Friday.
On November 1, the CM had inaugurated Eco Retreat Putsil, Daringbadi, Hirakud and Satkosia. The event, this year, promises exotic holidaying experiences with exciting water sports and other recreational activities. While Eco Retreat Konark has 70 cottages, Bhitarkanika (Pentha) and Sonapur have 25 each.
The CM said, "After having



successfully organised four editions, Odisha Government's flagship product Eco Retreat has been highly appreciated by the travel and tourism fraternity for its sustainable model incorporating best practices in waste to wealth and holistic resource management while offering tourists a more refined leisure hospitality akin to star category resorts."

Notably, the Eco Retreats in Odisha are committed towards being a zero-waste discharge tourism initiative, ensuring that the environment remains unharmed. These retreats are strategically positioned in ecologically sensitive areas. Odisha Tourism has taken measures to ensure that the tourism activities in these destinations have a minimal impact on the natural environment.
Tourists visiting these destinations this winter can experience 5-star facilities through glamorous camps amidst the lap of nature. Various activities like guided tours, adventure activities like water sport, paragliding are included to make their stay memorable.
To book your stay, visit odishaecoretreats.com.

Depression forms over Bay of Bengal

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Storm likely by Dec 3; no warning for Odisha
The well-marked low pressure over south-east Bay of Bengal (BoB) has concentrated into a depression at 5:30 am on Friday over south-east and adjacent south-west BoB, said the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday.
The system is currently at about 790 km east-south-east of Puducherry and 800 km south-east of Chennai. It is likely to intensify further into a deep depression and later into a cyclonic storm on December 3.
Under the influence of the cyclonic storm, squally wind speed reaching 40-50 kmph gusting to 60 kmph is likely to occur over southwest BoB from December 1 morning

and 50-60 kmph gusting to 70 kmph from December 2 morning. The wind speed will increase to gale wind speed reaching 60-70 kmph gusting to 80 kmph from December 3 morning for the subsequent 24 hours.
Sea condition is likely to remain rough to very rough from December 1 morning becoming very rough to high from December 3 morning for the subsequent 24 hours over southwest Bay of Bengal.
Fishermen have been advised not to venture into deep sea areas of southwest Bay of Bengal from December 1 and west central Bay of Bengal from December 2 till further notice.

buy some food. However, an altercation took place on November 5 and he held a grudge against Sasmita. He then purchased a knife from the shop of one Subash Sahu on November 6 evening and asked his friends to watch a sensational news on TV at 9 pm.
He then went to the spot and waited for the customers to leave. He attacked Sasmita with the knife when her husband left the stall to fetch water from a nearby tap. He fled the spot by taking a lift from a passerby and threw the knife on the way near a transformer. The weapon of offence has been seized and the accused was forwarded to court.

Pandian visits city Inter-State Bus Terminal

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Directs for project completion by Dec 31
5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman VK Pandian on Friday visited the Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT), Baramunda here and reviewed various ongoing works for their timely completion, after which the ISBT will be a world-class transit infrastructure in the capital city to benefit the people of Odisha and also other States.
Pandian enquired about the facilities like commuters' waiting facilities, proper sanitation, Ahaar centre, installation of proper illumination, toilets, etc.
He also advised the agencies to adopt smart IT-driven

infrastructure, develop creative ambience for the travellers using local art and advised to ensure arrangements of idle bus parking, dormitory for bus drivers, sufficient parking of auto rickshaw, taxi, two-wheelers, etc., for the visitors. He also asked to involve all stakeholders like taxi association, bus owners' association, OSRTC, etc.
Pandian instructed officials to complete all the construction activities by end of the year 2023.
The ISBT project, being implemented by the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) over 15.5 acres of land, will have facilities for the convenience of the passengers, office spaces, parking, food court, restaurant, commercial spaces, etc.

Konark Fest begins with Odishi, Bharatnatyam

PNS ■ KONARK
Also, Int'l Sand Art Fest kicks off at Chandrabhaga
The 13th International Sand Art Festival and 34th edition of Konark Festival were inaugurated virtually by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday.
"I welcome everyone to this beautiful open-air auditorium in the premises of this 13th century UNESCO World Heritage Site. With the Sun Temple acting as the grand backdrop for the stage, together we'll witness the beauty of Odishi and other Indian classical dance performances by several prolific artists from India and across the globe," said Patnaik in his video message.



Minister of Tourism Aswini Patra and Minister of Electronics and IT, Sports and Youth Services and Home, Tusharkanti Behera joined as guests of honour and lit the ceremonial lamp as part of the inaugural ceremony. The five-

day programme is organised by the State Department of Tourism in association with Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi (OSNA) and Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC).
The inaugural show wit-

nessed Odishi performance by Soor Mandir - Jyotsnarani Sahoo and Group, Cuttack. The maiden performance of the evening showcased Odishi dance recitals on NAAD NINAAD, a dance that started with an invocation to Lord Jagannath and Lord Surya with the Surya Mantra followed by SARANAM, a dance that signified the power of surrendering to the Lord.
This was followed by an ethereal Bharatnatyam performance by Praveen Kumar and Group of Chithkala School of Academy from Bengaluru. They showcased dance recitals named Jathiswaram, Shivanjali and Thillana. Simultaneously, the pristine Chandrabhaga Beach will witness thematic sand arts by 114 renowned sand artists from across the globe during the five days.

In city Youth held for killing woman eatery owner

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The Chandaka police on Friday arrested the accused in the murder of a woman, who was stabbed at the Gothapatna market in the capital city on November 6. The arrested was identified as Mithun Jena (34) of Gangapatna.
The deceased Sasmita Behera (35) of Krishnapuri Colony, along with her husband, ran a tiffin stall near the Revenue Officers' Training Institute at Gothapatna.
On a complaint lodged by the deceased's brother Bipin Behera, police began an investigation, which revealed that Mithun had visited the stall to

buy some food. However, an altercation took place on November 5 and he held a grudge against Sasmita. He then purchased a knife from the shop of one Subash Sahu on November 6 evening and asked his friends to watch a sensational news on TV at 9 pm.
He then went to the spot and waited for the customers to leave. He attacked Sasmita with the knife when her husband left the stall to fetch water from a nearby tap. He fled the spot by taking a lift from a passerby and threw the knife on the way near a transformer. The weapon of offence has been seized and the accused was forwarded to court.

'One Nation One Election' not compatible with India's federal setup

Though the idea of One Nation and One Election sounds good but it is very difficult to implement it under India's federal constitutional setup which enshrines multiparty democracy under a diverse, regional, political, social and cultural environment. The Constitution guarantees internal sovereignty to the States giving the States the law making power on the subjects enumerated in the State list. 'One Nation One Election', theory may not be compatible to constitutional values of dual polity, as both States and Union enjoy sovereign power distinctly assigned to them under the Constitution.
India being a Union of States, both the Chief Minister and Prime Minister are heads of their respec-



RAMA CHANDRA PANDA

pective Government who have discretion to dissolve the respective legislature to call for fresh election, when the term of any House expires or when the Chief Minister or Prime Minister would decide to seek

a fresh mandate from the people. The statutory life of a Legislature is five years and unless it is dissolved earlier due to defection or otherwise. In the circumstances extending or reducing tenure of a Legislature by statutory provision would invite multiple constitutional and political problems.
The concept of holding of simultaneous elections practically ended in a fiasco since the 70s due to manipulation of some national parties ruling at the Centre, as they engineered defections in opposition ruled State Legislatures, causing fall of the duly elected State Governments or breaking State Governments by misusing of Article 356, leading to midterm elections.
Therefore, the question that often crops up is why should the re-

gional parties suffer for the wrongdoing of the national parties? Elections are fundamentally a prerequisite to elect distinctively for different Legislatures. With 1.4 billion populations of the country and diverse political, social and ethnic entities, multi phase election aims balancing the authorities between the Union and the States. Since different political parties often take reins of governance in States, separate elections give the voters a chance to build and shape local leaders that creates competitive and multi-tier leadership at regional level. One Nation One Election concept grossly is antithetical to regional aspirations, which would weaken regional parties and in all probability would undermine regional and cultural interests of the

States harming growth of balance of power.
To protect purity of the elections, there is a need to outlaw every kind of defections, a disease that has harmed the health of politics. Luring a legislator directly or indirectly to change the party should be treated as a criminal offence and a judicial clarity would be helpful to check the disease. The need of the hour is to change circumstances that have weakened multi-party system, stopping unwanted and frequent defections, and facilitating equitable opportunity to opposition/regional parties to raise election funds for their survival and taking other electoral reforms to prevent use of black money and muscle power.
Democracy has no alternative, as elections being fundamental it can-

not be valued in terms of money/election expenditure. Pre election Model Code of Conduct may impede States taking up new project for three months, but it does not any way affects carrying on development works sanctioned during the earlier period of 4.9 years. In case, the Government is determined to adopt the One Nation One Election concept, the pros and cons of such a legislation including post legislation consequences should be examined threadbare to make it compatible to our constitutional philosophy. The matter needs wide consultations among political parties at length to arrive at a consensus before bringing the required legislative measures.
The frequent election is a man-made problem arising from defec-

tions which has undermined stability of the State Governments since 1967, and warranted midterm elections, for which neither the people nor the Constitution is responsible but those who misuse governance to engineer defection are responsible. Dr Ambedkar had remarked them as 'vile' in his concluding speech in the Constituent Assembly. In the present circumstances it would not be wise constitutionally to resynchronize the terms of the Legislatures by amending the Constitution as the same eventually would impede basic philosophy of constitutional federalism.
(The writer is a former Deputy Speaker, Odisha Assembly, Phone No- 9437412877. Email- pandarc@gmail.com Views expressed are personal)

4 Odia workers rescued from tunnel return

CM extends Rs 2-lakh assistance to each

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Four Odia workers, who were rescued from an under-construction tunnel in Uttarakhand after a 17-day-long struggle, reached their home State on Friday.

They arrived in Bhubaneswar by a special flight from New Delhi. Labour Minister Sarada Prasad Nayak and various labour organisations welcomed them.

The four workers later met Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at the Navven Niwas. The CM extended an assistance of Rs 2 lakh to each of them.

Minister Nayak said, "I would like to thank Chief Min-



ister Naveen Patnaik and 5T Chairman VK Pandian who took prompt steps for the rescue of stranded Odia workers in Uttarakhand."

Total five workers from Odisha, Dhiren Nayak of Badakudar and Bisweswar Nayak of Jogibandh in Mayurbhanj, Raju Nayak of Kuldihia in Balasore, Bhagaban Bhotra of Nabarangpur, Tapan Mandal of Bhadrak district, among 41 others were trapped

SCB University's 2nd campus merged with DD varsity

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Higher Education Department has announced the merger of 2nd campus of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University with the Dharanidhar University, Keonjhar.

As per a notification, all the sanctioned posts of 2nd campus of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University shall be transferred to Dharanidhar University.

All the students enrolled at 2nd campus of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University will continue to be under jurisdiction of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo

University till completion of their course. The teaching faculties of 2nd campus of MSCB University who opted for Dharanidhar University shall be absorbed against the vacancy in the Dharanidhar University as the posts of 2nd campus is also absorbed in the Dharanidhar University.

New admissions will be under Dharanidhar University from the date of incorporation of Dharanidhar University or any other date as decided by Dharanidhar University.

The Government land allotted in favour of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University (2nd campus) shall be alienated in favour of

Dharanidhar University as its ownership is vested with DD University.

No fresh admission of students shall be made in the 2nd campus of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University with effect from 2023-24. Fresh admission in this premise will be done under DD University only.

The Registrar of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University shall hand over all official files/ records/ documents of 2nd campus to the Registrar of Dharanidhar University who shall keep them under safe custody of Dharanidhar University for future reference.

INBRIEF

SEX RACKET BUSTED IN BHUBANESWAR

Bhubaneswar: The Commissionerate police on Friday claimed to have busted a sex racket at Kharavel Nagar in the capital city. Police detained two persons in this connection and rescued four women. The sex racket was operating from a building. The signboard of a pharmaceutical firm had been put up outside the building. However, the kingpin of the racket managed to give a slip to police. The rescued women would be sent to the reformation centre and the two other persons would be forwarded to court, police said.

UTKAL VARSITY GETS NAAC A+ GRADE

Bhubaneswar: The Utkal University, the premier public university in the State, has been awarded A+ Grade with a final point of 3.26 by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) of the University Grants Commission (UGC). A NAAC team had visited the Utkal University from September 26 to 28.

MISHRA NEW CPRO OF EAST COAST RAILWAY

Bhubaneswar: Ashoka Kumar Mishra, an officer of the 2011 batch of the Indian Railway Services of Electrical Engineers (IRSEE), has taken over as the new Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) of East Coast Railway. Prior to this, he worked as Deputy General Manager of ECoR.



WORLD AIDS DAY AT PPA HOSPITAL

Paradip: The World AIDS Day was observed at the PPA Hospital with the theme "Let Communities Lead". A walkathon was organised to create awareness about AIDS. PPA Chair-



man PL Haranadh administered the pledge on the occasion to the gathering and flagged off the walkathon. Doctors, paramedical staffs of PPA Hospital along with HoDs of the PPA, commandant CISF with his staff, Volunteers of Paradip Sakhyarata Samiti, volunteers of NGOs working on AIDS, transgender and general public participated with enthusiasm. Further, a screening camp for truckers was organized. By the time of reporting, none was found positive for AIDS.

XIMB HOLD 'X-HOOPS' BASKETBALL EXTRAVAGANZA

Bhubaneswar: The Xavier Institute of Management Bhubaneswar (XIMB) presents "X-Hoops," a 3vs3 basketball tournament open for all, uniting participants from schools, colleges, B-schools and corporates across Odisha. The event epitomises the institute's aim to promote sportsmanship, teamwork and community engagement. X-Hoops promises a display of skill and sportsmanship scheduled to be held on December 3 at the XIMB Old Campus, Jaydev Vihar. The event also promises a pool with prizes up to Rs 15,000.

TWO DEAD IN WALL COLLAPSE IN SAMBALPUR

Sambalpur: Two persons, including a woman, died when the wall of a house collapsed at Bijadihi village under the Kuchinda police limits in Sambalpur district on Friday. The deceased were identified as Namita Patel, owner of the house, and Lalit Dehury, a labourer of Kindira village. Namita had engaged Lalit in the demolition work of the wall of her old house.

BAJAJ ALLIANZ GEN INSURANCE OFFICE IN BALESWAR

Bhubaneswar: The Bajaj Allianz General Insurance has announced the inauguration of its new office in Baleswar. The expansion aims to boost insurance penetration across tier 2 and tier 3 cities in India and provide financial stability to citizens.

'Cong doesn't need 2 dist chiefs in Ganjam'

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

Large numbers of party workers are opposed to the move for appointment of two Congress presidents for Ganjam district.

Party workers of Kabisuryanagar are particularly unhappy about the proposal as they express strong confidence in the leadership of District Congress Committee president and Sanakhemundi MLA Ramesh Jena.

They are of the view that the situation of the Congress in the district is better than earlier. They are confident that

the party under the leadership of MLA Jena is in a strong position and capable of providing candidates in every constituency in the district.

The workers point out that Jena has been particularly successful in wooing young voters in support of the party. They are hopeful that the party would give a tough fight to other parties in the next elections.

If the party appoints two district presidents, it would be helpful for the BJD and the BJP, the workers opine and urge the leadership to reconsider its decision.

BJD wins JSpur civic body by-poll just by 1 vote

Rulin party's vote share declining to Cong's advantage

KAHNU NANDA

■ JAGATSinghpur

The Jagatsinghpur municipality Ward No. 6 by-election results were declared on Thursday.

BJD candidate Rojalini Dash won the election by just one vote defeating her Congress rival Chinmayee Nanda. Dash polled 407 votes and Congress contestant Nanda secured 406 votes while BJD candidate Bishnu Priya Singh was satisfied with 21 votes, finishing third. The results have largely stunned Jagatsinghpur BJD circles.

Despite manifold good works and pro-people development measures taken up by the BJD Government in urban bodies, the result was not encouraging considering the slender margin of BJD's win.

The by-election of Ward 6 was necessitated due to death of BJD Councillor Soubhagya Laxmi Rath three months ago. Deceased Rath had defeated Congress candidate Gitanani Mohanty by 10 votes in 2022 municipality elections.

Political observers say that due to internal squabble and lack of coordination among party leaders BJD votes have been declining.

Jagatsinghpur BJD MLA Prashanta Muduli's first test after elections was

Jagatsinghpur Municipal body elections held in 2022. BJD performed poorly, lost the chairperson post against Congress in direct election, even the Municipality's vice chairperson post was captured by BJP candidate after the former reached an unholy alliance with the Congress. Out of 21 Municipality wards, BJD had got nine, Congress seven, BJD two and independent had won in three wards.

Political analysts have opined that the three independents who got the victory in the election were dissidents from BJD, who had been denied ticket by the party in the elections and were recognised as opponents of MLA Muduli. But Muduli's camp defended that one splinter group of BJD led by former BJD district president Amarendra Das sabotaged BJD votes. As a consequence, BJD lost both chairperson and vice chairperson posts in municipality polls.

Notably to inform that Das was seeking BJD ticket for the Jagatsinghpur Assembly seat in 2019 elections but was denied of it. Since then BJD has been divided in two groups one led by MLA Muduli and another by Das. For the first time it was seen that Das who hails from Jagatsinghpur municipality area participated in the by-election campaigning in ward No 6 accompanied by his supporters. MLA Muduli had launched campaigning with his followers separately.

Bizman Pravakaran throws grand banquet on son's wedding

Wins heart by humility

RAJENDRA K SAHU
■ KEONJHAR

On Wednesday, Managing Director of Thriveni Earth Movers Limited B Pravakaran and his wife hosted a reception party of their son Sooryanarayan's marriage with Dhanashree at Anandas ground before BRPL plant near Barbil.

Nearly 7,000 guests which include VIPs like Champua MLA Minakshi Mahanta, Banai MLA Laxman Munda, Municipality Chairmen of Barbil and Joda, executives of private and public sector mines, factories, banks, local journalists, political leaders and workers and employees of mines and factories of Keonjhar and nearby Sundargarh district had attended the programme.

Considering the present stature of the host and large arrangements with facilities for good parking to accommodate the large number of crowd,



the bride and groom reached at stage by riding on a Rath being escorted by a drum party with sound of fire work and a large number of people following it.

Though it was a VIP arrangement in every respect but its speciality was the humility of the host. In other

pm to 9 pm.

Pravakaran had come to Joda with a tipper, a tractor and a compressor to set his foot on in the mining business in Keonjhar in 2002, but gradually he became successful and now one of the most successful business leaders of the State. Over time, he has diversified his business and his company - Triveni Earth Movers is also working in coal sector at Ramgarh in Jharkhand and in the countries like South Africa and Australia. Moreover, Triveni is now setting up a mega steel plant in the State of Maharashtra. Besides, Pravakaran owns a private jet plane.

But in spite of reaching a zenith of success in life, he has not forgotten his past and people with whom he had worked in his early days. He shared with them the most happiest movement of his life - marriage of his only son. This is called humility and it might be the secret of his tremendous success in life and business.

Memo to ECoR raises demands for S Odisha

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The Odisha Development Forum (ODF) submitted a memorandum to East-Coast DGM Ashok Kumar Mishra and Khurda Road DRM HS Bajwa to construct a world-class station and washing complex at Brahmampur in the line of Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Puri stations.

The memo demanded for complete development of the 130 years old Brahmampur Railway station building, construction of railway terminal and washing complex for termination and departure of trains at Sorala near Brahmampur, construction of platform No. 5-6, ensuring stoppages of all trains, construction of lavatory complexes on all platforms and outside the station.

On the occasion, members of the ODF placed a strong demand for the immediate introduction of MEMU trains starting from Brahmampur to Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, Puri and Visakhapatnam in the



morning hours. Along with this, it was demanded to change the time of 18525 Brahmampur-Vishakhapatnam intercity to 6.30 am and to start the limited stoppage Berhampur-Cuttack express train in the morning time immediately.

Besides, they sought extension of express and weekly trains terminating at Bhubaneswar and Visakhapatnam to Brahmampur,

running Delhi Rajdhani train from Bhubaneswar via Brahmampur, Rayagada (South Odisha) and starting Vande Bharat Express trains via Brahmampur and south Odisha.

During the discussion with the East-Coast DGM, the members of the forum informed that there is strong need for the speedy implementation of the railway projects in south Odisha.

After seriously listening to

the discussion, the East-Coast Deputy General Manager promised to resolve the issue as soon as possible. Khurda Road DRM Bajwa assured to look into the demands.

Forum secretary V Someshwar Rao, Pritish Panigrahi, Praveen Patnaik, Manas Ranjan Patra, B Shankar Patra, Santosh Kumar Sahu, Binod Sabat and N Nilamadhav Patra among others were present.

Sports Meet

DAV CSpur declared overall champ

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In the recently concluded DAV National Sports Zonal Meet - 2023 organised by the DAV Regional Directorate, Odisha, DAV Public School, Chandrasekharpur, has been declared as the overall champion for the second consecutive year.

The school secured 82 points followed by the Runners Up DAV CDA, Cuttack with 77 points. Around 60 DAV institutions of the State participated in the mega

sporting events which were organised by different DAV schools across Odisha. Regional Director of DAV institutions, Odisha Dr KC Satapathy and other dignitaries handed over the trophies to winning schools and honoured the budding players.

The champion team won titles in Boys and Girls Skating, Girls Karate, Girls Shooting and was adjudged Runners Up in Boys Football, Girls Chess, Boys Table Tennis, Boys Tennis and Boys Yoga.

Eyeing world record

Mirror Theatre to stage 48-hr long play in J'suguda

PNS ■ JHARSUGUDA

Jharsuguda's Mirror Theatre is organising a continuous 48-hour play from December 1 to 3. Director Subhash Chandra Pradhan, in a Press meet, unveiled plans for the event, aiming to set a new world record.

Established in 1993, Mirror Theatre is set to guide the youths and foster positive engagement through theater. Pradhan expressed confidence in achieving the milestone, having performed across In-



dia and abroad over the last three decades.

The meticulous preparations include a stage, three green rooms, seating for spectators, and compliance with record-keeping regulations. Notably, participants range from a 75-year-old to a two-

month-old, showcasing inclusivity and diversity.

The event, to commence at 7 pm on December 1 and culminate at 7 pm on December 3, aims to live-stream the entire performance. With 168 previous showings of their play "Lal Payan" across the nation, Mirror Theatre seeks to etch both Belpahad and the regional language's name in history.

The theater anticipates success, relying on the support of local residents to secure a place in the annals of global achievement, said Pradhan.

MoU inked for world-class univ at Info Valley

By State Govt with SVKM

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

To promote qualitative higher education and research, a historic collaboration with Shri Vile Parle Kelavani Mandal Trust (SVKM) and the Government of Odisha has been made with the signing of a MoU worth Rs 300 crore.

The MoU was signed on Wednesday in the presence of Minister, Higher Education, FS&CW and Co-operation



Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak, Chief Secretary Pradeep Jena and Development Commissioner Anu Garg.

This will establish a world-class educational campus in Bhubaneswar namely NMIMS University at Info- Valley, Khordha. Higher Education

Secretary Aravind Agrawal and SVKM Trust secretary Jayant Gandhi signed the MoU.

The Odisha Government has allocated 40 acres of land on lease in Goudakshipur, Jatni, Bhubaneswar for the establishment of the university

free of cost and free registration for an initial period of 30 years, extendable for another 30 years and free from annual maintenance charges of IDCO. "This collaboration isn't just about infrastructure; it's about nurturing a culture of learning and innovation. The responsibility shared in bearing expenses underscores our joint commitment to fostering an environment conducive to growth and knowledge dissemination," Minister said.

"By aligning with SVKM, we're sowing the seeds for a

world-class educational hub, bolstering Odisha's stature in higher education. Together, we're not just establishing a campus; we're shaping destinies and contributing to the holistic development of our region," he added.

SVKM secretary, Dr Gandhi complimented Odisha for giving the opportunity for establishing the university. "We are going to set up an international standard educational campus which will impart quality education for the students," Dr Gandhi said.

Govt trying to bring back former Navy men from Qatar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is making all efforts to bring back eight former Indian Navy personnel sentenced to death in Qatar last month, Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar said here on Friday. "We are working closely to ensure that their interests are looked after. The Government of India is putting all-out efforts to ensure they are brought back," Admiral Kumar said at a media briefing. The Indian nationals were on October 26 given death sentence by Qatar's Court of First Instance. India described the ruling as "deeply" shocking and vowed to explore all legal options in the case. An appeal has already been filed against the death sentence and a higher court in Qatar has already admitted the plea. The appeal has been filed by the legal team of the detained Indian nationals.



The Indian nationals, who worked with private company Al Dahra, were arrested in August last year reportedly in an alleged case of espionage. Neither the Qatari authorities nor New Delhi made the charges public against the Indian nationals. In its reaction to the ruling by the Qatari court, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) last month said it is attaching "high

importance" to this case and is exploring all legal options. The charges were filed against the eight Indian navy veterans on March 25 and they were tried under Qatari law. All of the former Navy officers had "unblemished stints" of up to 20 years in the Indian Navy and had held important positions, including that of instructors in the force, former military officials had said.

iDEX reaches milestone with signing of 300th contract

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), the flagship initiative of the Department of Defence Production, has reached a milestone with the signing of its 300th contract. The contract relates to the design and development of advanced Gallium Nitride Semiconductors (GaN), Defence Ministry said here on Friday.

Giving details, they said it is essential for the next generation of wireless transmitters in defence applications ranging from radars to EW (electronics warfare) jammers. Currently, almost all GaN components are imported being a sensitive and cutting-edge technology whose export is controlled and restricted by many countries. The proposal aims to design, develop and manufacture GaN components for defence in India using completely indigenous GaN technology. This would significantly enhance the indigenous design and development capability,



paving way for immense potential in the defence sector including exports. The contract was signed here on Friday by Additional Secretary (Defence Industries Production) and CEO/DIO T Natarajan with Agnit Semiconductors Private Limited in the presence of Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane and other senior civil and military officials of Ministry of Defence. The iDEX achieved the milestone within nine month of the signing of its 200th contract with a winner of the Indian Navy Prime challenge launched

under the SPRINT initiative on February 15, 2023. The 150th Contract of iDEX was signed in December, 2022. In his address, the Defence Secretary lauded the innovators on their success and reiterated the need for accelerated development of indigenous technologies. He complimented iDEX on the signing of the 300th contract and asked the officials to maintain the impressive tempo of connecting innovators with the Defence Sector. In another development, continuing with the commitment towards 'Make in India' initia-

ive and iDEX being a 'path to procurement' for the innovators, BEL signed a procurement contract with the iDEX Winner Blurgs Innovations Private Limited for their solution TRIDENT, which is an intelligent maritime domain awareness tool with a robust solution designed to enhance maritime security. This solution assists in building superior maritime domain awareness by relying on anomalous detection and would aid in quicker decision making. This is a first procurement order placed by a Defence Public Sector Undertakings

(DPSUs) under the iDEX scheme. The iDEX framework was launched by the Prime Minister in 2018 with the objective to provide a platform of co-creation and co-development in the defence sector, engage start-ups and develop defence and aerospace set up in the country. The iDEX is being implemented by the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO), established under the Department of Defence Production. Within a short span of time iDEX, which has also been awarded the prestigious Prime Minister Award for Public Policy in Innovation Category for the year 2021, has emerged as a game changer in the defence eco-system through its flagship programmes like DISC, Prime and Open Challenges (OC). The iDEX has been able to build the required momentum and generate a critical mass of start-ups in the defence sector. It has also been able to generate thousands of jobs and attract India's talent back to the country.

Maximum global talk, minimum local walk, says Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of indulging in "maximum global talk, minimum local walk" on his assertion at the COP-28 that India has struck a balance between development and environment conservation. "How can anyone take what the Prime Minister says globally on environment seriously in light of his disastrous track record in India?" Congress general secretary and former Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh said in a social media post. Modi during his address at the UN climate conference (COP28) in Dubai asserted that India has presented a great example to the world of striking a balance between development and environment conservation. "India is among the only few countries in the world on track to achieve its Nationally Determined Contributions or the national action plans to restrict global warming to 1.5

degrees Celsius, the guardrail to avoid worsening of the impact of the changing climate," he said. Claiming that the Modi Government has made several "illegal and regressive changes" to relax environmental protections, Ramesh said the Prime Minister's statement at the Dubai conference was "yet another of his trademark falsehoods". "Maximum Global Talk, Minimum Local Walk — is the principle followed by the Prime Minister. He has claimed in Dubai that India has 'struck a great balance between ecology and economy'. This is yet another of his trademark falsehoods," Ramesh alleged. The Forest Rights Act of 2006, a historic legislation protecting the traditional rights of adivasis and forest-dwelling communities, was "weakened" with a 2022 notification, he claimed. "Forests can now be cleared without consulting those who live there, and consent from gram sabhas is no longer needed to use forest land," Ramesh said.

UN body applauds domestic standards on millets

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian millets are likely to dominate the global nutriceals platter soon with the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), a UN food standards body applauding domestic standards on millets at the same time accepting the Government's proposal for the development of international standards for the superfoods. The Food and Safety Standards Authority of India's proposal for the development of global standards for at least 15 types of millets including finger millet, barnyard millet, kodo millet, proso millet and little millet as group standards as in the case of pulses was unanimously endorsed in the 46th session at FAO in Rome in Italy, said an official from the Union Health Ministry. The meet is being attended by representatives from 161 member countries, including the European Union (EU), said the official. The CAC, an international food safety and quality standard-setting body created by the WHO and the Food and

Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN with 188 member countries, currently has standards for sorghum and pearl millet. The Indian delegation led by FSSAI CEO G Kamala Vardhana Rao had proposed international group standards for millets not only considering that 2023 has been declared as the "International Year of Millets" but also reflecting on the growing international trade in these products, he said. With the CAC endorsing the proposal, work on the submission of project documents and development of draft standards will now be initiated by India, he said. The move will set the benchmark in highlighting millet and its benefits worldwide. Presently, India is exporting millets to 139 countries across the globe with export value at USD 64 million in FY 2021-22 while there has been an increase in export of millets by 12.5% during April-December 2023 as compared to the same period last year. The group standards on millets framed by the FSSAI for 15 types of millets, which speci-

fy eight quality parameters, including maximum limits for moisture content, uric acid content, extraneous matter, other edible grains, defects, weevil grains and immature and shrivelled grains, will act as an important foundation for the development of global standards. The existing Codex standards for sorghum and pearl millet would also be reviewed while making the group standards for millets, the official said. Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya congratulated the Indian delegation on the "momentous" occasion and said that India has played a pivotal role in making the millet choice of the common man. The major importing countries were USA, Australia, Japan, Belgium etc in 2011-12 which had been shifted to Nepal (USD 6.09 million), UAE (USD 4.84 million) and Saudi Arabia (USD 3.84 million) in 2021-22. The other seven destinations in the current top-ten list of India's millet export are Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, UK, Yemen, Oman and Algeria, said an official from the APEDA.

1.15 crore digital life certificates generated



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 1.15 crore digital life certificates were generated by pensioners across the country during the recently concluded special campaign. Union Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh complimented the Department of Pension and Pensioners Welfare for the successful conclusion of the nationwide digital life certificates (DLCs) campaign 2.0 from November 1 to 30, it said. He said that the campaign was conducted to implement the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the digital empowerment of Pensioners,

according to the statement issued by the Personnel Ministry. Singh said the Government was deeply committed to improving pensioners' welfare and the campaign was an important step for the ease of living of pensioners. During the nationwide campaign, which was held in 100 cities at 597 locations, 1.15 crore DLCs were generated, including 38.47 lakh for central government pensioners, 16.15 lakh for state government pensioners and 50.91 lakh for EPFO pensioners, it said. "DLC submission is an ongoing activity as more than 35 lakh defence pensioners can submit life certificates in the

month of their retirement. By March 2024, it is expected that total DLC submission would cross the 50 lakh mark," it said. An analysis of the age-wise generation of DLCs reveals that more than 24,000 pensioners above the age of 90 years used digital mode, the statement said. The leading states for DLC generation are Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, having generated 5.07 lakh, 4.55 lakh and 2.65 lakh DLCs, it said. The leading banks for digital life certificate generation are the State Bank of India and the Punjab National Bank, with 7.68 and 2.38 DLCs respectively.

India keeping close tabs on China presence in Indian Ocean Region

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As China has stepped up its presence in strategically important Indian Ocean Region (IOR), India is keeping a close watch on it, Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar said here on Friday. He also said at any given time, six to eight Chinese warships are in the region besides Chinese research vessels and fishing boats. Assuring that the Indian Navy is cognizant of these vessels, he said "we do keep an eye in the Indian Ocean region and what they are up to" adding the Navy is constantly revising its plans to these challenges. Admiral Kumar made these observations during the media conference here on the occasion of the Navy Day on December four. He outlined the Navy's readiness when asked about Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean region and assistance to Pakistan Navy to



have at least 50 warships. On the issue of women officers in the force, he said the Navy has appointed the first woman commanding officer on a warship. He, however, refrained from disclosing her name as she is undergoing pre-commissioning training. She will command a fast attack craft on the western seaboard, the Navy chief said. He also said since the implementation of Agnipath scheme in the armed forces last year, nearly 1,000 women Agniveers have joined the Navy. The Navy chief said the force follows the dictum "all roles-all

ranks."On the operational side of the Navy, he said ships, submarines, and aircraft have sustained a high operational tempo in the strategic waters in the last one year. "Our ships, submarines, and aircraft have sustained a high operational tempo - undertaking missions and tasks encompassing military, diplomatic, constabulary and benign roles," he said. "Our units were mission deployed across the Indian Ocean Region and beyond, to protect and promote our national interests," he said. The Navy has "remained a

'Combat-ready, Credible, Cohesive, and Future Proof' force enabled by what we call our 'ships first' outlook where every single action that we take is aimed to enable our women and men in operational units to perform their duties very well," the Navy chief said. The Navy's footprint of deployments has been persistently present across the Indo Pacific. Underlining the importance of self-reliance, Admiral Kumar said at present Indian shipyards are building 65 of the 67 warships. These capabilities had their origin in the 1960s and the latest example is induction of the indigenously built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant, he said only six or seven nations have the expertise to build aircraft carriers. Stressing upon indigenisation, the Navy chief said the ongoing Ukraine conflict has disrupted logistics supply chain and some countries are facing challenge

NIA chargesheets eight in Telangana for supplying explosives, drones to Maoists

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday chargesheeted eight accused in Telangana for allegedly supplying explosives, drones and other equipment to the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist) for attacking security forces in the Maoist-affected areas of the country, an official said. All the eight accused are in custody following their arrest under sections of the Indian Penal Code, Telangana Public Security Act, Explosive Substances Act and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the official said. While three of them, working as couriers for the proscribed outfit, were nabbed on their way to supply the explosives, drones and a lathe machine, the others were apprehended subsequently, a spokesperson of the federal agency said. The official said investigations have revealed that the explo-



sive material recovered from the possession of the three arrested -- Punem Nageswar Rao, Devanuri Mallikarjun Rao and Vollepogula Umashankar -- was originally supplied to them by accused Jannu Koti, Arepalli Srikanth, Tallapalli Arogyam and Bontha Mahender. The latter four had procured the staff from Sonaboina Kumaraswamy, who held a licence for dealing in explo-

sives, the spokesperson said. The official said investigations have further revealed that the courier trio of Punem, Devanuri and Vollepogula had purchased and supplied a drilling machine to the Maoists in March. They had further purchased a lathe machine in May for delivery to CPI (Maoist), a Left-wing extremist organisation involved in various terrorist activities, the spokesperson

said. The official said these accused had also purchased a drone for the Maoists in May intended for spying on the activities of security forces inside the forest. They further received explosive materials, meant to unleash violent attacks on security forces, from their co-accused, to be supplied to the accused underground Maoists, the spokesperson said. The official said the cache that the three accused were carrying at the time of their arrest was intended for use in manufacturing of country-made arms, to be deployed against the security forces in India's Maoist-affected areas. The case was initially registered at Cherla police station in Telangana on June 5 and taken over by the NIA on August 3, the spokesperson said, adding further investigations to expose and demolish the CPI (Maoist) outfit's nefarious anti-India designs are in progress.

Communities can help end AIDS, says UNAIDS report

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Every minute, a life is lost to AIDS. Every week, 4000 girls and young women become infected with the infectious disease, and out of the 39 million people living with HIV, 9.2 million do not have access to lifesaving treatment across the countries, a new report released by the Joint United Nations Programme on human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) / AIDS (UNAIDS) has painted a gloomy picture. However, on the brighter side,

the report, as suggested by its title 'Let Communities Lead' says that there's hope to end the deadly disease by 2030 if communities on the frontlines get the full support they need from governments and donors. "Communities across the world have shown that they are ready, willing and able to lead the way. But they need the barriers obstructing their work to be pulled down, and they need to be properly resourced," said Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director of UNAIDS as the world observe World AIDS Day on Friday.

"Too often, communities are treated by decision-makers as problems to be managed, instead of being recognised and supported as leaders. Communities are not in the way, they light the way to the end of AIDS." The report notes that community advocacy from the streets to the courtrooms to parliaments has secured groundbreaking changes in policy. Communities' campaigning helped open up access to generic HIV medicines, leading to sharp, sustained reductions in the cost of

treatment from US\$ 25 000 per person per year in 1995 to less than US\$ 70 in many countries most affected by HIV today, it said. "Investing in community-led HIV programmes delivers transformational benefits," it asserts while citing several instances to drive home the point. For example, it says programmes delivered by community-based organizations in Nigeria were associated with a 64% increase in access to HIV treatment, a doubling of the likelihood of HIV prevention service utilization, and a four-

fold increase in consistent condom use among people at risk of HIV. Talking about community initiatives in India, it said that "a community-led initiative by the Transgender Welfare Equity and Empowerment Trust (TWEET) in India supports the socioeconomic inclusion of the transgender community by increasing awareness of the business sector regarding transgender issues and by helping connect community members to well-paid jobs." As per reports, the number of

People Living with HIV (PLHIV) are estimated at around 24 lakhs. Southern States have the largest number of PLHIV viz. Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka being the top three. Annual New Infection (ANI) are estimated at 62.97 thousand in 2021 in India. The UNAIDS report says, among sex workers reached by a package of peer-based services in the United Republic of Tanzania, the HIV incidence rate was reduced to below half (5% vs 10.4%). The report also highlights

how communities are at the forefront of innovation. For instance, in Namibia's Windhoek, a self-funded project by the Youth Empowerment Group is using e-bikes to deliver HIV medicines, food and adherence support to young people who often cannot attend clinics due to their schooling hours. In China, community organizations developed smartphone apps that link people to self-testing which contributed to a more than four-fold increase in HIV tests across the country from 2009 to

2020. The report reveals how communities are also holding service providers to account. In South Africa five community networks of people living with HIV inspected 400 sites across 29 districts and conducted more than 33 000 interviews with people living with HIV. In the Free State province, these findings led provincial health officials to implement new appointment protocols to reduce clinic wait times and three- and six-month dispensing of antiretroviral medicines.

Ajit drops bombshell on Sr Pawar NCP factions to battle it out in Baramati Lok Sabha seat



TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a shocking claim that may embarrass NCP chief Sharad Pawar, Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister and breakaway NCP leader Ajit Pawar said on Friday that Sr Pawar had himself asked the party workers to go on agitation to demand that he should take back his resignation as the party president in May this year.

Paranjpe and party's women wing leaders and asked them to organise an agitation in front of the YB Chavan centre in south Mumbai. "Excepting Ahwad, there was not even a single MLA among the NCP functionaries who were agitating to demand Pawar to take back his resignation," Ajit said. It may be recalled that Pawar had on May 2 this year dropped a bomb shell in the political circles by announcing his resignation as the NCP president. However, Pawar agreed to continue in the post on May 5 after hundreds of party workers had gone on a spontaneous agitation demanding that he take back his resignation, while party leaders met him on several occasions

and tried to convince him to take back as continue in the post. Ajitdada said that he and 10 to 12 MLAs and leaders, including Chhagan Bhujbal, Dilip Walse Patil, Dhananjay Munde, had expressed their intent to join the Eknath Shinde Shiv Sena-BJP government and they wanted Sr Pawar to take a decision in the matter. "Sharad Pawar called me on May 1 and said if he joined the Shinde-BJP government, he would resign as the NCP president. At that time no one had an idea that Pawar would resign from his post as the party president," he said. "After he announced his resignation from the party chief's post, Pawar saheb Jitendra Awahad, Anand Paranjpe and

women leaders and asked them to start agitation demanding withdrawal of his own resignation," Ajitdada claimed. "After he took back his resignation, Sharad Pawar insisted that his Supriya Sule be made the party's national president. "Later, Pawar saheb did not like our decision to join the Shinde-BJP government on July 2. But on July 17, he assured he would streamline things. He again met at an industrialist's place and assured me he would set things right. All the while, he was trying his trying to catch us unawares," Ajit said. The claims made by Ajitdada are in contrast to the revelation made by Sr Pawar's MP daughter and party's national working president Supriya Sule on

October 12 an upset NCP President (Sr Pawar) had chosen to resign as the party chief's post after several of the leaders from the Ajit Pawar camp insisted on joining hands with the BJP. "My father never wanted to resign from his post as the NCP president's post. But, after only several of the party leaders - currently belonging to the Ajit Pawar - insisted on joining hands with the BJP, Pawar saheb was pained by the insistence by this kind of a clamour within the party. He then resigned from the NCP chief's post," Supriya had said. In another revelation, Supriya said that Sr Pawar had no knowledge about Ajit Pawar and eight of NCP senior MLAs being sworn in as ministers in the Eknath Shinde government on July 2. "The decision (to join the Eknath Shinde-led BJP-Shiv Sena government) was taken by keeping him (Sharad Pawar) in the dark," she claimed. Contesting several claims made by Ajit Pawar camp leader Chhagan Bhujbal in a television interview on the circumstances leading to Sharad Pawar's resignation, Supriya said: "You people thought it was all a drama. He tendered his resignation from his post as he was hurt, after all the leaders (now in the Ajit Pawar) wanted to team up with the BJP." "After Pawar saheb resigned from his party president's post, all party leaders, party workers and people from across the state insisted that he continue as the party president. At that time, even Chhagan Bhujbal had insisted on continuing in the post as the party's president," she recalled.



TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The two feuding NCP factions, led by Sharad Pawar and his nephew Ajit Pawar, are preparing to battle it out for the prestigious Baramati Lok Sabha seat, a pocket borough of Sr Pawar and his daughter-MP Supriya Sule, in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Fresh from the superlative performance during the Gram Panchayat (GP) elections in which his faction bagged 109 Gram Panchayat (GP) seats out of a total 231 seats followed among others by Sr Pawar-led NCP (27) in Pune district, Ajit Pawar set the stage for a battle royale between the two NCP factions for the Baramati Lok Sabha polls. Speaking at the party's "Chintan Shibir" at Karjat in Raigad district, deputy chief minister and chief of the NCP faction

headed by him Ajit Pawar said on Friday that his party would contest four seats — Baramati, Shirur, Satara and Raigad — as part of the ruling "Maha Yuti" (grand alliance) in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. "We have had preliminary discussions with the leaders of our alliance partners — the Eknath Shinde-headed Shiv Sena and BJP. We will take a final decision after holding discussions with Eknath Shinde and Devendra Fadnis (of the BJP)," Ajit Pawar said. Picking up the gauntlet thrown by her cousin Ajit Pawar, Supriya said that she welcomed the decision taken by the rival NCP faction to field a candidate against her. "I am Indian and Maharashtra which has full faith in democratic system. That being the case, any political party has the right to decide from which constituency it

would put up a candidate. Who will contest from where is an internal of Maha-Yuti. From the bottom of my heart, I welcome the rival decision to field a candidate from Baramati," Supriya said. Sharad Pawar is a six-term Lok Sabha MP from Baramati, Supriya Sule is a three-term MP from Baramati. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, Supriya was elected from Baramati Lok Sabha constituency for the third consecutive term. Supriya trounced BJP candidate Kanchan R. Kool by a margin of 1,57,000 votes. Supriya polled 6,50,000 votes as against 493,000 votes secured by her rival candidate Kanchan. It may be recalled that in the Gram Panchayat polls witnessed recently in the politically important Katewadi Gram Panchayat in Baramati taluka of Pune district, the Ajit Pawar-led ruling NCP won 14 out of total 16 seats, while its alliance partner BJP secured two remaining seats. Katewadi forms a part of the Baramati Lok Sabha constituency represented by the Sharad Pawar family over five decades now. While Ajit Pawar is a one-term Lok Sabha MP from Baramati and for Baramati MLA for seven times, Supriya Sule is a three-term MP from Baramati. In the overall Gram Panchayat elections in Pune district — of which Baramati Lok Sabha constituency is a part, is faction bagged 109 Gram Panchayat (GP) seats out of a total 231 seats followed among others by Sr Pawar-led NCP (27) in Pune district.

Make India leading power in medical research, health care: President



President Droupadi Murmu with Maharashtra Governor Ramesh Bais, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis during the platinum jubilee celebrations of Government Medical College in Nagpur PTI

PTI ■ NAGPUR

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday asked the health care fraternity to work towards making India a leading power in medical research and ensure facilities are so affordable that people from across the world can come to the country to avail them. She was the chief guest at the inauguration of the platinum jubilee celebrations of the Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) in Nagpur. Hailing GMCH for the services it had rendered in the past 75 years, the President said affordable medical facilities were necessary for the overall development of any society. The COVID pandemic made everyone realise the importance of a strong health care system, she said. "It was the hard work of doctors, nurses and other medical professionals which ensured India could vaccinate such a huge

population speedily against the disease," she said. Pointing out that lack of doctors was a big obstacle in providing universal health care, the President said the country had recently seen a good increase in the number of medical colleges as well as MBBS and post graduate seats, all of which would play an important role in providing proper facilities to people. Disparity in health services is also a problem and the Central government is addressing it by opening medical colleges in districts, which will reduce regional imbalance and the rural-urban divide, Murmu said. Hailing the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana as well as the digitisation of medical records, Murmu underlined the need to spread awareness on organ donation, which at the moment was low. The President lauded GMCH for its research in mental health and for contributing to the health care sector of Maharashtra.

"Take steps in making the country a leading power in medical research and health care and make these so affordable that people from across the world should come to you for health services," she told the gathering. Lauding GMCH for giving good doctors to the country, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said the state government has given Rs 550 crore for the development of the facility. This will provide a facelift to the college and hospital due to the addition of modern amenities, said Fadnis, who also told the gathering that he was born in GMCH, Nagpur. Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said it was the wish of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that all citizens get good medical facilities at minimum cost. Gadkari, who is Lok Sabha MP from here, also said GMCH had made Nagpur famous because those who studied medicine here have been tendering services across the world.

'Domestic violence societal menace'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Domestic violence is not a private issue but a societal menace, said Dr Shobha Vijender, noted author and founder of NGO Sampurna. However, it can be resolved through positive intervention for both the victims and the perpetrators of violence, she added. She stressed that mental health is the core issue when dealing with the victims of domestic violence. She also underscored that intervention and counselling play an important role for women and families on the verge of a breakdown in their happy homes.



Her concern to prepare the future generation to end up the problem of domestic violence was the focal point throughout the discussion held at the Guru Gobind Singh College on her latest book 'Broken Brides: domestic violence in India. The idea of pre-marital counselling of the young minds to understand the real meaning of marriage was the key. She enlightened the audience that marriage was a bond between

two families and of shared responsibilities. She appreciated the college and the organisers for the session saying that such sessions can prepare the young generation to play role of productive members of the society must be conducted. The concern that more universities and colleges must conduct such sessions was pressed upon. Also present at the function were the principal Prof Jatinder Bir Singh and Prof Namita Rajput, ex principal of Sri Aurobindo College. The vote of thanks was proposed by the convener, Dr Gurdeep Kaur.



PM Modi committed towards 100 per cent saturation of Govt schemes: LG Sinha

PTI ■ JAMMU

Asserting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed towards 100 per cent saturation of government schemes and reaching out to the unreached, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said that people should actively participate in the 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra'. Sinha further added that people should avail the "on-spot services" being provided and disseminate the information about the schemes. He highlighted the efforts of the J&K government to ensure benefits of welfare measures reach the poor and the weaker sections of society. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed towards 100 per cent saturation of government schemes and reaching out to the unreached," Sinha said at the Dhok Waziran panchayat. The LG said that the Union Territory administration is providing five Marla land to poor landless beneficiaries under the PMAY (G). "This will raise the living standards of poor, vulnerable landless families, remove the existing societal imbalances and lead to their economic and social prosperity," he said. He urged them to reach out to the maximum number of families, generate awareness about the government schemes and encourage enrolment of potential beneficiaries. He emphasised the need to replicate the best practices of Panchayat Dhok Waziran to develop model villages in a holistic way for better livelihood options, improved quality of life and "action-oriented Jan-Bhagidari". "Individual success stories must reach out to every nook and corner of the UT to highlight the transformation brought about by the government's flagship schemes in their lives," he said. He said that through integrated action and involvement of every individual, villages can be turned into viable, sustainable economic centres, creating opportunities for youths, women, farmers and vulnerable sections to accomplish the vision of Viksit Bharat.

Gujarat sees 1,052 heart attack deaths in 6 months

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

A total of 1,052 persons have died of heart attack in Gujarat in the last six months, with 80 per cent of the deceased being in the 11-25 age group, state education minister Kuber Dindor said on Friday. In view of the rising number of heart attacks, nearly two lakh school teachers and college professors will be provided training in performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), a crucial lifesaving intervention during such medical emergencies, Dindor said. "As many as 1,052 persons have died due to heart attack during the last six months in Gujarat. Nearly 80 per cent of them were in the age-group of 11 to 25 years and these students and youngsters were not even obese. The 108 ambulance service receives 173 cardiac emergency calls per day," said Dindor while addressing the media in Gandhinagar. Youngsters are living in fear

because a majority of the heart attack victims were in their age group, he claimed. "We have seen how people died (due to heart attack) while playing cricket or taking part in garba (a traditional dance form popular during Navratri festivities) in the last six or seven months. I urge teachers to take part in this CPR training camp so that they can save lives," the minister said. Under this initiative of the state Education Department, CPR training camps will be conducted at 37 medical colleges between December 3 and 17 to provide training to nearly two lakh school and college teachers, he said. Some 2,500 medical experts and doctors will be present at these training camps and certificates will also be provided to the participants, Dindor added. Such training was given earlier to Bharatiya Janata Party workers and police personnel in the state, he pointed out.



TN CM asks officials to take precautionary measures as IMD issues yellow alert

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin urged officials to take necessary precautionary measures as the Regional Meteorological Centre has forecast heavy rains in the next two days. Chairing a meeting with senior officials of the revenue, municipal administration departments as well as the police at the secretariat here, the chief minister told the officials to take coordinated measures to ensure the safety of human lives. Yesterday's well-marked low-pressure area over the southeast Bay of Bengal concentrated into a depression today and lay centered in the same region about 760 km of Puducherry, 780 km of Chennai, 960 km of Bapatla in Andhra Pradesh, and 940 km of Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh, the India Meteorological Department said. "It is likely to intensify into a deep depression by December 2 and further into a cyclonic storm on the following day," the IMD said in a bulletin on Friday. Thereafter it would move northwards and cross south Andhra Pradesh and adjoining north Tamil Nadu coasts between Chennai

and Machilipatnam around the evening of December 4, it said. Heavy rain is likely to occur at isolated places over the coastal districts of Tamil Nadu. Following the yellow alert (6-11 cm of rainfall expected) issued by the IMD, the Chief Minister held a review meeting with the district collectors and instructed them to take precautionary measures. Issuing a set of guidelines on the preparedness and mitigation works for the Northeast Monsoon, Stalin said "I urge the officials to effectively tackle the situation arising out of the cyclonic storm while ensuring minimal inconvenience to the public." They should take necessary precautions in a coordinated manner, he said, and added that the requirements of the districts concerned could be conveyed to the local ministers, chief secretary, or department heads. Revenue Minister K K S R Ramachandran, Chief Secretary Shiv Das Meena, Additional Chief Secretary (Revenue) S K Prabhakar, Greater Chennai Corporation Commissioner J Radhakrishnan, Director General of Police Shankar Jiwali and other officials participated in the meeting.

Manipur CM hits out at BJP baiters

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Friday launched a scathing attack on those who blamed the BJP for the ethnic strife in the State. Addressing 'karyakartas' at the party head office here, Singh said, "Over the past six months, I kept asking myself what fault did we commit? Was it a serious error to launch a campaign to identify illegal immigrants who otherwise would have swallowed the indigenous people of the state?" "Was it a fault to start a war on drugs to save the youths. Was it also a fault to have stopped the massive deforestation which only destroyed the natural beau-

ty, but also led to emergence of new villages and widespread poppy cultivation," Singh asked. "My conscience is clear. I am not wrong. BJP is not wrong. The only fault of the BJP is to take up such initiatives to protect the indigenous people of the state," Singh said. "If these steps had not been taken up by the party and the government, imagine the situation of the state a decade later," Singh said, adding, "BJP will work for a united Manipul." "There is no other party which can save the state's people," the CM said and emphasised on the work done by the BJP for the welfare of the people including implementation of Inner Line Permit and removal of AFSPA



from majority of valley areas of the state. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Shah have given approval to fence around 100km of the Manipur section of the Indo-Myanmar border," Singh said and asked, "Which party or government had launched a biometric campaign to identify illegal immigrants. The unrest we are seeing today is because of such campaigns being taken up." On the recent peace deal between the Centre and United National Liberation Front, Singh said, "The peace agreement was not an instant thing. It took three to four years to such an agreement."

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PAPER WITH PASSION

The helping hand

COP28 sees developed countries pledging aid to developing nations to fight climate change

World leaders are in Dubai, the UAE, to take part in the World Climate Action Summit (COP28) which got under way on November 30. The Summit is an important moment for the heads of State and Government to signal their commitment to transform key climate-related decisions into concrete action and credible plans. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UN secretary general António Guterres and King Charles III have already spoken at the inauguration ceremony. For 12 days, these leaders would discuss the menace of climate change; it is crucial to reflect on the progress made and the challenges ahead. The key outcomes of COP28 and the steps taken to combat the urgent threat of climate change have not been spectacular but some progress has indeed been achieved. On the COP28 opening day, all parties showed solidarity by agreeing to operationalise the 'loss and damage fund' and funding arrangements. Several countries pledged money to the fund, totalling around \$300mn. The conclave saw renewed commitment from nations to the goals outlined in the Paris Agreement. Parties reiterated their commitment to limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, with efforts to pursue limiting it to 1.5 degrees Celsius. This commitment is crucial for preventing the most severe impacts of climate change.



Thankfully, both developing and developed countries have realised the importance of checking climate change. With assured funding, many plans will see the light of the day and go a long way in reducing carbon emissions, including ambitious targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing renewable energy capacity and promoting sustainable development. This conference would be remembered for financing climate action, a breakthrough on the very first day. Developed countries pledged increased financial support to developing nations to help them adapt to climate change impacts and transition to low-carbon economies. The financial commitments aim to bridge the gap between developed and developing nations and recognising the shared responsibility; the conferences have emphasised the importance of innovation and technology transfer. As COP28 highlights the significance of nature-based solutions, the discussions focused on the role of forests, wetlands and other ecosystems in enhancing resilience to climate change. Initiatives were launched to promote sustainable land use and conservation practices. While COP28 has made some headway, challenges remain. Addressing these challenges is crucial for the overall fight against climate change. COP28 must achieve some tangible results when it ends. It is not just an environment issue but a question of survival of many developing nation who may perish if sea level rise or droughts and floods ruin their agriculture. It is now or never!

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PICTALK



Sand artist Manas Sahoo creates a sand sculpture to spread awareness about AIDS, in Puri

Myanmar: Generals under fire

The success of the current offensive in Myanmar shows once again that the ruling junta is doomed



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

The continuing offensive by an alliance of resistance groups, that began on the morning of October 27, has panicked Myanmar's ruling junta. This is clear from a report in The Global New Light of Myanmar, the junta's media voice, which said that Acting President Myint Swe recently told Myanmar's Defence Council that the country was in a critical condition, and could be torn apart if the military did not act effectively against the groups that carried out the attacks, which were a part of the offensive.

The offensive has been launched by The Three Brotherhood Alliance (henceforth Brotherhood Alliance) comprising the ethnic Rakhine armed group, the Arakan Army (AA), the Taang National Liberation Army (TNLA), the armed wing of the Palaung (the Burmese name for the Ta'ang ethnic minority group) and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) active in the Kokang Special Region of northern Shan State.

It has made significant gains, seizing the military's bases and towns across northern Shan, Kachin and Rakhine states and the upper reaches of Sagaing and Mandalay regions. According to the website, The Irrawaddy, several resistance organisations including the People's Defence Force (PDF), the armed wing of the opposition National Unity Government (NUG), the Karenni Nationalities Defence Force (KNDF), and one of the country's most powerful armed ethnic organisations, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), are coordinating with the Brotherhood Alliance's operation.

The Brotherhood Alliance has captured over 224 junta bases and seven towns across northern Shan State, including some strategic centres on key Myanmar-China trade routes. It and allied resistance forces fully control Chin Shwe Haw, a trade hub on the Chinese border, and another strategic town, Hseni, where the Lashio-Muse and Lashio-Chin Shwe Haw trade routes converge, as well as another trade gate—Kyin San Kyawt on the



China border in Muse Township. The Chin National Army and other Chin resistance groups have captured Reh Khaw Da in Fala town on the India border. Rikhawadar and Laidenpi in Chin State and Khampat in the Sagaing region, are also in the hands of the Junta's opponents.

In coordination with Operation 1027, the Karenni Army, the Karenni National People's Liberation Front (KNPLF), the KNDF, and the PDF, had jointly launched another offensive, Operation 11.11, on November 11, seizing more than 20 junta bases and outposts in Kayah State's Loikaw and Demoso townships as well as the nearby Pekon township in southern Shan State.

They have also captured the strategically important Kunlong township on the Lashio-Chin Shwe Haw Road that is considered the gateway to the Kokang region. The resistance groups have also blocked strategic arteries like the Mandalay-Lashio-Muse and the Mandalay-Lashio-Chin Shwe Haw roads, which pass through Shan State. They also control several border trade routes with China.

The military, which should be called Sit-Tat and not Tatmadaw, had been on the backfoot even before the current offensive began. It was bedeviled by low morale and

desertions. Ye Myo Hein said in a piece datelined May 4, 2023, and featured by the United States Institute for Peace, "the military currently has about 150,000 personnel. Roughly 70,000 are combat soldiers. At least 21,000 service members have been lost through casualties, desertion and defection since the coup. At this troop level, the Sit-Tat is barely able to sustain itself as a fighting force, much less a government." Things have been made worse by discord within. Several three-stars generals have been removed. Many younger officers are unhappy as they recognise that almost the entire country is against them.

The number of casualties has increased since Ye Myo Hein's piece came out, and particularly since the current offensive began. According to reports, hundreds of junta soldiers have been killed. The Junta does not give out credible figures. The fact that the commander of the 99th Light Infantry Division, Col. Aung Kyaw Lwin has been killed—the first divisional commander to have met this fate since the 2021 coup—is, however, significant; so is the recent death of Major Soe Win Hitke, the second-in-command at the Sit-Tat's Lailenpi base, in a drone attack. The odds are now rapidly increasing against the Junta.

The latter doubtless has tanks and other armoured vehicles, artillery and air force. Tanks and armoured vehicles are very difficult to deploy in the areas dominated by the ethnic forces. With densely forested mountainous terrains, deep gorges and steep climbs, these are ideal for staging ambushes. Moreover, air-strikes and artillery do not win wars, even when backed by heavily armed and trained infantry. Otherwise, the United States would have won hands down in Vietnam.

The junta will land in history's dustbin—not tomorrow but sooner than many think. India must seriously consider its options. It has to contain China's influence in Myanmar when Beijing has maintained close contact with the ethnic fighters, with some even suspecting that the offensive had its nod.

Second, India has its security concerns in its north-eastern parts, which is primarily why it has maintained friendly ties with the Junta. With areas in Myanmar adjoining India's borders increasingly dominated by the ethnic resistance groups, India must consider cooperating closely with the NUG and establishing links with the ethnic forces.

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



THE JUNTA WILL LAND IN HISTORY'S DUSTBIN—NOT TOMORROW BUT SOONER THAN MANY THINK. INDIA MUST SERIOUSLY CONSIDER ITS OPTIONS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Modern-day slavery is rampant



Human trafficking, bonded labour and forced marriages are stark examples of modern slavery. Domestic work, agriculture, construction activities, manufacturing units, and sexual exploitation—all fall into areas of forced labour where there are few regulatory clauses. Child labour is a sordid story of modern slavery and its vagaries with approximate-

ly ten million children falling prey to the devious agendas of employers. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has identified about twenty-five million men and women as victims of modern slavery.

A comprehensive plan to tackle forced labour was laid down in detail in the 2014 General Conference of the ILO. The ILO has specially identified migrant workers who are lured or easy to be tricked because of their poor understanding of the local language and tradition. Enforcement of proposed laws is important to instil a sense of fear in others. Appropriateness and uniformity are needed for the consistent implementation of the laws to the satisfaction of all concerned. To take stock of the progress made by ancillary agencies and the respective governments, International Day for the Abolition of Slavery is observed on December 2.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

tech propaganda game. Caught in this web of deception, social media platforms and tech giants face an uphill battle in combating deepfakes. As the 2024 elections draw near, the onus falls on the Election Commission of India (ECI) to safeguard the democratic process. The clock is ticking, and the stakes have never been higher. Will India rise to the challenge and protect its democracy?

C K Subramaniam | Mumbai

BLAME GAMES

Sir — If the BJP accuses Congress of being a political party adept at 'appeasement'. So, shouldn't the BJP be accused of religious division and majority appeasement? Because of this party gives up its religious agenda. If people stop demanding accounts of temples, mosques and atrocities of the Mughal period in the 23rd year of the 21st century, then there will be no difference between BJP and Congress. These people played the latest game of inciting religious sentiments and polarisation in Bihar. Not only Bihar but the people of the entire country were shocked when three days ago

this big headline was seen in which it was written that holidays were abolished for Mahashivratri, Rakshabandhan, Janaki Navami, Ramnavmi, Janmashtami, Teej and Jitutiya from the schools of Bihar. It was also written that the holidays of Muslims like Eid Bakrid and Muharram etc. have been extended.

The table of holidays released by the Education Department of the Government of Bihar, there are holidays on all those days, about which there is a discussion in the media that those holidays have been abolished. Then who manipulated this table and put a gun on the media's shoulder? Adding fuel to the fire, BJP leader Giriraj Singh writes on his X handle, "The way Lalu Yadav and Nitish government are attacking Hindus, in future they will be known as Mohammad Nitish and Mohammad Lalu." Day after day, these leaders can go to any extent to achieve success in politics.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Fragile hope emerges in Israeli-Hamas conflict

The ceasefire gives peace a chance but no lasting peace in Gaza is possible without a two-state solution

After weeks of intense warfare in Gaza, a four-day truce has offered a glimmer of hope for millions yearning for peace in the beleaguered enclave. The pivotal question now lingers—can this pause pave the way for a permanent resolution to the enduring hostilities between Israel and Hamas, which have claimed thousands of lives and heightened the spectre of a broader conflict?

Under the current agreement, Israel and Hamas have agreed to a temporary cessation of hostilities to facilitate the release of 50 hostages in Gaza in exchange for 150 Palestinians held in Israel. Humanitarian aid is also set to enter the strip. The flexibility of the deal allows for its extension and expansion if the initial phase proceeds smoothly, raising optimism for a more enduring solution to this deeply entrenched issue with global implications.

The first phase, involving the release of hostages and prisoners, is slated to commenced from November 24. However, disconcertingly, the Israeli Prime Minister



asserted that the war against Hamas will persist beyond this truce, emphasizing Israel's commitment to achieving its objectives, including eliminating Hamas and neutralizing perceived threats from elements in Gaza.

Hamas, in parallel, has echoed similar sentiments, underscoring that the truce does not impede their broader missions. They maintain readiness to defend their people and resist the occupation, while Israel remains firm in its decision to retain military presence in Gaza.

The aggressive postures of both sides reflect a clash rooted in history, culture, geography, and divergent developmental aspirations.

The current conflict stems from Hamas's incursion into Israel on October 7, resulting in significant casualties on both sides.

Notably, the captives involved in this strife hail from over 40 countries, adding a layer of complexity to negotiations. The diplomatic breakthrough, brokered by Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, with support from Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and US President Joe Biden, represents a temporary truce. However, achieving a lasting peace requires more intricate negotiations in the future.

The impending challenge lies in negotiating the release of Israeli military personnel held captive by Hamas. Israel faces internal divisions, with political parties in agreement but significant pressure from captive families complicating matters for Prime Minister Netanyahu. Global demonstrations, spanning Europe, the USA, Asia, and beyond, underscore the widespread demand for a lasting peace.

The substantial civilian casualties in Gaza have swayed

international sentiment, putting pressure on Israel to reach an agreement promptly.

As leaders worldwide advocate for a truce, the prospect of a two-state solution gains prominence. However, the road to lasting peace is fraught with challenges, and the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains imperative for stability in the Middle East. The recent diplomatic efforts, culminating in the BRICS virtual summit, reflect a global push for a truce and a comprehensive peace process. The call for a two-state solution, echoing the borders of 1967, resonates among leaders worldwide.

Without addressing this long standing issue, enduring peace and stability in the Middle East remain elusive. The implementation of international decisions supporting a two-state solution is deemed essential for the security and prosperity of both sides, emphasizing the imperative of coexistence for a peaceful future.

(The writer is a senior journalist, views are personal)



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

THE IMPACT OF CASTE CENSUS

Sir — After the caste-based survey, the Bihar government has now increased the limit of reservation in jobs and education from 60 to 75% (in line with the share of the population). But there was no movement on this issue anywhere in the state. When the Mandal Commission was implemented in the country 34 years ago, this issue became a major cause of tension, which changed the balance of political power in North India. This time nothing like this is happening because the general class is not very excited about the continuously decreasing government jobs in this interval.

Anyway, out of the total employment, only 5.8% are government jobs, the rest are in the private sector or self-employment. Every year, 1.5 crore new youth are added to the already crowded job market of the country. The total number of government employees in Bihar is four lakh and on average a few thousand new jobs are created every year, but 30 lakh new youth enter the job market. This is the reason that this time the reservation percentage increased based on 'whose number is bigger, his share is more' could not create backward-forward tension in the society. However, the strategy of political parties will remain under watch given the general elections.

N Ashraf, Mumbai | Mumbai

DEEPFAKE POLITICS

Sir — There is no end to the problems of the Election Commission as Deepfake has established its deep-rooted designs. The truth is distorted, and deception reigns supreme. As India gears up for its upcoming elections, a sinister weapon has emerged, threatening the very fabric of democracy. Enter the world of deepfakes, where artificial intelligence (AI) crafts hyper-realistic videos that manipulate and mislead voters. From Telangana to Madhya Pradesh, deepfake videos have infiltrated the campaign landscape, spreading fabricated messages and distorting reality. What's more alarming is that political parties themselves are complicit in this high-



FIRST COLUMN

RECLINING WIND GOD

The idol of Shri Bade Hanuman ji, situated at the Sangam in Prayagraj, is unique



RAVI VALLURI

Prayagraj is a prominent city in the populous state of India, Uttar Pradesh. The party that rules Uttar Pradesh invariably conquers India. Triveni Sangam, the confluence of the Ganges, the Yamuna, and the mythical and invisible Saraswati rivers, is pre-eminently holy for Hindus.

The Sangam is near the 16th-century Allahabad Fort, built by Mughal Emperor Akbar. In the fort are several architectural marvels such as the ancient sandstone Ashoka Pillar, the underground Patalpuri Temple and a sacred banyan tree. The bustling city which is the cradle of "Kumbh Mela" organised once in twelve years is teeming with a large population and is quintessentially catholic and pluralistic.

The history of the idol of Shri Bade Hanuman ji, situated at the Sangam Kshetra of Prayag is unique. The story connected with the history of the idol goes like this. In the city of Kannauj, an opulent trader resided. He was blessed with large sums of money and materials and all the enjoyments of life but tragically did not have a child who could carry on the legacy.

In sheer desperation, the trader traversed to the foothills of Vindhyaachal to construct a temple for Hanuman ji to fulfil his wish of being blessed with a son. In the chain of hills of Vindhyaachal, the merchant had constructed a huge statue of Hanuman ji out of stone. He decided to bathe the statue of Hanuman ji at several places of pilgrimage.

While bathing this statue of Hanuman ji at different pilgrim spots he eventually arrived at Sangam Kshetra of Prayag. While he was taking rest as the shadows fell, he dreamt that if he would leave the statue at this holy place all wishes would be fulfilled and the hankerings would drop.



At the crack of dawn the following day he decided to work on the lines of the previous night's dream. Thus, he left the statue at Prayag Kshetra and departed for his city, Kannauj. After a passage of time, a son was born to his wife by the munificence of Shri Bade Hanuman ji. Sometime later, the huge statue of Shri Bade Hanuman ji got submerged in the waters and embroiled under the sands. Meanwhile, a mendicant Mahatma who was performing penance with Vyagracharya arrived at Sangam Kshetra in the holy month of Magha to take a dip at Triveni.

One day when the Mahatma was piercing his Trishul in the sand to form his phone, he got an inkling of the statue, through his clairvoyant powers. Mahatma Balgiri began to sift the sand from the spot. He soon spotted the statue of Shri Bade Hanuman ji.

After purifying the Shri Vighrah, he meditated on the valorous qualities of Lord Hanuman. The populace in the neighbourhood was subdued with the radiance of Lord Hanuman and the devotion and miraculous qualities of sage Balgiri. The aura and fame of Shri Bade Hanuman ji expanded rapidly. It is also believed that Mahatma Shri Balgiri ji Maharaj was bestowed with the mammoth statue of Lord Hanuman. He made valiant efforts to make the statue stand erect but he failed.

Subsequently, the statue was tried to be laid in the fort. After numerous abortive efforts, devotees were unable to remove the idol from its place. Thus, it was concluded that Shri Bade Hanuman ji did not wish to be removed from that place. All efforts were terminated and consequently, the statue was left at the place where it was first established by Saint Balgiri where thousands of pilgrims pay obeisance.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

The democratisation of forestry: Indian Scenario

Bridging local and global concerns, promoting equity and passionate stakeholders, are crucial for fostering the conservation of forests



BKP SINHA



ARVIND K JHA

Forests are vital ecosystems that maintain the balance of our planet and provide numerous resources and ecological services indispensable for human survival. Numerous research studies underscore the paramount importance of biodiverse natural forests in both climate change mitigation and adaptation.

In today's world, democracy stands as a beacon of hope, a principle that is both popular and attractive. However, the conundrum of choice between 'decision by merit' and 'decision by majority' presents a unique challenge in the context of the sustainability of forests and natural resources.

Historically people lived off natural resources while forests, producing more than what was extracted, sustained themselves. Communities often followed customary rules and norms related to grazing, firewood collection and more, demonstrating a profound respect for nature. Later the Zamindars and Chieftains formalised rules for exploitation of forest-produce. Management of forests using silvicultural principles started during British time and continued thereafter. Village Panchayats in central India, for example, had a say in the exercise of 'nistar' rights indicated in 'Nistar Patra' and 'wazib ul arz' and also in 'Du-chand' areas that were twice the cultivated area of the village. However, the relentless tide of rising populations and development pressures led to such areas' overexploitation and abuse resulting in a loss of productivity, encroachment, and also diversion.

The National Forest Policy 1988 heralded an era of community-led management practices in forestry. The Joint Forest Management in the 1990s and the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996, made villagers participants in the domain of forestry. However, with Panchayats saddled with the responsibility of working as the grass-root level governance units for a multitude of social and financial resource-rich sectors and with the emergence of newer livelihood options and development strategies, forestry-related activities had, de facto, a low priority within Panchayats.

In 2006, the Forest Rights Act (FRA) was passed to redress the 'historical injustice' allegedly done to the 'forest-dwelling scheduled tribes' (FSDTs) and 'other traditional forest dwellers' (OTFDs) and recognize forest rights in their favour. FRA, a unique instrument heralding democratization of the forest right claims' scrutiny at the village level provided for vesting of management rights into the eligible communities of FSDTs and OTFDs. Democratization is supposed to equip the management framework with the relevant traditional knowledge and local communities' wisdom. It allows recognition of the interest of communities in preserving forest resources and securing a collective commitment towards their sustainability. While it fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility and the creation of an equitable and just system, it must ensure that marginalized communities are not left behind. India attempted the democratization of forestry using the paradigm of traditional Gram Sabha/ Panchayats. In the past selection of Panchas was based on local customs, traditions, and community consensus. The system was deeply rooted in the principles of inclusivity and collective decision-making where well-respected individuals with leadership qualities, integrity, wisdom, fairness, competence, and



LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS WITH SECTORAL BIASES HARM COMMUNITY INTERESTS AND JEOPARDISE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF RESOURCES

knowledge of local issues were selected. Village dynamics, however, have undergone a seismic shift with political leaders gaining influence. The impact of the political system on the village-level psyche; already fractured by caste, class, and economic considerations; is a complex and multifaceted issue today. While the political system does foster awareness and civic participation, state or national politics often eclipses local concerns. Interestingly, however, global prioritization of forest conservation seldom trickles down to the village through political leaders and in instances of damage to forests, they tend to favour their electorate. Political expediency becoming the order of the day, and transforming mindsets to favour forest conservation irrespective of political affiliations is a formidable challenge. Further, convincing people to protect and conserve for the sake of stakeholders beyond their village limits is yet another challenging task.

The journey towards the democratization of forestry has been fraught with challenges and limitations. A fundamental obstacle is the persistence of power asymmetry within local communities. This became glaringly evident during FRA's implementation when powerful elites and interest groups attempted to manipulate amendments to its rules and guidelines. The influence on decision-making led to widespread illegal recognition of non-admissible individual and community forest rights, to the disadvantage of genuine beneficiaries. Such instances of 'elite capture' hurt the sustainability of forests and natural resources. The 2021 Status of Forest Report by the Forest Survey of India (FSI) reveals that Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district; with management rights on the majority of forest areas vested, albeit in violation of provisions, in Gram Sabhas; witnessed maximum forest fires in the previous three years.

Effective forest management in today's context necessitates specialised knowledge in areas like ecology, silviculture, and their interdisciplinary linkages. With the availability of new livelihood options and increased migrations, villages do experience an erosion of traditional knowledge and competencies. Preparation of biodiversity registers under the Biological Diversity Act 2002 by hiring outsiders in many villages is a case in point. Further, a lack of technical knowledge becomes a significant limitation. The case of Mendha Lekha village in Maharashtra serves as a poignant example. Here, a bamboo coupe was clear-felled in 2012 by violating silvicultural prescriptions. The area is yet to regain its productivity creating difficulties for the exercise of forest rights.

The desire for quick economic gain may lead to the prioritisation of short-term gains over long-term sustainability undermining conservation-oriented practices. Bamboo over-harvesting as also neglecting the sanitary felling operations is reported in many villages. In this context, the FSI's 2021 report regarding the loss of about 10,500 sq. km of bamboo-bearing area in the country deserves field-level scrutiny. On the economic front, because of the scale of operation, village-level incomes suffer due to market dynamics and inadequate value chains. The position of the genuine beneficiaries of FRA in the case of the 'tendu leaves' trade controlled by village elites in many villages of Maharashtra is worth examining.

Legal frameworks and implementations with sectoral biases harm community interests and jeopardize the sustainability of resources. In this context, the exclusion of foresters from the FRA's micro-plan preparation committees in Maharashtra warrants a reevaluation. Ministry of Tribal Affairs, GOI issued guidelines for the supersession of existing landscape-based

Working Plans by all village-level micro-plans. While the guidelines have far-reaching implications for the ecosystem continuum vital for biodiversity's survival, they disregard the National Working Plan Code of the MOEFCC, Government of India as well as the Supreme Court's order mandating the sanction of all management plans by the Central Government. Tribal department being the nodal agency for FRA, there is a conspicuous lack of urgency in addressing the mandated issue of sustainability of forests and forest resources which is a non-negotiable precondition for the sustainability of forest rights itself. Exercising effective control on corruption and misgovernance at various levels including that at the panchayat level is yet another serious concern. In the absence of cognizance of violations, FRA's implementation has largely been ignoring the proverb 'Charity beyond law is an injustice to others'.

Duly accepting the fact that contextuality will determine its success, democratization may be adopted carefully as a strategy for sustainable resource management. The development of appropriate institutional capacity, trained workforce, and availability of resources within an appropriately designed legislative framework must become a precondition. Recognizing the limitations and learning from past experiences is essential. Addressing power imbalances bridging local and global concerns, and promoting equity and collaboration among stakeholders, for fostering conservation approaches are crucial. The need for a nuanced understanding and adaptive strategies being paramount, the selection of the most appropriate strategy will be a testament to our commitment to a sustainable and equitable future. The stakes are high, and the time to act is now!

(The writers are Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, UP and Maharashtra, views are personal)

Operation 'Firki': Dealing with stray dogs in a humane way

The Government should support research to explore inexpensive, non-surgical options for dog sterilisation

On a misty winter morning of the year 2021, I was drawn to a commotion in the front-lane parking area of my residence in a South Delhi colony. A female dog had appeared from somewhere at night and delivered a litter. The people around appeared with all means to feed the mother and make the family comfortable in cold winter weather.

The mother made the nearby area her permanent abode. She was a very scared stray and would even come near the food after being fully assured that no one was around. Given her very fast movements, I named her "Firki" and she is known by this name all over the place. Out of the six pups, one got



JAGDISH KAUR

crushed under a speeding car and another got injured by a bike. In due course, we arranged for the adoption of five pups.

Efforts began to get Firki sterilised to stop further breeding. True to her name, it was a harrowing task catching her. After repeated requests to MCD, they were able to catch her on the fourth attempt. There was a big sigh of relief which did not last long as after 3 days she was dropped back by on the pretext that her blood tests were abnormal. That was the lost opportunity as she is still at large, managed to deliver three more litters with three surviving dogs each from the second and third litters. We managed to get the second litter picked up



for sterilization with great effort and it was discovered after a few months that they too were dropped back without any surgery (for unknown reasons). Firki has grown smarter with time, hiding in the big drain with her family during the day and coming out for meals in the morning and night only. The overenthusiastic residents have employed dog feeders for dozens of strays in the vicinity and also ensure continued feeding from their

homes. Repeated calls and visits to the South Delhi MCD office, personal requests to the vet, social media posts tagging senior MCD officers, and messages to RWA did not fructify in catching Firki. Many times, when we managed to corner Firki and inform the MCD team, their approach was very casual and pathetic resulting in failed attempts. On advice from a private vet, I could manage to sedate her but the attempt failed again. My desperation and helplessness knew no bounds, to the extent of announcing a reward of INR 10,000 to catch her. This followed dog catchers, colony guards, garbage collectors, cleaners, and some NGOs making attempts to catch but Firki

evaded every attempt. We also got the male dogs in the surrounding area sterilized but there was always some unsterilized dog who would mate resulting in a new litter. So, from a stray dog-free part of the lane, we now have seven dogs all over the place, chasing vehicles and barking throughout the night.

The presence of unvaccinated free-roaming dogs (FRD) or street dogs, amidst human settlements is a major contributor to the high incidence of endemic Rabies in India. Stray dogs chasing morning-walkers, cyclists, and two-wheeler riders, have resulted in serious injuries and death of innocent persons on innumerable occasions. The National Rabies Control

Programme in India has been under implementation for more than a decade. The "National Action Plan for Dog Mediated Rabies Elimination from India by 2030" is being implemented jointly by various stakeholders. Successful Rabies control programmes have been implemented throughout the world, demonstrating that elimination is technically feasible.

Dog-mediated Rabies has been eliminated from Western Europe, Canada, the USA, Japan, and some Latin American countries. Even low-income countries such as regions of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia have been able to reduce the burden significantly by mass dog vaccination strategy. Non-surgical

methods have existed in the past, however, they have not been widely adopted due to a lack of will and coordination among concerned stakeholders, lack of research, cost-effectiveness and other reasons including rampant corruption.

There is a need for more concerted efforts including ownership and enhanced coordination among concerned partner agencies. In addition, the Government should support research to explore inexpensive, non-surgical options for dog sterilization. RWAs should be more sensitive and help with monitoring count and anti-rabies vaccination of stray dogs.

(Dr Jagdish Kaur, is a public health expert; views are personal)

Israeli airstrikes on Gaza resume after truce ends

AP ■ DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP)

Israel's war with Hamas resumed in full force Friday, with airstrikes hitting targets in the Gaza Strip minutes after a weeklong truce expired. Black smoke billowed from the besieged territory, and Israel dropped leaflets over Gaza City and southern parts of the enclave, urging civilians to leave their homes to avoid the fighting. In Israel, sirens warned of incoming rockets at several communal farms near Gaza, a sign that militants also restarted attacks. The renewed hostilities heightened concerns for Palestinians — many of whom have been displaced by the war — as well as about 140 hostages still in Gaza, after more than 100 were freed during the truce.

Qatar, which has served as a mediator along with Egypt, said negotiators were still trying to restart the cease-fire.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry singled out Israel's role in the resumption of fighting and said it "complicates mediation efforts and exacerbates the humanitarian catastrophe".

A day earlier, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Israeli officials and urged them to do more to protect Palestinian civilians as they seek to destroy Hamas. Blinken arrived Friday at the COP28 climate talks in Dubai, where he was to meet with Arab foreign ministers and other officials.

Israel's retaliation for Hamas' deadly Oct 7 raid has killed thousands of Palestinians, uprooted most of Gaza's 2.3 million people and led to a humanitarian crisis. Hundreds of thousands of displaced people are now crammed into the territory's south with no exit, raising questions over how any Israeli offensive there could avoid heavy civilian casualties. It was

not clear to what extent Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will heed appeals from the United States, Israel's most important ally.

Netanyahu's office said Friday that Israel "is committed to achieving the goals of the war: releasing the hostages, eliminating Hamas and ensuring that Gaza never again constitutes a threat to the residents of Israel". Only hours in to the renewed offensive, the Health Ministry of Hamas-controlled Gaza said 109 people had been killed and dozens wounded.

In the leaflets it dropped in southern Gaza, Israel urged people to leave homes east of Khan Younis, warning that the southern town was now a "dangerous battle zone". Other leaflets warned residents of several neighbourhoods in Gaza City in the north to move south.

The Israeli military also released a map carving up the Gaza Strip into hundreds of

numbered parcels, and asked residents to learn the number associated with their location in case of an eventual evacuation. It was not immediately clear how Palestinians would be updated on calls for evacuation. Hundreds of thousands of people fled northern Gaza earlier in the war, in an extraordinary mass exodus that saw many take shelter in Khan Younis and other places in the south.

One of the first airstrikes Friday destroyed a large building in Khan Younis. Moments later, residents were seen frantically searching the rubble for survivors as medics approached. One wounded person was carried away on a stretcher.

In Hamad City, a Qatari-funded housing development near the city, a strike hit an apartment in a multi-story residential building, while other parts of the building appeared largely intact. Elsewhere, a strike hit a home near Gaza

City in the north, and in the refugee camp of Maghazi, in central Gaza, rescuers clawed through the rubble of a large building hit by warplanes. A foot stuck out of the tangle of concrete and wiring.

Israel has said it is targeting Hamas operatives and blames civilian casualties on the group, accusing the militants of operating in residential neighbourhoods. Since the war erupted Oct 7, in response to a deadly Hamas attack on southern Israel, many of those killed in Israeli bombardments have been women and children.

In Israel, white smoke trails could be seen in the skies over Sderot on the border with northern Gaza after Israel's missile protection systems activated. Netanyahu said the war resumed because Hamas had violated the terms of the truce. "It has not met its obligation to release all of the women hostages today and has

launched rockets at Israeli citizens," he said in a statement.

Hamas claimed Israel had asked for the release of 10 female soldiers, which it rejected. Hamas blamed Israel for the end of the truce, saying in a statement that it had rejected all offers Hamas made to release more hostages and bodies of the dead.

The Israeli military's announcement of the resumption of strikes came only 30 minutes after the cease-fire expired early Friday.

During the weeklong truce, Hamas and other militants in Gaza released more than 100 hostages, most of them Israelis, in return for 240 Palestinians freed from prisons in Israel.

Virtually all of those freed were women and children, but the fact that few such hostages now remain in Gaza made it hard to reach a deal to extend the cease-fire. Hamas, a militant group that has ruled Gaza

for 16 years, had been expected to set a higher price for the remaining hostages, especially Israeli soldiers.

Netanyahu has been under intense pressure from families of the hostages to bring them home. But his far-right governing partners have also pushed him to continue the war until Hamas is destroyed, and could abandon his coalition if he is seen as making too many concessions. A total of 81 Israelis, including dual nationals, were freed during the truce, most of whom appeared physically well but shaken. Another 24 hostages — 23 Thais and one Filipino — were also released, including several men.

The Palestinian prisoners who were released were mostly teenagers accused of throwing stones and firebombs during confrontations with Israeli forces. Several were women who were convicted by military courts of attempting to attack soldiers.

'Israel already knew about Hamas attack'

Jerusalem (AP): Israel's military was aware of Hamas' plan to launch an attack on Israeli soil over a year before the devastating Oct 7 operation that killed hundreds of people, The New York Times reported Friday. It was the latest in a series of signs that top Israeli commanders either ignored or played down warnings that Hamas was plotting the attack, which triggered a war against the Islamic militant group that has devastated the Gaza Strip.

The Times said Israeli officials were in possession of a 40-page battle plan, code-named "Jericho Wall", that detailed a hypothetical Hamas attack on southern Israeli communities.

It was unclear how the document was obtained by Israel, but the article said that it had been translated — indicating it may have been in Arabic and directly intercepted from Hamas.

The Israeli military declined to comment on the report, saying it was "currently focused on eliminating the threat from the terrorist organisation Hamas".

"Questions of this kind will be looked into in a later stage," it said.

The document was seen by many Israeli military and intelligence officials, the report said, though it was unclear if Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu or other top leaders had seen it. The document predicted that Hamas would bombard Israel with rockets, use drones to disable Israel's security and surveillance abilities at the border wall, and take over southern communities and military bases.

Another 2016 Israeli defense memo obtained by the Times said Hamas intended to take hostages back to Gaza. The Oct 7 attack — in which 1,200 people were killed and 240 people were abducted and taken to Gaza — would uncannily mirror the one outlined in the battle plan. But Israeli officials had brushed off the plan, the report said, dismissing it as "aspirational" rather than something that could practically take place, the report said.

Harris to tackle delicate tasks of talking climate

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Vice President Kamala Harris will tackle two delicate tasks this weekend in Dubai: She'll try to demonstrate US environmental leadership despite President Joe Biden's notable absence from an annual summit on climate change and she'll work to nudge forward fragile efforts to shape the next phase of the war between Israel and Hamas.

Harris has only a brief opportunity to accomplish either goal while she's in the United Arab Emirates. She leaves Washington on Friday and is scheduled to appear only briefly at the United Nations conference known as COP28. Like most vice presidents, Harris is expected to hew tightly to administration talking points on controversial issues where any divergence could ricochet around the globe.

Her public remarks, however limited, will be closely scrutinized. Activists are eager for any boost in the fight against climate change, which experts warn is lagging behind what's needed to prevent damaging global warming. And Harris will be the highest-ranking U.S. official to visit an Arab nation since the outbreak of war in the Middle East, where anti-

American sentiment has been inflamed by Washington's support for Israel's military campaign in Gaza.

Administration officials said Harris will be delivering remarks at the climate summit on Saturday and holding bilateral meetings with regional leaders.

But details on her schedule remain scarce and the trip appears to have been hastily arranged. As recently as last week, Harris' staff said she had no plans to attend the climate conference, known as COP28. White House officials have not explained the change in plans. Biden attended the last two UN summits, which were held in Scotland and Egypt, but he disappointed some environmental activists by his decision to skip this one.

Manish Bapna, head of the Natural Resources Defense Council, said it's "so important" for Harris to be there on behalf of the president and his administration. "She's representing concrete U.S. progress — from significant investments in clean cars and clean energy to a crackdown on dirty power plants," Bapna said. "There's much work ahead to lock that progress in and build on it — but it's a complete turnaround from where we stood even a year ago."

Top leaders to discuss Global warming

Dubai (AP): International climate talks turned to a power game on Friday as dozens of world leaders including the Saudi crown prince and India's prime minister were to speak, but two of the world's most powerful men — President Joe Biden of the U.S. and China's President Xi Jinping — were glaringly absent. Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, a top oil producer, Presidents Emmanuel Macron of France, Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa, Abdel Fattah el-Sissi of Egypt and Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey were among more than 130 world leaders set to address the United Nations climate conference in Dubai over the next two days. The idea is to try to keep the planet from heating too much because of humankind's actions. In a fire-and-brimstone kicking off of Friday's parade of VIPs, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, fresh from melting glaciers in Antarctica and Nepal said "Earth's vital signs are failing" and told leaders, "you can prevent planetary crash and burn."

Resumption of Israel-Hamas war casts shadow over COP28 climate summit

AP ■ DUBAI

As world leaders gathered for the COP28 climate summit in Dubai, the collapse of a cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war Friday plunged the conflict back into open combat and cast a long shadow over the talks. Israel's top diplomat for the Middle East huddled with leaders at the summit as his colleagues went through a book of posters of those held hostage by the militant group Hamas, placing yellow "released" stickers by some while looking at others still held.

Meanwhile, just a street away at the Palestinian territories' first-ever pavilion, an official gave a horrified look when Associated Press journalists gave her the news that Israeli airstrikes and ground fighting in the Gaza Strip had resumed. Even United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres brought up the fighting in his remarks at a COP conference meant to focus on restraining global warming. "As we see in this region, con-



United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, left, and Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, center, walk after leaving a group photo at the COP28 U.N. Climate Summit, Friday in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

flicts are causing immense suffering and intense emotion," he told the delegates. "We just had the news that the bombs are sounding again in Gaza."

The war hadn't been initially the plan for Israel at this Conference of Parties held in the United Arab Emirates, with which it only struck a diplomatic recognition deal

in 2020. Their country pavilion sits just across from the Emiratis' own. Oded Joseph, the Israeli Foreign Ministry's top diplomat for the Mideast, told the AP that he believed that the war had not ruptured Israel's ties to the UAE and others.

However, Joseph acknowledged what he called the "traumatic images" of dead Palestinian

women and children after Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip.

He contended those deaths came because "Hamas took a strategic decision to take human take civilians as human shields."

"Unfortunately, wars are always ugly and wars always demands us for us to pay in many prices," Joseph said.

Indian student found dead in London river

London (PTI): A 23-Indian student who went missing in the UK last month has been found dead in the river Thames here. Mitkumar Patel arrived in the UK for higher studies in September and was reported missing on November 17.

The Metropolitan Police discovered his body in the river Thames near the Canary Wharf area of east London on November 21 and was declared dead by paramedics.

"The death is not believed to be suspicious," the Met Police said. Parth Patel, a relative, has since launched a Go Fund Me online fundraiser and raised over GBP 4,500 since last week. "Mitkumar Patel was a 23-year (old) boy who came to the UK for higher studies on 19th

September 2023," reads the fundraising appeal.

"He belonged to a farmer family and used to live in a village as well. He was missing from November 17, 2023. Now on November 21 police found his dead body from Canary Wharf in the water. It was sad for all of us. So, we decided to do fund raising for helping out his family and to send his body to India as well," it adds.

The appeal reiterates that the funds will be safely transmitted to Mitkumar's family in India. According to the 'Evening Standard' newspaper, the student was due to move to Sheffield on November 20 to start a degree at Sheffield Hallam University and a part-time job at Amazon.

Indian student beaten, forced into labour for months in US; 3 charged

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Authorities in the US have rescued a 20-year-old Indian student, who was held captive for months without access to a bathroom, viciously beaten, and forced to work at three homes by his cousin and two other Indian-origin men in an incident described as "absolutely inhumane and unconscionable."

The victim, whose name was not disclosed, spent months trapped in three homes in the US state of Missouri.

On Wednesday, police descended upon a home on a rural highway in St Charles County. They later arrested

Venkatesh R Sattaru, Sravan Varma Penumetcha and Nikhil Verma Penmatsa, and on Thursday charged them with offences including human trafficking, kidnapping and assault.

Police were dispatched to investigate the home after a concerned citizen became aware of his situation and called 911. The victim is safe and being treated at a hospital for multiple bone fractures, as well as lacerations and injuries covering his entire body, said prosecutor Joe McCulloch.

Over seven months, the men locked the student in a basement and forced him to sleep on an unfinished floor without access to a bathroom,

charges say. He scavenged for scraps in nearby restaurant dumpsters and was beaten with electrical wire, PVC pipe, metal rods, wooden boards, sticks and a water supply hose for a washing machine, St Louis Post-Dispatch, a major regional newspaper, reported.

"It's absolutely inhumane and unconscionable that one human being could treat another human being like this," said McCulloch at a news conference Thursday. The three defendants are accused of confining and abusing the victim at three different homes owned by Sattaru in Defiance, Dardenne Prairie and O'Fallon, starting in April 2023, accord-

ing to St Charles County's official website.

Sattaru was identified by investigators as the ringleader and lives in the O'Fallon home with his wife and children.

The main suspect in the case, Sattaru, 35, is additionally charged with human trafficking for the purpose of slavery and contributing to human trafficking through misuse of documentation.

Penumetcha and Penmatsa live in the home where the student was rescued. Authorities said the student had come to the US from India last year with hopes of studying at Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla.

CHELMSFORD CLUB LIMITED
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NOTICE OF THE 101st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, E-VOTING INFORMATION

NOTICE is hereby given that:

- The 101st Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Chelsford Club Limited ("Club") is scheduled to be held on **Wednesday, 27th December, 2023 at 11.30 AM** at the Club premises 1, Raisina Road, New Delhi-110001 to transact the matters as stated in the Notice convening the meeting.
- Electronic copies of the Notice of the AGM, Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March, 2023 have been sent to all members whose email IDs are registered with the Club. The same are also available on the website of the Club: www.chelsfordclub.in and on the website of National Securities Depository Limited e-voting website: <https://www.evoting.nsdl.com>. Notice of AGM, Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March, 2023 have been sent to all the members at their registered address in the permitted mode. The electronic dispatch and dispatch by post has been completed by 02nd December 2023.
- Green Initiative in the Corporate Governance.**
Due to high price of paper and printing, additional copies of the Notice will not be available at the AGM. Members are therefore, requested to bring their copy to the AGM venue.
- In compliance with provisions of Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 as substituted by the Companies (Management and Administration) Amendment Rules, 2015 as amended, the Club is pleased to provide e-voting facility to its members, to vote from a place other than venue of the AGM (remote e-voting). The Club has engaged the services of National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) to provide e-voting facilities enabling the members to cast their vote in a secure manner.
- All the Members are informed that:
 - The business as set forth in the Notice of the AGM may be transacted through voting by electronic means.
 - The e-voting facility will be available at the link <https://www.evoting.nsdl.com> during the voting period from Sunday, 24th December, 2023 (9 AM) to Tuesday, 26th December, 2023 (5 PM). The remote e-voting shall be disabled thereafter, by NSDL.
 - The cut-off date for determining the eligibility to vote by electronic means or at the AGM is Wednesday, 20th December, 2023. A person whose name is entered in the Register of Members as on the Cut Off Date only, shall be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-voting as well as voting in the AGM.
 - Any person, who has become a member of the Club, after the dispatch of the Notice of AGM may obtain the login ID and password by sending a request to the Club Secretary at info@chelsfordclub.in and request for their login ID and Password. After verifying their membership details, the Club will forward the request to NSDL and NSDL will forward the login ID and password to their respective email ID.
 - Members who have cast their votes by remote e-voting prior to AGM may attend the AGM but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again.
 - The facility for voting through ballot shall be made available at the AGM and the members attending the AGM who have not cast their vote by remote e-voting or by ballot shall be able to exercise their right to vote at the AGM through Ballot.
 - The Club has appointed Mr. Ishant Arora (CS) of Ishant & Associates, alongwith Sh. Sunil Sareen and Sh. Sushil Kumar Dwivedi, Members of the Club, as scrutineers to scrutinize the entire Ballot and Voting process in a fair and transparent manner.
 - In case of any query/grievance in relation to e-voting, they may be addressed to Mr. Puneet Bhaini, the Club Secretary, at info@chelsfordclub.in or members can visit "Help/FAQ" section (under download section) available at NSDL's website <https://www.evoting.nsdl.com> or write an email to evoting@nsdl.co.in or call NSDL at toll free number 1800 1020 990 / 1800 224 430.
 - The result of election/ voting at the AGM shall be declared on Wednesday, 27th December, 2023 at 7.00 PM. The result declared, alongwith the Scrutineers' Report shall be displayed at the registered office of the Club and also placed on the Club's website (www.chelsfordclub.in) and on the website of e-voting agency National Securities Depository Limited (website: <https://www.evoting.nsdl.com>).

For Chelsford Club Limited
Puneet Bhaini
Secretary

Place: New Delhi
Date: 02nd December 2023

FORM G INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR TERIYAKI BUILDERS PRIVATE LIMITED OPERATING IN TRADING BUSINESS AT NEW DELHI (Under sub-regulation (1) of regulation 38A of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016)	
RELEVANT PARTICULARS	
1. Name of the corporate debtor along with PAN & CIN/ LEP No.	Teriyaki Builders Private Limited (Formerly Known as Oasis Suppliers Private Limited) PAN No.: AABC04980F CIN : U91990DL2011PTC37749
2. Address of the registered office	Registered Office: 865, Ground Floor, Shop No. 2, Gali No. 7, Gowindpur, Kalkaji New Delhi, South Delhi-110019 Earlier Registered Office: 740 GF, Janta Flat, GTB Enclave, Dilshad Garden, Delhi, North East Delhi-110093
3. URL of the website	Not Applicable
4. Details of place where majority of fixed assets are located	No Fixed Assets of Corporate Debtor as per the provisional financial statements as on CRP Commencement date i.e. 29th August, 2023
5. Installed capacity of main products/ services	NIL
6. Quantity and value of main products/ services sold in last financial year	NIL
7. Number of employees/ workmen	5
8. Further details including last available financial statements (with schedules) of two years, lists of creditors are available at URL:	Details can be sought by email to Resolution Professional at cirp.teriyakibuilders@gmail.com
9. Eligibility for resolution applicants under section 25(2)(h) of the Code	Details can be sought by email to Resolution Professional at cirp.teriyakibuilders@gmail.com
10. Last date for receipt of expression of Interest	17/12/2023
11. Date of issue of provisional list of prospective resolution applicants	23/12/2023
12. Last date for submission of objections to provisional list	28/12/2023
13. Date of issue of final list of prospective resolution applicants	06/01/2024
14. Date of issue of information memorandum, evaluation matrix and request for resolution plans to prospective resolution applicants	11/01/2024
15. Last date for submission of resolution plans	10/02/2024
16. Process email ID to submit Expression of Interest	cirp.teriyakibuilders@gmail.com
Sudhanshu Gupta Resolution Professional of M/s Teriyaki Builders Private Limited (Formerly Known as Oasis Suppliers Private Limited) Regn. No.-IBBI/PA-02/IP-N00216/2017-18/10668 Address: 311, Agarwal Chamber-2, Plot No. 30, 31, Veer Savarkar Block, Opp. Metro Pillar No. 58, Shakarpur, East Delhi-110092 Email Address: sg_1973@rediffmail.com Contact No.: +91-9811547321	
Dated : 01.12.2023 Place : Delhi	

Buckingham Palace 'exploring all options' as King Charles III embroiled in race row

PTI ■ LONDON

Buckingham Palace officials said on Friday that they were exploring all options, including legal, as King Charles III and Kate Middleton — the Princess of Wales, were embroiled in a race row after the Dutch edition of a controversial new book named them erroneously.

Omid Scobie's 'Endgame: Inside the Royal Family and the Monarchy's Fight for Survival' hit bookshelves around the world this week and repeated an allegation that senior members of the British royal family had raised questions around the skin colour of Prince Archie — the son of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle born in May 2019. Meghan, of African American heritage, first raised the issue of an unnamed royal referencing their first-born's skin colour during the couple's infamous interview with Oprah Winfrey over two years ago.

While the main edition of Scobie's new book chose not to name the senior royals, the Dutch edition included the



allegation that it was King Charles and Kate who had discussed the skin colour.

"We're exploring all options," a palace spokesperson told the BBC.

Initially, most UK media outlets were holding off naming the royals but it has been dominating headlines after TalkTV aired the names of Charles and Kate from the Dutch book fiasco.

"Some individual has written some rumour and scuttlebutt that has made various claims about His Majesty the King that are, frankly, completely unproven," UK Security Minister Tom Tugendhat told

TalkTV when asked about the row.

"The King's done a brilliant job for us, not just in the last year since he's been King, but he's been absolutely fantastic for many, many years in arguing in the interests of the British people as Prince of Wales. So frankly I see this as just rumour, hearsay and an attempt to disparage somebody who's served our country with enormous dignity and enormous grace for many, many years," he said.

The Dutch publisher of the new book, Xander Uitgevers, said it had been pulled from shelves in the Netherlands due to an "error". Scobie, meanwhile, has been insisting it was not part of some publicity stunt and lamented that the row had "overshadowed" the release of his book.

"All of this is frustrating because it feeds into something that couldn't be further from the truth. And also, quite frankly, I've always felt the names weren't needed to have this discussion," he told the BBC.

Japan expresses concern about Osprey aircraft

Tokyo (AP): Japan's top government spokesperson expressed concern on Friday that the U.S. military is continuing to fly Osprey aircraft in the country without providing adequate information about a fatal crash this week in southwestern Japan despite repeated requests that it do so. One crew member was killed and seven others are missing, along with the aircraft. The cause of Wednesday's crash, which occurred during a training mission, is still under investigation. Search operations widened Friday with additional U.S. military personnel joining the effort, while Japanese coast guard and military ships focused on an undersea search using sonar. The Pentagon said Thursday that US Ospreys continue to operate in Japan, and Deputy Press Secretary Sabrina Singh said she was not aware of an official request from Japan to ground them. "We are concerned about the continuing Osprey flights despite absence of an explanation about their safety" from the U.S. military, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said on Friday.

How secret trip by Kissinger grew into 50-yr relationship with China

Officially China has called Henry Kissinger "an old friend". A commentator likened him to a giant panda, a good-will ambassador between two countries that have been at odds more often than not over the decades.

envoy who was willing to overlook ideological differences at the height of the Cold War and to engineer a rapprochement that over time brought communist-ruled China fully back into the family of nations.

Republicans in Washington. Kissinger made more than 100 trips to China, according to the Chinese government, and was welcomed as an American it could talk to; as recently as July, he was met by China's leader Xi Jinping.



An editorial in the state-run Global Times newspaper called Kissinger's death "a tremendous loss for China-US relations."

Mao Zedong to economic reformer Deng Xiaoping and Presidents Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao and Xi. Following the Chinese military crackdown on democracy protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, Kissinger met Jiang three times between 1989 and 1991 as China worked to mend its relations with the United States.

deported Wu soon after. "The role for people like Kissinger is not to advise the government but use their own wisdom, connections and experience to serve the long-term interests of their country by shuttling among the politicians and businesspeople of different countries," Wang said in an article posted on the official news site of Peking University.

the general public, said Zhang Feng, a former journalist who is a visiting scholar at Columbia University in New York. His realpolitik approach resonated with many Chinese, who admired his ability to set aside values and negotiate back and forth among several countries with ease, Zhang said.

US to step up efforts in pushing China to negotiate with Dalai Lama envoys

Congressional committee passes bill

A powerful Congressional committee has passed a bill to strengthen US efforts in pushing China to negotiate with the Dalai Lama's envoys to resolve the longstanding Tibet-China dispute and counter the Communist Party's propaganda about the history of Tibet.

markup. "Tibetans are a democracy-loving people who wish to practice their own religion freely and have their own wishes and desires acknowledged as we do in the United States of America. The freedoms that we enjoy, we want to be enjoyed by the people of Tibet," McCaul said.

Dispute Act pushes back against CCP propaganda about the history of Tibet. "The United States has never accepted that Tibet was part of China since ancient times," as the CCP falsely claims. This legislation clarifies US policy, highlights the unique language, religion, and culture of the Tibetan people, and directs US diplomacy to push back against CCP propaganda," McCaul said.

Philippines opens coast guard surveillance base in SCS

The Philippine coast guard inaugurated a new monitoring base Friday on a remote island occupied by Filipino forces in the disputed South China Sea as Manila ramps up efforts to counter China's increasingly aggressive actions in the strategic waterway.

structed, two-story centre that will have radar, ship-tracking and other monitoring equipment — either already installed or added early next year — to monitor China's actions in the hotly disputed waters and other problems, including sea accidents. "It's no longer gray zone. It's pure bullying," Ano told reporters after the ceremony, describing the actions of Chinese ships as flouting international law.

250 Filipino villagers. It's one of nine islands, islets and atolls that have been occupied by Philippine forces since the 1970s in the South China Sea's Spratly archipelago. The Philippines claims the region as its most remote offshore township, under its western island province of Palawan. It has encouraged fishing families to move there with incentives such as free rice, to underscore its control over an area also claimed by China and Vietnam.

iting Thitu island, have routinely been warned by the Chinese coast guard via radio calls to stay away from what China claims as its territory or face unspecified repercussions. The Filipinos have countered with their own radio messages, ordering the Chinese to leave their territory and stop dangerous and provocative maneuvers. It was not immediately clear if Chinese radio warnings were sent to the Philippine air force and coast guard planes that brought Ano and other officials to Thitu on Friday along with three Associated Press journalists and several other invited members of the media.

Marcos Jr took office last year, the Philippines has been deepening its security ties with Washington and US allies like Japan and Australia in a major shift from his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, who had nurtured cozy relations with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian leader Vladimir Putin while criticising Western security policies.

11 civilians killed in attack by gunmen in Iraq's eastern Diyala province

Baghdad (AP): A group armed with explosives and guns killed 11 people in eastern Iraq, security officials said Friday. The attack took place Thursday night in the area of Muqaddiyah in Diyala province. A roadside bomb exploded and gunmen then opened fire on rescuers and bystanders at the scene, two security officials said.

Anti-graft body files case against Imran, his wife

A Pakistani accountability court on Friday filed a corruption case against jailed former prime minister Imran Khan, his wife and other suspects in a Rs 50 million corruption case. The National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) Deputy Prosecutor General Muzafar Abbasi and investigative officer Umar Nadeem filed the case in an accountability court in Islamabad.

Spl court to conduct cipher trial of Pakistan ex-PM, Qureshi at Adiala jail today

A Pakistani special court on Friday decided to hold an open hearing in the cipher case against incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan on Saturday in the Adiala Jail at Rawalpindi after receiving approval from the government. Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain presided over the hearing against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the Federal Judicial Complex building because a formal permission for a jail trial had not been granted by the government.



the judge said at one point during the hearing. The cipher case pertains to a diplomatic document sent by the country's embassy in Washington in March last year. The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) launched a case on Aug 15 against Khan and Qureshi, accusing them of violating the secret laws while handling the document.

Paraguay official resigns after pact with fictional country

Buenos Aires (AP): A Paraguayan government official was replaced after it was revealed that he signed a memorandum of understanding with representatives of a fictitious Indian guru's fictional country, who also appear to have duped several local officials in the South American country. The revelation sparked a scandal — and lots of social media mockery — in Paraguay but it's hardly the first time self-described representatives of the United States of Kailasa duped international leaders. Earlier this year, they managed to participate in a United Nations committee meeting in Geneva and also signed agreements with local leaders in the United States and

Canada. Arnaldo Chamorro was replaced as chief of staff for Paraguay's Agriculture Ministry on Wednesday shortly after it was revealed that he signed a "proclamation" with representatives of the United States of Kailasa. Among other things, the October 16 "proclamation" expressed a "sincere wish and

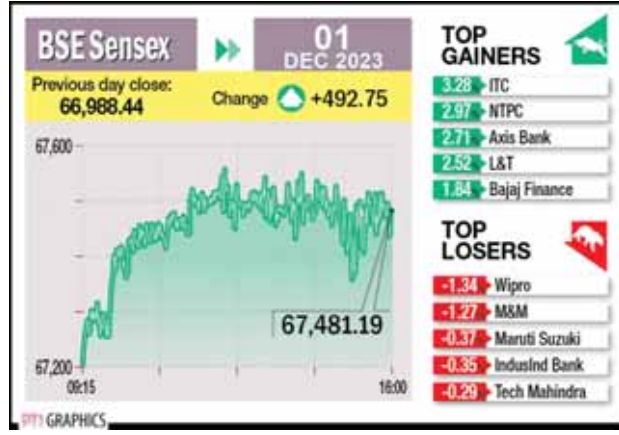
recommendation for the government of Paraguay to consider, explore and actively seek the establishment of diplomatic relations with the United States of Kailasa and support its administration as a sovereign and independent state in various international organisations, including, among others, the UN," according to a copy of the agreement posted on social media.

Public Notice: Notice is hereby given by Bahi Paper Mills Limited, H-475, First Floor, New Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi - 110060 (Company) that the Original Sale Deed executed by Sri Gurneet Singh and Kuldeep Singh in favour of Bahi Paper Mills Limited, registered as document no. 2216 on 15.07.1996 with SRO Kashipur, Udhm Singh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, now Uttrakhand in relation to immovable property being Khata No. 28, Kharsa No. 7471, measuring 1.618 Hectares, situated at village Mauja Baghelwala, tehsil Kashipur, district Udhm Singh Nagar, Uttrakhand, in the name of the company office at H-475, First Floor, New Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi - 110060 and is not traceable since July 15, 2023. The Company shall create mortgage charge on the basis of certified copy of sale deed of the aforesaid property for the benefit of State Bank of India, for securing the loans/facilities availed by JGN Sugar and Biofuels Pvt. Ltd.

Nifty hits lifetime high, Sensex jumps 493 points on favourable macro data

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Key equity index Nifty hit its lifetime high while Sensex jumped 493 points to close at an 11-week high, driven by favourable macroeconomic data and continuous foreign fund inflows. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 492.75 points or 0.74 per cent to settle at 67,481.19, the highest closing level since September 18. During the day, it surged 575.89 points or 0.85 per cent to 67,564.33. The Nifty climbed 134.75 points or 0.67 per cent to settle at an all-time high of 20,267.90. During the day, the benchmark touched its intraday record high of 20,291.55, up 158.4 points or 0.78 per cent. Among the Sensex firms, ITC, NTPC, Axis Bank, Larsen & Toubro, Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints and Tata Steel were the major gainers. Mahindra & Mahindra, Wipro, Maruti, IndusInd Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and HDFC Bank were among



the laggards. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 8,147.85 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. "Better-than-estimated India GDP numbers will raise the growth outlook for FY24 and provide cheer for the market to continue its upward momentum. The global market too rallied on hopes that the ECB has completed its rate-hiking cycle on the back

of easing inflation and ahead of the FED chair speech today. "The auto sales numbers witnessed a festival cheer, while the premium valuation restricted the upside potential," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. India retained the tag of the world's fastest-growing major economy, with its GDP expanding by a faster-than-expected rate of 7.6 per cent in

the September quarter on booster shots from government spending and manufacturing. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 0.96 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.48 per cent. Among the indices, power jumped 1.57 per cent, FMCG climbed 1.53 per cent, utilities (1.46 per cent), realty (1.32 per cent), metal (1.07 per cent), commodities (0.92 per cent) and industrials (0.88 per cent). Auto emerged as the only laggard. On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,511.15 points or 2.29 per cent while the Nifty 473.2 points or 2.39 per cent. In Asian markets, Shanghai settled in the green, while Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong ended lower. European markets were trading in positive territory. The



RBI, BoE sign pact for cooperation, information exchange related to CCIL

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Bank of England on Friday signed an initial pact for cooperation and exchange of information related to Clearing Corporation of India Ltd (CCIL). The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishes a framework for the Bank of England (BoE) to place reliance on the RBI's regulatory and supervisory activities while safeguarding the UK's financial stability, the RBI said in a statement. "The MoU also demonstrates the importance of cross-border cooperation to facilitate international clearing activities and the BoE's commitment to deference to other regulators' regimes," it added. Further, the statement said the MoU confirms the interests of both authorities in enhancing cooperation in line with their respective laws and regulations. "It will also enable the BoE to assess the application of CCIL for recognition as a third country Central CounterParty (CCP), which is a pre-requisite for UK-based banks to clear transactions through CCIL," the statement said. The MoU was signed by RBI Deputy Governor T Rabi Sankar and BoE Deputy Governor for Financial Stability Sarah Breeden in London.

Oct-Nov sugar output down 11% to 4.3 mn tonne, says NFCFSL



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's sugar production was down by 10.65 per cent at 4.32 million tonne during October-November, the first two months of the ongoing 2023-24 season, cooperative body NFCFSL said on Friday. Sugar season runs from October to September. The production stood at 4.83 million tonne in the year-ago period. India is one of the largest sugar producing countries in the world. According to the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Ltd (NFCFSL), the country's overall sugar production was down on account of lesser output in Maharashtra and Karnataka. Sugar production in Maharashtra, the country's second largest producer of the sweetener, was lower at 1.35 million tonne in October-

November of this season as against 2.02 million tonne in the year-ago period. Sugar production in Karnataka, the country's third largest producing state, was also lower at 1.1 million tonne as against 1.21 million tonne. However, the production in Uttar Pradesh, the country's top producer of the sweetener, remained higher at 1.3 million tonne as compared to 1.06 million tonne in the year-ago period, the cooperative said in a statement. Sugar recovery was 8.45 per cent in the first two months of the current season. As per the NFCFSL data, sugar output was lower as the total quantity of sugarcane crushed in October-November was less. About 51.01 million tonne of sugarcane was crushed during October-November of the 2023-24 season, as against 57.06 million tonne in the year-ago period. Even the number of sugar mills that were in operation was lower at 433 as against 451. NFCFSL has pegged the total sugar output at 29.15 million tonne for 2023-24 season, lower than 33 million tonne in the previous season.



Gold rises by ₹100; silver jumps ₹500

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices rose Rs 100 to Rs 63,300 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday amid gains in precious metal price globally, according to HDFC Securities. The yellow metal had closed at Rs 63,200 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Silver also jumped Rs 500 to Rs 79,700 per kilogram. In the international markets, both gold and silver were quoting higher at USD 2,042 per ounce and USD 25.30 per ounce, respectively. Spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,042 per ounce, up by USD 2 from its previous close. Traders are expecting that the Federal Reserve would not raise interest rates again and potentially easing monetary policy in the first half of 2024, which will continue to support gold prices, HDFC Securities' Senior Analyst of Commodities Saumil Gandhi said.

Will never give company specific incentives in EV sector: Govt official on Tesla demand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will never provide company or enterprise-specific incentives in the electric vehicle sector, a top government official said on Friday, amid a push from American electric carmaker Tesla for special sops to set up its factory in the country. If the government has to consider providing incentives then it will only be for all EV makers and entrants who want to come to India, the official said. The official added that inter-ministerial discussions have happened on the customs duty concession demand of the US-based electric car maker Tesla, but "we never" came to any conclusion on those. In 2021, the US-based electric car maker demanded a reduction in import duties on electric vehicles (EVs) in India. It had requested the government to standardize the tariff on electric cars to 40 per cent irrespective of the customs value. At present, cars imported as completely built units (CBUs) attract customs duty ranging from 60 per cent to 100 per cent, depending on engine size and cost, insurance and freight (CIF) value less or above USD 40,000. "Never. It will never be a com-



pany-specific. It will always be for all entities, companies. If any concessions are given, these will always be linked to fairly stringent performance criteria for everybody. It's never going to be an enterprise-specific thing," the official said when asked if the government is considering specific concessions for Tesla. The official clarified that the reports on duty concessions and others related to the company are "mostly in the nature of speculation". "They have asked for some concessions but we never came to any conclusion. Nothing has come to any conclusion at all on that," the official added. Last month, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal visited the manufacturing facil-

ity of US-based electric vehicle major Tesla in Fremont, California and said that the company would be doubling its auto components imports from India. The world's largest electric car producer Tesla Inc's chief Elon Musk met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June in New York and after the meeting Musk had said that he planned to visit India in 2024. There are reports that India is looking at giving customs duty concessions to Tesla for setting up a plant in the country. In September, Goyal said the company is looking to source components worth around USD 1.9 billion from India this year against USD 1 billion in 2022. Going forward, demand for

Foreign exchange reserves jump \$2.5 bn to \$597.9 bn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's foreign exchange reserves increased USD 2.538 billion to USD 597.935 billion for the week ended November 24, the Reserve Bank said on Friday. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had jumped USD 5.077 billion to USD 595.397 billion. For the week ended November 24, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased USD 2.14 billion to USD 528.531 billion, as per the data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves were up USD 296 million to USD 46,338 billion during the week, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up USD 87 million to USD 18.218 billion. India's reserve position with the IMF rose USD 14 million to USD 4.848 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

India, US agree to strengthen cooperation in pharma, semiconductors, critical minerals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India and the US have agreed to strengthen cooperation in sectors like pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, critical minerals and emerging technologies, an official statement said on Friday. The two countries also discussed collaborative opportunities in green and clean technologies; and strengthening partnership in critical technologies, the commerce ministry said. These key areas emerged from the discussions during the meeting of Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo at a review meeting of the India-US CEO Forum virtually last night. "As both sides are focused on closer engagement based on



trust, following key areas emerged from the discussions -- supply chain cooperation across pharma, semiconductors, critical minerals and energy; collaborative opportunities in green tech and scaling up manufacturing for clean tech; and strengthening partnership in critical and emerging technologies," it said. Raimondo urged the CEO

Forum to seize the current momentum and implement the pivotal recommendations outlined by the forum members. She also announced the inclusion of four new members in the forum from the US industry including Honeywell, Pfizer, Kyndryl, and Viasat. The Forum, comprising CEOs from leading Indian and US-



Honda Motorcycle, Scooter India sales up 20% to 4,47,849 units in November

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India on Friday reported a 20 per cent rise in total sales at 4,47,849 units in November 2023. The company had sold 3,73,234 units in the same month last year, Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India (HMSI) said in a statement. Domestic sales were at 4,20,677 units as against 3,53,553 units in the same month a year ago, it added. Exports were also higher at 27,172 units last month as compared to 19,681 units in November 2022, the company said.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor sales up 51% at 17,818 units in November

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Toyota Kirloskar Motor on Friday reported 51 per cent growth in sales at 17,818 units in November 2023 as compared to the year-ago month. The company had sold 11,765 units in November 2022, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) said in a statement. Domestic sales last month were at 16,924 units in the domestic market, while exports stood at 894 units, it added. The company had undertaken a week-long maintenance shutdown from November 11-19, 2023 for upkeep of machinery and equipment to sustain operational efficiencies, maintain quality and safety, the statement said. "We recorded a strong festive season with healthy bookings, and we are extremely thrilled



to see the market responding very positively to our entire product range," TKM Vice President of Sales and Strategic Marketing Atul Sood said. TKM said its cumulative sales for calendar year 2023 (January-November) stood at 2,10,497 units, up 40 per cent over the same period in 2022, when the sales were 1,49,995 units.

BUSINESS BRIEF

IIFL SAMASTA TO RAISE UP TO ₹1,000 CR VIA BONDS
 Delhi: IIFL Samasta Finance, which is one of India's largest non-banking microfinance companies (NBFC-MFI), will raise up to Rs 1,000 crore through its maiden public issue of secured bonds, for the purpose of growth and capital augmentation. The bonds offer up to 10.50 per cent and a high degree of safety. The issue opens on Dec 4 and closes on Dec 15. IIFL Samasta Finance will issue bonds, aggregating to Rs 200 crore, with a green-shoe option to retain over-subscription of up to Rs 800 crore (aggregating to Rs 1,000 crore).

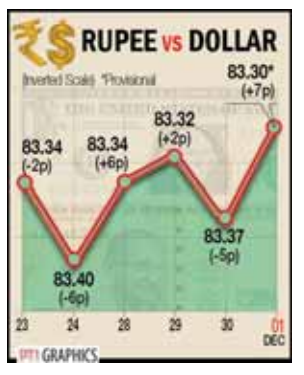
INTERNATIONAL EXPO ON FOOD AND BEVERAGES
 New Delhi: The Three day 5th edition of 'SIAL INDIA', an international exhibition for food and beverages, collocated with Vinexpo India, an event on wine and spirits, will be hosted here at Yashboomi, India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC), Dwarka. The exhibition is powered by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MOFPI) and is supported by Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority and Forum of Indian Food Importers. SIAL India is jointly organised by Comexposium, France and Inter Ads, India. Vinexpo India is jointly organised by VinexpoIndia, France and Inter Ads, India. Not only India is now the biggest market in the world... but the appetite of the middle class for new and innovative products is amazing, said Nicola Trentesaux, Director SIAL Group.

Rupee rises 7 paise to settle at 83.30 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated 7 paise to settle at 83.30 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, following positive cues from equity markets and strong domestic macroeconomic data. Forex analysts said easing crude oil prices in the international markets also favoured the local currency. Global crude price retreated from the level of USD 84 to

USD 80 per barrel as oil-producing countries' grouping OPEC+ agreed not to reduce output in 2024, they added. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened stronger at 83.29 against the dollar and traded between the peak of 83.25 and the lowest level of 83.36 against the American currency intra-day. It finally settled at 83.30 (provisional) against the greenback, registering a gain of 7 paise over the previous close. The rupee settled 5 paise lower at 83.37 against the dollar on Thursday. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.19 per cent lower at 103.30 on Friday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures declined 0.23 per cent to USD 80.67 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex surged 492.75 points, or 0.74 per cent, to set-



tle at 67,481.19 points. The Nifty advanced 134.75 points, or 0.67 per cent, to 20,267.90 points. A monthly survey on Friday said India's manufacturing sector continued with its robust performance in November. The seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to 56 last month from the eight-month low of 55.5 recorded in October.

Foreign institutional investors were net buyers in the capital market on Thursday as they purchased shares worth Rs 8,147.85 crore, according to exchange data. According to the Thursday data released on Tuesday, India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 7.6 per cent during July-September beat most estimates, including 6.5 per cent projected by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), retaining the country's tag of

the world's fastest-growing major economy. Also, another data released simultaneously showed that the output of eight key infrastructure sectors jumped 12.1 per cent in October 2023 against 0.7 per cent expansion in the year-ago period. The government's fiscal deficit at the end of October touched 45 per cent of the full-year budget estimate, as per the data released by the Contoller General of Accounts (CGA).

NATIONAL BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Thapa, Sanjeet, Panghal reach finals

PTI ■ SHILLONG

Veteran boxer Shiva Thapa (63.5kg) and 2021 Asian champion Sanjeet (92kg) hardly broke a sweat as they stormed into the final of the men's National Boxing Championships here on Friday.

On a day when 12 SSCB pugilists entered the summit clash, 2019 world championship silver medallist Amit Panghal (51 kg) Panghal tamed Ankit of RSPB. The bout was closely contested but the 28-year-old Panghal, who failed to make the Indian squad for this year's world championships and the Asian Games, maintained his composure in the crucial moments to beat his opponent 5-2.



Panghal will now face Anshul Punia of Chandigarh in the gold medal bout. The other SSCB boxers to enter the final are: Barun Singh (48kg), Pawan (54kg), Sachin (57kg), Akash (60kg), Vanshaj (63.5kg), Rajat (67kg), Akash (71kg), Deepak (75kg), Lakshya (80kg) and Jugnoo (86kg).



NATIONAL RANKING TT

Sharath, Sathiyam earn hard fought wins

PTI ■ VIJAYAWADA

Veteran Achanta Sharath Kamal and fellow international G Sathiyam entered the men's singles quarter-final of the 4th UTT National Ranking Table Tennis Championships here on Friday.

Sharath was down 0-2 against Akash Pal before summoning his vast experience to win the last two extended games despite stiff resistance from the Railway's paddler. The fast-paced match witnessed several long rallies, most of which went Sharath's way.

JUNIOR WORLD C'SHIPS Boxers confirm eight more medals



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Asian junior champions Nisha (52kg) and Akansha (70kg) progressed to the semifinals as eight Indian boxers assured themselves of a medal each at the IBA Junior World Boxing Championships in Yerevan, Armenia.

Italy, Croatia tough options as lower seeded teams in Euro 2024 tournament draw

AP ■ MILAN

Defending champion Italy and World Cup semifinalist Croatia are among the lower-seeded teams in Saturday's draw for next year's European Championship, a quirk created by the way UEFA decides the seedings for the tournament.

together with teams like Scotland and Slovenia, who rarely reach major tournaments. Host Germany and group winners are in pot 1 for the 24-team draw in Hamburg, which is held in a ceremony that starts at 6 p.m. Local time (1700 GMT) on Saturday.



world rankings. Germany is in a relative slump at No. 16 after a troubled year. The rest of the draw has quirks and wrinkles. SECOND-SEEDED TEAMS This pot includes the other five group winners and the runner-up with the best record, which was Austria from the group Belgium won.

home and away by a dominant France. Both Croatia and the Netherlands lost to eventual champion Argentina at last year's World Cup, in the semifinals and quarterfinals, respectively, and look like the toughest options in a pot that also includes the Czechs, Scotland, Slovakia and Slovenia, which last reached the Euros in 2000.

Sport gave Devi new lease of life

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Born without arms, Sheetal Devi would use her feet to climb trees. But little did she know that the childhood habit was acting as the spade work in laying a strong foundation for future success.



test. She came out with flying colours in the test, scoring 8.5 out of 10. "When we first met in Bengaluru in 2021, Sheetal was keen to have prosthetic hands. After a lot of convincing she decided to take up sports," Preethi said.

fidant and fully prepared for Paralympics," Sheetal said on Friday during the launch of a book cover featuring her. "I used to think that I can't do anything in life but everyone supported me and that is the reason I am here today. If I didn't get that support I guess I wouldn't have been where I am today."

compound and mixed team compound besides claiming silver medal in doubles compound event. She thanked the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board for playing a big role in her journey. "Whatever I am today is because of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sports Complex in Katra and its coaches Abhilasha Chaudhary and Kuldeep Wadhwan," Sheetal said.

UK police probe ticket problem that sparked violence

AP ■ BIRMINGHAM

English police had 46 supporters of Legia Warsaw in custody Friday after "90 minutes of sustained violence" the night before when 1,000 Polish fans arrived to Villa Park but weren't given their tickets to the game against Aston Villa.



erning body said in a statement. "We have no further information or other comment to make at this stage." The normal process of ticket allocation, Barratt explained, is that the home club through UEFA provides them to the away club.

Nadal to return in January after being out for a year

AP ■ MADRID

Rafael Nadal will return to playing at the Brisbane International in Australia in January, the 22-time Grand Slam champion said on Friday. "After a year of not competing, it is time to come back," Nadal said in a video posted on social media.

After cricket, movies are source of entertainment in Lanka: Muttiah

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sri Lankan cricket legend Muttiah Muralitharan says Hindi and Tamil films enjoy a huge fan following in his home country and the craze for cinema comes in a close second to cricket in the island nation.

people want to watch films in their own language. Both Hindi and Tamil movies are famous in Sri Lanka. Something for entertainment in Sri Lanka, cricket is a part, next one is the movies," Muralitharan told PTI in a virtual interview.



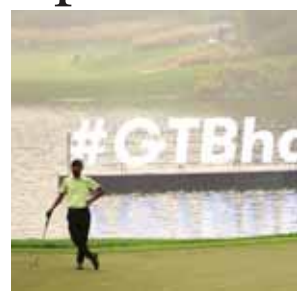
ing at a hostel, he would hardly get an opportunity to watch television. "In those days, we had to go to a cinema hall. Earlier, the movies in Sri Lanka came months after the release. It's only been in the last 10 years that films have been released in Sri Lanka (around the same time) as well," he added.

Muralitharan's biopic "800", titled after the record number of wickets he took in Test cricket, will start streaming on JioCinema from December 2. The film is written and directed by MS Sripathy.

Rashid leads pack heading into final round of Kapil Dev Grant Thornton golf

PTI ■ GURUGRAM

Two-time international winner Rashid Khan led the pack with a total of six-under 138 at the end of round two of the Rs 2 crore Kapil Dev Grant Thornton Invitational golf tournament here on Friday.



place after his 71 in round two that took his total to five-under 139. Sunhit Bishnoi (69-70), who had played his second round on Thursday, shared the second spot with Karan. kRound

two resumed at 9:30 am as there was a two-and-a-half-hour fog delay. Out of a total of 120 golfers, the 84 players who couldn't complete their second round on Thursday, came out and completed their rounds on Friday.

amateurs in the last round where the Pro-Am Team Championship will be played alongside the main event. There will be two professionals and two amateurs in each group. Rashid, a 10th tee starter, began the day on a promising note with two long birdie conversions on the 10th and 13th. He dropped a couple of bogeys thereafter but negated the effect of those with birdies on two par-5s, the 18th and eighth, where he narrowly missed 10 to 12 feet eagle putts.

IGNORED AXAR SHINES

PTI ■ RAIPUR

INDIA BEAT AUSTRALIA BY 20 RUNS TO CLAIM SERIES

Ignored for the upcoming assignment in South Africa, left-arm spinner Axar Patel responded with excellent figures of 3/16 as India got the better of Australia by 20 runs in the fourth T20I to win the five-match series here on Friday. This was India's fifth consecutive T20I series on trot. Rinku Singh blazed away to a 29-ball 46 while Jitesh Sharma smashed 35 in 19 balls before Australia pulled things back to stop India at 174 for nine after the visitors opted to bowl first. Cruising at 167 for four in 18.3 overs, India lost five wickets for only seven runs in the last two overs, thanks to Ben Dwarshuis (3/40) and Jason Behrendorff (2/32). In reply, Australia were restricted to 154 for seven in 20 overs as India took an unassailable 3-1 lead with a match to go. Matthew Wade remained out on 36 off 23 balls. Axar Patel (3/16) and Ravi Bishnoi (1/17) were magnificent, bowling eight overs for only 33 runs with four scalps to their credit. There was no dew and hence the target of 175 became defendable unlike Guwahati. Both spinners hit immaculate lengths and mostly bowled stump to stump which became



Australia's undoing. Set a target of 175, Australia were off to a flyer with Travis Head (31 off 16 balls) collecting a flurry of boundaries to lift his team to 42 for one in four overs, including picking 22 runs off seamer Deepak Chahar. Seasoned spinner Axar however had the hero of Australia's World Cup final caught after the

batter got a leading edge while attempting a slog-sweep. It was a huge breakthrough for India, coming 10 balls after leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi knocked over Josh Philippe's off-stump with one that straightened. Playing across the line, Aaron Hardie's middle stump was disturbed by Axar as he put India in a position of strength by leav-

ing Australia at 55 for three at the end of seventh over. Skipper Suryakumar Yadav introduced Avesh Khan into the attack and the seamer started on a good note, conceding six runs in his first over. Ben McDermott (19) and Tim David (19) steadied the Australian innings with a 35-run partnership before Axar picked

up his third wicket to leave the visitors in a very difficult situation at 87 for four in the 12th over and with the run rate pressure increasing. Axar hit McDermott's off stump as the batter went for a big shot. Taken to the cleaners by Head earlier in the innings, Chahar came back strongly to dismiss David and reduce Australia to 107 for five in the 15th over and the match tilted decisively in favour of India. Earlier, Aaron Hardie started the match with a maiden over before Yashviji Jaiswal (37 off 28 balls) got off the mark with a lovely cover drive Jason Behrendorff. The 21-year-old Jaiswal launched into Ben Dwarshuis in the third over, hitting the left-arm seamer for three boundaries to set the tone for the hosts. Ruturaj Gaikwad (32 off 28 balls) watched the action from the other end as Jaiswal went after the bowling and when the former did get strike for the first time in the fourth over, he employed the cut shot off a Behrendorff delivery to open his account with a boundary. Jaiswal continued with his aggressive ways and played debutant spinner Chris Green through the off-side for a four before smashing him over the midwicket fence for a six.



Ganguly bats for Rohit as Indian captain till 2024 T20 World Cup

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Impressed with his captaincy at the ODI World Cup, former captain Sourav Ganguly on Friday threw his weight behind Rohit Sharma, saying he should lead India at least till the T20 World Cup in June next year. Rohit, who led India to the ODI World Cup final at home, and Virat Kohli have taken a "break" and will miss the white-ball leg of the upcoming South Africa tour, beginning December 10. Talking to reporters, Ganguly said the duo deserved rest so that they come back "fresh" for the hectic calendar ahead. "Once Rohit is back playing all formats, he should be the captain of India, because he has done so well in the World Cup," said the former BCCI president, who was named the Dabur Chyawanprash's brand ambassador for East India, during a program here. "You saw in the World Cup how well they played. They are absolutely integral and an important part of Indian cricket."

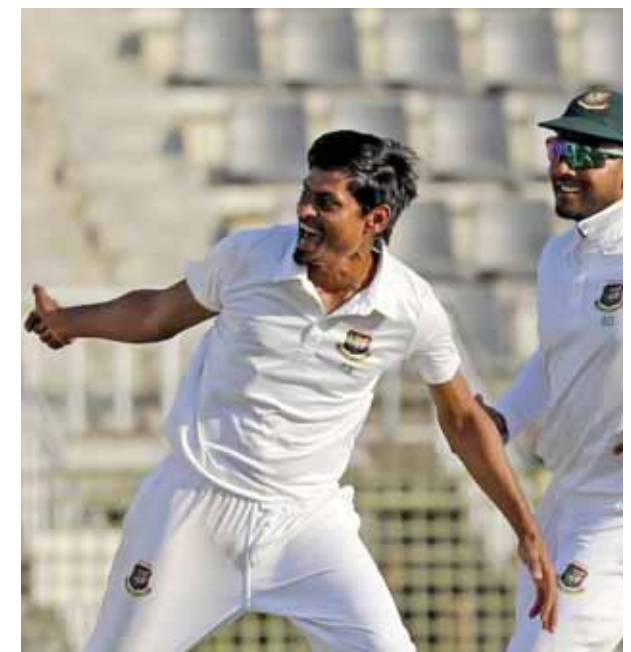
Interestingly, both Rohit and Kohli haven't played a T20I since the semifinals against England in the 2022 T20 World Cup and the BCCI was not clear whether the duo should be in India's scheme of things for the T20 global showpiece in six months time. After the 2022 T20 World Cup, Hardik Pandya was named India's T20 captain but following his injury during the ODI World Cup, Suryakumar Yadav is leading the team in the ongoing five-T20 series against Australia. "World Cups are different than a bilateral series because the pressures are different. They have been exceptional this World Cup and hopefully six-

seven months down the line in the West Indies they will be again at their best," Ganguly said. "He's (Rohit) a leader. I expect and I presume that he will continue as captain till the T20 World Cup in 2024." The duo will be back for the two-Test series in South Africa beginning with the Boxing Day Test in Centurion. "Very rightfully, they have taken a break because there is so much cricket all the time. I cannot imagine that you played a World Cup final on the 19th and in three days' time you're playing a T20I series against the same team," Ganguly said. "It is not easy to pick yourselves up, especially with the pressures and demands of the World Cup. I'm happy that they have got a break. They will come back fresh for Tests — there're five Tests against England — there's IPL, and then the T20 World Cup, so it's non-stop cricket. Hopefully they'll come back fresh and keep performing."

HAPPY FOR DRAVID: The BCCI has also extended the contract of India head coach Rahul Dravid at least till the T20 World Cup, even though the exact duration of his second term is not yet known. It was during Ganguly's BCCI tenure that Dravid had become the head coach and the former India left-hander was happy for his teammate's contract extension. "I'm not surprised that they have shown faith in Dravid. When I was president of the Board, we convinced him to do this job. And I'm so happy to see yesterday that his tenure has been extended. "It was always the case, depending on whether he wanted it or not. I wish him luck for another

World Cup in June. He was very close this time. "They may not have won it, but they probably were the best team in the competition with the way they played. So he's got another seven months for a World Cup in the West Indies. Hopefully, at that time, he will not be runners-up, but a champion," he said. Asked about India's title drought at an ICC global showpiece, Ganguly said: "Hopefully they will cross the bridge one day." "As a captain, I've qualified for three finals, and lost twice — 2003 World Cup and 2001 Champions Trophy. So I don't have the right to say how to win finals. I managed just one win that too as joint winners with Sri Lanka (2002 Champions Trophy)," he said. "At least, they are making the final and by dominating the tournament. Hopefully they will cross the bridge one day, their luck will change. There is no rocket science. "At Australia 47/3, India had a great chance, one wicket and it would have been different. But it's past now."

THANK YOU PUJARA, RAHANE: Test specialist batters — Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane — were not included for the two Tests against South Africa. "At some point of time you have to play new talents. It happens, there is enormous talent in India and the team has to progress. Pujara and Rahane had enormous success for India, sport doesn't remain with you forever," Ganguly said. "You cannot be there forever, it will happen to everyone. I must thank them what they have done for Indian cricket and selectors want fresh faces, so that's the way it is."



Marsh defends controversial act of resting feet on World Cup trophy

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia all-rounder Mitchell Marsh, who faced criticism from Indian fans for resting his feet on the World Cup trophy, on Friday insisted that the gesture was not disrespectful and he won't mind repeating the controversial act. Soon after Australia defeated hosts India by six wickets in the final to claim their record-extending sixth ODI World Cup, skipper Pat Cummins shared a picture of Marsh with his feet on the trophy on his Instagram account, creating a huge furor on social media. "There was obviously no disrespect meant in that photo at all," Marsh said on 'Sen Radio'. "I haven't given it too much



thought, I haven't seen a lot on social media even though everyone tells me it's gone off. There's nothing in that," he added. However, when asked if he would do it again, Marsh said "Yeah probably, to be honest." The picture, which went viral on

social media, didn't sit well with Indian fans. Even pacer Mohammed Shami claimed that he felt "hurt" by Marsh's action. "The trophy for which all the teams in the world fight, the trophy which you want to lift over your head, keeping a foot on that trophy did not make me happy," Shami had said. **Hope big series aren't scheduled after World Cups, players deserve to celebrate** Four days after Australia beat India in the final, the two sides squared off in a five-match T20 series. Marsh hopes such big series won't be scheduled so soon after ICC tournaments in future as triumphant players deserve to celebrate for a while with their families at home.

Taijul takes 4 wickets as Bangladesh closes in on win

AP ■ SYLHET (BANGLADESH)

Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam claimed 4-40 to rip through New Zealand's batting lineup as Bangladesh closed in on a victory in the series-opening Test on Friday. New Zealand was reduced to 113-7 at stumps on day 4, chasing a victory target of 332. Daryl Mitchell batted patiently to end the day on 44, with Ish Sodhi on 7. Opener Devon Conway was the only other batter to put up resistance with 22. Pacer Shoriful Islam extended Tom Latham's lean patch with a six-ball duck in the first over, and Kane Williamson failed to build on his first-innings century on an increasingly deteriorating wicket. Williamson started with a brace of boundaries against Mehidy Hasan but Taijul troubled him by varying the pace and finally trapped him lbw for 11. Williamson reviewed in vain. Henry Nicholls was the next to go, top-edging a slog-sweep off Mehidy to Nayeem Hasan at short fine leg for 2. Conway was playing with positive intent with wickets falling around him and perfectly swept the spinners to keep the score-

board moving before Taijul had him caught by Shahadat Hossain at short leg. With New Zealand at 46-4, the onus was on Mitchell but he found little support from the other end. Wicketkeeper-batter Tom Blundell (6) was stifled by Taijul before edging a turning delivery behind, and Nayeem pegged back the visitors further with a successful review to remove Glenn Phillips. When Taijul got the better of Kyle Jamieson for 7, Bangladesh looked like they could wrap up the win on day four. But Mitchell and Sodhi survived a tricky 30 minutes before the bad light forced stumps. Earlier, Bangladesh was bowled out for 338 in its second innings. Najmul Hossain Shanto added just one run to his overnight score and was out for 105 as Bangladesh lost a succession of wickets. Mehidy Hasan scored 50 not out to help the side take the lead past 300. The hosts started Day 4 on 212-3 but lost Shanto in the second over when Tim Southee had him caught down the leg side, ending a 98-run fourth-wicket stand.

SA20 ropes in de Villiers as 'Brand Ambassador'

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

SA20, South Africa's premier T20 cricket league, has roped in former Proteas skipper AB de Villiers as its official 'Brand Ambassador' for the second season. The second season of the SA20, which kicks off on January 10, will feature 34 matches over four weeks and will showcase elite domestic and international players from the six global franchises. De Villiers will be working very closely with the management team of the league to help strengthen SA20's global fan-base and reinforce the league's brand across key strategic markets of India and the UK. He will be joined by an illustrious ensemble of South African cricket legends, including Herschelle Gibbs, Allan Donald, Dale Steyn and Mark Boucher. Robin Petersen completes the list. De Villiers said: "It is an honour to be associated with SA20. It embodies a pioneering vision for South African cricket, with the potential to illuminate the global cricketing stage. "SA20's remarkable talent and international reach provide a platform to showcase the finest of South African cricket, propelling it to unprecedented lev-



els." Speaking on the appointment of De Villiers as the brand ambassador, Betway SA20 League Commissioner, Graeme Smith said, "AB's exceptional cricketing talent and magnetic personality make him the perfect fit for our league. His involvement will undoubtedly elevate the league's status, both on and off the field. "AB's passion for the game and his ability to connect with fans align perfectly with our vision



OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, ATHMALLIK FOREST DIVISION.
AT/PO: ATHMALLIK, DIST- ANGUL – 759125
E-mail: dfoathmallik@gmail.com Mob: +91 9437004236

MM-333 No: 7194 /Date: 30.11.2023

CANCELLATION OF BID

The Bid for the works Advertised vide No.ADV.T 08125/11/0011/2324 IPR, Bhubaneswar on Dt.16.11.2023 i.e., "Construction of Staff Quarters (Ministerial-1 & Group-D-1 and Balcony) in Forest Colony (1st Floor) Athmallik under Athmallik Range of Athmallik Forest Division" (Tender Notice No.6914/1F-2023 Dt.16.11.2023 is hereby cancelled due to bring out some changes in the Estimate and Site.

In view of the above, I would request you kindly make necessary arrangements for wide publicity and publication of "Cancellation of Bid" in the leading Odia and English daily newspaper at the earliest. The copy of the advertisement may be provided to this office for record and reference. The price of the quotation/ Tender is more than 10 Lakhs.

It is hereby mentioned that the office of the undersigned can not bear the cost of advertisement and the same may kindly be borne at your end for the interest of public service.

OIPR-08125/11/0012/2324 **Divisional Forest Officer, Athmallik Division**

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION GANJAM No - I, BERHAMPUR.
E-mail: J.D.-eemi_gm1@yahoo.co.in Letter No. 3482, Date-30.11.2023
Corrigendum to Bid Identification No online Tender/04 / GMID-1/2023-24

In partial modification to this office Bid ID No Online tender/ 04 / GMID-1/2023-24 vide DTCN No.3272 dt. 06.01.2023. The following modifications are made.

SI No.	Details of Modification	As Per TCN	Modified as
1)	Last Date of availability and receipt of Bid document online	30.11.2023 upto 17.00 Hours	26.12.2023 upto 17.00 Hours
2)	Date and time of Opening of Tender	01.12.2023 at 11.00 Hours	27.12.2023 at 11.00 Hours

All Other terms & conditions of the tender will remain unaltered.
Superintending Engineer, M.I.Divn. Ganjam-I, Berhampur.
OIPR-32104/11/0018/2324

EAST COAST RAILWAY
Tender Notice No. 53/ET/SBP/ENGG/2023-24
Date: 22.11.2023

(1) e-Tender No. 37-ET-SDENC-SBP-23
Name of the work: PWAY AND OTHER ALLIED WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH PSR REMOVAL OF CURVE NO. 3 UP AT KM. 686/11 TO 686/35 B/W BALANGIR-DEOGAN ROAD IN SAMBALPUR-TITLAGARH SECTION OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION.
Approx cost of the work: ₹78,51,936.97, Bid Security: ₹1,86,000/-

(2) e-Tender No. 38-ET-SDENC-SBP-23
Name of the work: PWAY AND OTHER ALLIED WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH PSR REMOVAL OF CURVE NO. 31 DN & 32 DN AT KM. 586/4 TO 585/4 BETWEEN GODHAGA-ATTABIRA IN SAMBALPUR-TITLAGARH SECTION OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION.
Approx cost of the work: ₹92,98,338.52, Bid Security: ₹1,86,000/-

(3) e-Tender No. 39-ET-SDENC-SBP-23
Name of the work: PWAY AND OTHER ALLIED WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH PSR REMOVAL OF CURVE NO. 65 DN AT KM. 663/38 TO 664/16 BETWEEN LOISINGHA-BALANGIR IN SAMBALPUR-TITLAGARH SECTION OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION.
Approx cost of the work: ₹1,15,18,176.79, Bid Security: ₹2,07,600/-

(4) e-Tender No. 42-ET-SDENC-SBP-23
Name of the work: REPAIRS TO DAMAGED WATER PIPELINE AT RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF SETTLEMENT/SAMBALPUR IN SAMBALPUR DIVISION.
Approx cost of the work: ₹1,10,81,909.65, Bid Security: ₹2,05,500/-

Completion Period of the work: 06(Six) Months (for Sl. No. 1, 2 & 3) and 09(Nine) Months (for Sl.No. 4).
Date & time of Tender Closing: 18.12.2023 at 1500 hrs.

No manual offer sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-Tender even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tenders is available in website www.ireps.gov.in

The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered or IREPS portal. Only registered tenderer/bidder can participate on e-tendering. All relevant papers must have to be uploaded at the time of participating on e-tendering as per instruction. Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 15 (fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigendum issued for this tender.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.) PR-830/O/23-24 Sambalpur

Wong fires England Women's A to four wicket series levelling win against India

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Issy Wong's late flourish helped England Women's A level their three-match T20 series against India with a four-wicket win here in the second game on Friday. Chasing 150 to win, England stumbled towards the end with India making regular breakthroughs but Wong, who plays for Mumbai Indians in the Women's Premier League, produced a match-winning innings as she hit a 15-ball 35 (5x4s, 1x6s). The contest appeared to be heading towards another close

finish like the first game with England losing wickets in heap but Wong went ballistic on a turning track here at the Wankhede Stadium, scoring the last 23 of her runs off only seven balls. With 17 needed off 12, Wong hit two fours and a six off Kashvee Gautam (1/34) to take England over the line who finished at 151/6 in 18.5 overs. The series-decider will be played here on December 3. Before Wong's heroics, Grace Scriven top-scored with 39 and added 38 runs for the first wicket with Maia Boucher to provide a strong start.

OFFICE OF THE REGULATED MARKET COMMITTEE, ATTABIRA
ATP.O.- Attabira, Dist. - Bargarh (Odisha)- 768027
E-mail-attabircmc@gmail.com

Government Of Odisha "e" procurement Details.

Sl. No.	Item	Details
1	The Sub-Collector Bargarh-cum-Chairman, RMC Attabira invites request for quotation in ONLINE MODE only for work as detailed below.	
2	Nature of the work	Supply and installation of 10 M.T solar cold room at Attabira, Godhaga, Kathdera, Kharmunda, Sahratikra, Tentultikra & Resham Market Yards under RMC, Attabira.
3	No of work	1 No.
4	Bid Cost	Rs. 10,000.00 (Demand Draft of any Nationalised Bank, payable at Attabira in favour of Secretary, RMC, Attabira).
5	Availability of BID Documents in the website	DL.30.11.2023 to DL.08.12.2023
6	Last date/time of Receipt of bids in the portal	DL.08.12.2023 up to 5.00 P.M.
7	Date of opening of bid	DL.11.12.2023 at 11.30 A.M.
8	The Bidders have to quoted rate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: https://tenderscisss.gov.in . Any Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of the Tender etc can also be seen in the website: https://tenderscisss.gov.in .	

Sd/-
Sub-Collector, Bargarh-cum-Chairman, RMC, Attabira.
OIPR-07043/11/0005/2324