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INSIDE

WORLD 8
BETHLEHEM PLANS ANOTHER SOMBER CHRISTMAS UNDER THE SHADOW OF WAR IN GAZA

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Centre scraps no-detention policy for primary class V, VIII



decision intending to improve the learning outcome among children. "The Union Education Ministry has taken a big decision and abolished the 'No Detention Policy'. Students who fail the annual examination in classes 5 and 8 will be failed," Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, told The Pioneer. However, the Government has clarified that no child shall be expelled from any school till the completion of elementary education. According to a gazette notification, after the conduct of regular examination, if a child fails to fulfil the promotion criteria, as notified from time to time, he shall be given additional instruction and opportunity for re-examination within a period of two months from the date of declaration of results.

within two months, but if they fail again, they will not be promoted. The school will not expel a student until the 8th grade. Education Secretary Sanjay Kumar said that the Central Government has taken this

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a major change in the primary education system, the Centre on Monday directed for ending the "no-detention policy" for fifth and

eighth class, which means that students in these classes who fail their annual exams shall not be promoted to higher grade and hence will need to repeat the same class. Failed students will have a chance to retake the test

Three Khalistani terrorists killed in Pilibhit encounter

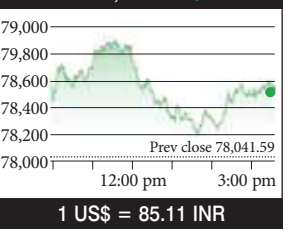
BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ PILIBHIT

In a major anti-terror operation, three militants belonging to the Khalistani Commando Force were gunned down in a joint operation by Punjab and Uttar Pradesh police in Pilibhit's Puranpur area early Monday morning. The encounter left two policemen injured, while the police recovered a significant cache of weapons, including two AK-47 rifles and two Glock pistols, from the spot. The operation was carried out around 5 am near the Hardoi Branch Canal after Punjab police traced the location of the wanted militants to Pilibhit. The three militants, all hailing from Punjab's Gurdaspur district, were accused of orchestrating a grenade attack on a police outpost in Gurdaspur on December 19. According to officials, the militants were traveling on a motorcycle when they were intercepted by the joint police team. Upon being surrounded, the trio opened fire indiscriminately using their automatic weapons. In the ensuing exchange of gunfire, all three were neutralized. Two policemen sustained injuries during the operation. The sounds of gunfire in the early hours sent shockwaves through nearby villages, with residents initially unsure of the nature of the operation. Bullet marks on police vehicles and the seizure of a motorcycle used by the militants indicated the intensity of the encounter.

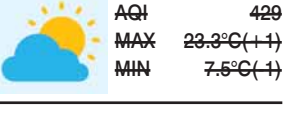


This combo image shows arms and other items recovered at the site of an encounter of three terror suspects, allegedly involved in the grenade attack in Gurdaspur, by a joint team of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab police, in Pilibhit. PTI

MARKETS



WEATHER



No lapse, says CISF on MPs scuffle



The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Monday said there was "no lapse" on its part when asked about the scuffle that took place among MPs in Parliament complex during the recently concluded Winter Session and added it will choose to "keep quiet" when allegations are levelled by lawmakers. The CISF is tasked to guard the Parliament House Complex. "There was no lapse (on part of the force)...By lapse if you mean some weapons were allowed inside, then I can tell you that no weapon was allowed..." CISF Deputy Inspector General (operations) Shrikant Kishore said at a Press conference.

Delhi Govt teachers to learn how to handle bomb threats

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

In a way replicating the training reportedly given to school teachers in United States of America (USA) on 'how to shoot a gun, and handle a weapon' due to the rampant problem of gun shooting in schools, the Delhi Police joined hands with the Delhi Education Department, for training teachers and school staff of all government and private schools on how to handle bomb threats even as the fear of such threats through emails continue to loom among the school



authorities in the National Capital since May. This comes as an extension of the Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena's 'Samvaad' program where in a meeting with teachers, they raised the issue of Drug Abuse, Cyber Hygiene and recent Bomb threat emails. Multiple schools in Delhi have received hoax bomb threats in the last 10 days. The threats disrupted classes and triggered multi-agency search operations.

Terror suspect planned escape to Pak via B'desh

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The arrested member of the 'Tehreek-e-Mujahideen' terror outfit from Kashmir was planning to use the river route to travel to Bangladesh and eventually escape to Pakistan, a senior officer of the West Bengal Special Task Force (STF) said on Monday. Bengal STF officials also believe that the arrested person, identified as Javed Munshi, has close ties with the Lashkar-e-Taiba terror group. Investigators are working to decode the notes seized from his possession to uncover more details about his plans, the officer added.

Munshi was arrested by a joint team of Jammu and Kashmir Police and West Bengal Police STF from near Canning in South 24 Parganas district on Sunday. The 'Tehreek-e-Mujahideen' group is controlled from Pakistan and has connections with other terror outfits in the valley, as well as in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the officer added. The 58-year-old man was considering multiple routes to reach Bangladesh, including traveling by road from Canning to Dhamakhali, and then using river routes through the Sunderbans.

In Kendrapada Youth held for abducting, marrying minor girl

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

The Town police detained a bridegroom and rescued a minor bride on Sunday night from the Baladev Temple in Kendrapada. Later, the detained youth and the minor girl were handed to a Bari Ramchandrapur police team for further investigation. According to Town PS IIC

Dillip Kumar Sahoo, the minor girl from Bari Ramchandrapur was kidnapped by the 22-year-old youth and his family members were solemnising their marriage in the Baladev Temple. Acting on the information, a police team led by the IIC conducted a raid and detained the youth and rescued the 17-year-old girl. Notably, the girl's parents



Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi meets Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Monday and invites him to attend the upcoming Pravasi Bharatiya Day and Utkarsh Odisha functions in Bhubaneswar



ONOE JPC to meet on Jan 8

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The first meeting of the 39-member parliamentary panel on the 'One Nation, One Election' initiative is scheduled for January 8, marking the start of discussions on a major electoral reform proposed by the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government. According to parliamentary sources, the Joint Committee on Bills for simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies, chaired by BJP MP PP Chaudhary, will likely have an introductory session where officials will brief the panel on two key Bills aimed at implementing the BJP's long-standing election reform agenda.

Gig workers need targeted regulatory framework: NHRC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In the rapidly expanding gig economy of India, gig workers often endure grueling shifts that can exceed 10 hours a day, while contending with low, unpredictable incomes and the pressure of meeting unrealistic performance targets. However, things might change for the better for this workforce, which is estimated to be 65 lakh strong. At a recent session held by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), stakeholders from the sector recommended a slew of measures including the need for targeted regulatory frameworks, setting up rest points, and the creation of grievance redressal mechanisms, particularly for women workers. These recommendations which come amidst Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya announcement in October to put in place a framework for social security of gig workers, including health insurance and pension were presented as part of the



meet addressing the challenges faced by gig workers. The issue holds importance given that India's top think tank panel Niti Aayog has estimated 65 lakh gig and platform workers in the country, but the number is likely to be over two crore as the segment is growing rapidly. Gig workers, also known as independent contractors, are individuals who undertake temporary or short-term work assignments, primarily within the service sector. They operate independently and are not regarded as employees of the

organizations. Hence, they do not typically have access to common employee benefits that full-time staff members receive. However, irregular incomes, unexpected expenses, and limited access to credit have often left them at the receiving end. Taking serious note of their precarious condition, NHRC's acting chairperson, Vijaya Bharathi Sayani said that there is a "need for targeted efforts" through regulatory frameworks to address gig worker's challenges, including long working hours, financial strain, and physical exhaustion.

Rains predicted for two days in State

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Following Christmas, from December 26 onwards, dry weather may prevail over most of the State with temperatures dropping further. "On December 25 also, light to moderate rain is very likely to occur at isolated places in the districts of coastal Odisha and dry weather to prevail thereafter," stated IMD Regional Director Manorama Mohanty. She also added that mercury is expected to plummet by as much as 2 to 4 degrees Celsius from December 26, bringing back cold wave conditions. The incoming rainfall activity predicted is attributed to the formation of a low-pressure area that remains active

over the west-central Bay of Bengal. As a result, a trough line may form over Odisha. The entry of moisture-laden sea winds from the southeast direction into the State could lead to cloudy skies and rainfall in coastal and adjoining northern coastal areas. Notably, unseasonal rainfall occurred in many places in the State on Friday before subsiding, under the influence of a low pressure-turned-depression over the Bay of Bengal. Meanwhile, cold wave conditions, with temperatures dropping to nail-biting 4 degrees Celsius at a few places, had been prevailing before the rains and are now again set to return after Christmas.

Fire engulfs warehouse in city



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A major fire broke out on Monday evening at a warehouse in the Satyanagar area of Bhubaneswar, causing damages worth lakhs. As per reports, locals first spotted the fire at the pressure cooker warehouse but were unable to extinguish it because the outlet was closed.

Eyewitnesses said that the flames had engulfed the entire godown within a few minutes while locals promptly informed the Fire Service and two fire engines arrived at the scene. As of the latest updates, efforts to control the fire were still ongoing and the fire personnel deployed a robotic fire fighter to control the blaze.

Bengali villages in Malkangiri being renamed

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Malkangiri district administration has begun a process of renaming villages where migrant Bengali settlers have lived for decades, addressing a longstanding demand for culturally significant identities. The settlers, predominantly from the Scheduled Caste community, migrated from Bangladesh during the 1960s and 1970s and now reside in 214 villages. These settlements, until now, have been labelled with alphanumeric codes such as MV (Malkangiri Village) and MPV

(Malkangiri Poteru Village) followed by numbers like 26 and 79, which lack cultural or historical meaning. Malkangiri Collector Asish Iswar Patil stated, "We have initiated the process of renaming the villages. According to existing guidelines, the proposal for a new name must be approved at multiple levels starting with the Gram Sabha, then the Palli Sabha, tehsil, Sub-Collector and Collector before being sent to the Board of Revenue for its final approval." Officials also revealed that some of these villages could achieve revenue village status if they meet the necessary cri-

teria, further enhancing their administrative recognition. The demand for renaming the villages gained prominence during the general elections with the BJP pledging to address the issue if voted to power. The renaming initiative is expected to restore a sense of belonging and pride among the settlers, many of whom have faced years of neglect and administrative ambiguity. Once completed, the villages will bear culturally resonant names that reflect their residents' history and identity, marking a new chapter for the region.

In city Goons abduct woman after assaulting BF

Victim rescued; love triangle suspected

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

A young woman returning to her home on Sunday night was kidnapped by four men from Lumbini Vihar under the Maitri Vihar police station in Bhubaneswar.

The miscreants bundled her into a car and sped away after severely thrashing her boyfriend (BF).

Sources said the woman was returning home with her boyfriend by a scooter at around 1:30 am when the incident occurred. A love triangle is suspected to be the reason behind the incident.

The four miscreants came in a car from nowhere and attacked the woman's male friend, leaving him critically injured. They later gagged the



girl, put her inside the car and sped away. On being informed, police rushed to the spot and rescued the injured youth, who was later admitted to a local hospital. Based on a complaint by the injured youth, the Maitri Vihar police registered a case and launched a manhunt to nab the four

miscreants and rescue the girl. "The perpetrators arrived in a vehicle and attacked her male companion with a weapon before forcibly taking the woman. The male friend suffered injuries during the assault," an eyewitness said. Later, police swung into action and rescued the young

woman safely on Monday from the Baramunda area. The woman was being questioned by police to ascertain the motive behind the incident. However, Lumbini Vihar residents have expressed concern over the incident and demanded more police patrolling in the area.

Trader looted at gunpoint in Barang

Series of armed robberies triggers panic

PNS ■ CUTTACK

A spate of robberies in the Barang area of Cuttack district in the last three days by armed miscreants has triggered panic among the traders and business community.

In the latest incident on Monday, a trader, Basanta Lenka was intercepted near the Naraj firing range while he was on his way to Cuttack for business purposes. The armed robbers allegedly snatched over Rs 5,000 from him.

Just a day earlier, another merchant in Shandpur had allegedly been robbed of Rs 10,000. The Monday incident followed a similar pattern seen the day before when two businessmen were targeted in Godisahi and along the Shandpur Canal Road.

"When I was on my way to Cuttack to bring fish for business purpose, as many as three bike-borne miscreants attacked me and looted money from me at gunpoint," said a victim.

As per reports, the Cuttack police are investigating these incidents. However, as of yet, the perpetrators have not been apprehended.

In city Burglars loot Rs 30L valuables from house



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In yet another burglary in Bhubaneswar in close succession, unidentified miscreants decamped with cash and gold jewellery worth Rs 30 lakh from a house in Paikanagar under the Nayapalli police station on Sunday night.

"My sister had gone on a religious trip. The miscreants have looted gold ornaments and cash from the house after entering the house from the terrace," said a family member.

The burglars spent a lot of time in the house as some cigarette butts were recovered from the spot. They left behind

imitation jewellery and some foreign currency that were kept in the cupboard, he added.

On getting information, a team of the Nayapalli police arrived at the scene and launched an investigation into the incident. They also took the help of forensic teams and sniffer dogs to track the culprits. This burglary has raised considerable concern among residents regarding the security in the area.

It is pertinent to mention here that there has been a spurt in incidents of burglaries and thefts in various localities and apartments in Bhubaneswar in the past several months.

NTPC to set up green hydrogen station in city

Inks pact with GRIDCO, CRUT

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The NTPC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with GRIDCO and Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) on Monday here for furthering green energy technologies in Odisha, especially a green hydrogen mobility scheme.

The MoU was exchanged among CGM (RE), NTPC DMR Panda, MD, GRIDCO Trilochan Panda and MD, CRUT Dr N Thirumala Naik in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, Housing and Urban Development Minister Dr Krishna Chandra Mohapatra, Principal Secretary of Energy VK Dev, Principal Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Usha Padhee and other senior officials

from NTPC, GRIDCO and CRUT.

As per the pact, the NTPC will set up a green hydrogen fuelling station in Bhubaneswar along with hydrogen buses for short-haul and long-haul operation. This will open an option of phasing out fossil fuel buses in favour of clean and green fuels, bringing decarbonisation and energy security. MNRE has contributed partially for setting up of the project in Bhubaneswar.

NTPC is successfully operating the green hydrogen blending project at Surat, Gujarat for last two years and already has taken similar mobility initiatives at Leh, Ladakh, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh and Kandla, Gujarat. NTPC is also developing the green hydrogen hub in Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh and aims to reach 60 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2032.

In Odisha 26 villages recognised as 'Tsunami Ready'



By IOC-UNESCO

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha has led the way in tsunami preparedness with 26 villages across six districts being recognised as 'Tsunami Ready' by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO).

The six districts comprising 24 villages, along with two previously-designated villages have been recognised as Tsunami Ready by IOC-UNESCO.

According to reports, this recognition is based on compliance with 12 stringent indicators. Odisha's effort has earned national and international recognition.

Efforts to achieve this status involved comprehensive training and capacity building efforts, community awareness drives and dissemination of instructional materials. Moreover, management plans were developed, mock drills con-

ducted, evacuation routes identified and signage appropriately installed.

The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) in Hyderabad has played a crucial role in this initiative. It operates a continuous tsunami monitoring and alert system, incorporating risk assessment, warning dissemination and ensuring timely warnings.

A live evacuation exercise was conducted in Kaitha village in Kendrapada district, which was observed by Dr T Sinanivasa Kumar of UNESCO, Dr Sunitha Jena, General Manager of Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDAMA); and Amlan Anupam Senapati, District Project Officer.

Interactions with local leaders and residents provided significant insights into their preparedness. It highlights how proactive measures are crucial in safeguarding lives and building disaster-resilient communities.

University High School celebrates diamond jubilee

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The diamond jubilee celebration of the University High School, Vani Vihar, was held on Saturday and Sunday in the Multi-Purpose Hall of the school built with the contribution of the alumni of the school. In the opening ceremony, Minister Prithviraj Harichandan was chief guest and ex-MLA Priyadarshi Mishra guest of honour. Alumni Association president Deepak Ku Swain welcomed the guests.

Association general secretary Er Brahma Prakash Paital highlighted the contribution of the alumni in the infrastructure and other development works of the school. He raised



two important issues like filling up teachers' posts and repair as well as construction of new classrooms. Head Mistress Sandhya Mohapatra praised the contributions of the alumni.

Minister Harichandan also praised the alumni's contribu-

tion camp organised by the Alumni Association followed by a prize distribution ceremony of annual sports by chief guest Prof Navneeta Rath, Chairman, PG Council, Utkal University, who is also the chairperson of the school. In the second half of the closing ceremony, Prof Sabita Acharya, Vice-Chancellor, Utkal University, was chief guest and Gautam Pradhan guest of honour. Both promised to take all possible measures to fulfill the dream of the school in getting its lost glory.

Chakradhar Sir was felicitated for his outstanding contribution for the school. A cultural function was organised by the alumni.

The second day's celebration started with a blood do-

40 Odisha youths stranded in Maldives

Appeal in video to govt for rescue

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Over 40 youths from Odisha, who went to the Maldives six months ago in hopes of better employment opportunities in a private company, are now stranded under poor working conditions and no pay.

Through a video, they have appealed to the government to rescue them. They alleged that despite working for months, the company Renaatus has not paid their salaries and is forcing them to survive in dire conditions.

As per the allegations, a man named Kishore Barik of Pratap village of Banpur tehsil of Khordha district acted as an agent and facilitated the migration of these men, about 45



in number including from Odisha and other States to the Maldives.

Meanwhile, the workers have alleged being confined and intimidated when they raised voices against the company's inhospitable working and living conditions. They also claimed having to

pay for food and accommodation and that electricity connection is also being snapped to pressurise them.

"Despite working for four to five months, we have only received proper pay for one month. The living conditions are very dire and the company often threatens or jails us if we

protest against them," alleged one youth while narrating the ordeal in the video.

The men closed their video with a request to the government to ensure their security and safe return to their native places across the States of Odisha, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh.

Design Thinking and Innovation at IIT BBS

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar is organising AICTE ATAL FDP on "Design Thinking and Innovation", which was inaugurated on Monday. The five-day faculty development programme is being organised by the institute's School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Management.

The event was inaugurated today by Prof V Pandu Ranga, Dean, Continuing Education.

This FDP aims to train educators and participants about the intricacies of integrating design thinking and innovation into business operations, which shall be helpful to further channelise the students' minds in realising user-centred solutions relevant to markets and bringing success.

Dr Punyashree Panda stated the need to continually develop the curiosity of knowledge and the importance of design thinking in this process. Prof Pandu Ranga briefed about the institution and



highlighted that education is a continuous journey aimed at

personal growth, professional networking and social ad-

vancement. Chief speaker of the inaugural session Dr Ajit

Kumar, Associate Professor, XIMB, focused on the importance of the FDP which shall equip the participants to decipher the right information from information overload. Dr Dukhabandhu Sahoo proposed a vote of thanks.

The FDP will cover various aspects of Design Thinking and Innovation for the participants across the country, wherein the experts will discuss and deliberate upon the applications, development and execution of Design Thinking and Innovation.

Doppler Radar installation begins in S'pur



A significant step in weather forecasting

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

In a significant step in enhancing State's meteorological forecasting capabilities, the installation of a Doppler Radar has begun at Jamadarpali, Sambalpur, on Sunday.

The project, inaugurated by Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari, is slated for completion within six months, with an es-

timated cost of Rs 5 crore.

The sophisticated radar technology is set to improve forecasting accuracy across a 250 km radius, providing crucial early warnings to communities in the region. "The Centre has provided us with the Doppler Radar. The technical design has been completed in consultation with the Weather Designing Department of the Union Government and Odisha's Disaster Management Department. The work order has been issued, and the installation will be completed within six months," said Pujari.

Tension in Barbil as Hanuman idol vandalised

Bandh observed

PNS ■ KEONJHAR

Tension gripped Barbil town on Monday morning after locals held protests over vandalising of a Hanuman idol at the New Market area, demanding action against the miscreants.

Under the Hindu Ekata Manch a call for a Barbil bandh was given and all the entry points of the town were blocked to put pressure on the police to nab the culprits. The bandh call received massive support from the shopkeepers who pulled down their shutters showing solidarity with the cause.

The agitators alleged that for the past few years, Hindu idols are under the target of miscreants. Some days back an idol of Lord Shiv near



Champua had been vandalised but the miscreants are yet to be taken to task.

The tense situation continued up to 12 noon when Keonjhar SP Nitin Kushalkar rushed to Barbil and held a meeting with the protesters. He assured that strong action will be taken against the culprits. After assurance of the SP, situation became normal.

In Baleswar Youth killed over theft at garments shop

3 others also injured; 3 arrested
SIBDAS KUNDU ■ BALESWAR
A young person died and three others were seriously injured after they were allegedly thrashed over suspicion of theft at a garments shop at Sartha village in the Singla area in Baleswar district on Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Trilochan Pradhan (32) of the village. The garment shop belongs to one Ajay Das. Suspecting the involvement of Trilochan and three others, identified as Satish Singh, Tapua Mahanti and Tapan Pradhan in the theft, Ajay and his two sons along with some locals beat them black and blue with iron rods and sticks after tying them to an

electric pole at Odishala Square. While Trilochan died on the spot, three others were rescued and rushed to a nearby hospital with grievous wounds and later shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital as their health conditions worsened. Deceased Trilochan was the only son of his parents and the family members demanded stringent action

against the accused besides monetary compensation. Later, Ajay and his two sons were arrested and forwarded to court. In another case, the keys of an excise mobile team vehicle was allegedly snatched away by the family members of a person, who was arrested on the allegation of brown sugar smuggling in Jaleswar in the district on Monday.

In K'pada MBK loses job after fake cert slur against her comes true

RAJESH BEHERA ■ KENDRAPADA
A Master Book Keeper (MBK) was disengaged from her job on Wednesday after she was found getting the job by producing the fake certificate through RTI revelation. According to sources, the district administration had issued notification for filling the posts of Master Book Keeper (MBK) and Community Resource person (CRP) under Mission Shakti for Derabish block in

2023. As per the notification, the qualification for applying the form for MBK post was +2 pass whereas for the post of CRP it's 10th pass. But some applicants managed to get the jobs by furnishing tampered and fake certificates during the submission of application. According to sources, one Swayamprava Mishra managed to get the MBK post for Janra Barimula by submitting fake educational certificate. Swayamprava man-

aged to apply for the MBK post by submitting Upasastri and Sastri certificate of Beleswar Mahadev Sanskrit College. One Seema Nayak, an aspirant candidate, allegedly challenged the educational certificate submitted by Swayamprava. Later, she filed an RTI application in this regard before the authority of Beleswar Mahadev Sanskrit College to get information about the genuineness of the certificate of Swayamprava.

The college authority replying to the RTI query stated that the certificates of Swayamprava were fake. Seema Nayak brought the matter to the notice of Namita Barik, the BDO of Derabish and urged to take action against the errant. Later, an inquiry by the BDO revealed that the certificates submitted by Swayamprava were fake. The BDO disengaged Swayamprava Mishra on Wednesday and directed to repay the amount she has received as salary since her joining.

CIFA holds prog on scientific aquaculture



200 beneficiaries join
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA), Bhubaneswar, organised an Awareness-cum-Training Programme on Scientific Aquaculture under the SCSP project on December 18 at Saraskola village in the Samapatana block of Keonjhar district.

The event saw the participation of nearly 200 beneficiaries, including approximately 170 women farmers and 30 male farmers, emphasizing the significant role of women in aquaculture and related community activities. The ICAR-CIFA scientific team, led by Dr GS Saha, Sovan Sahoo, and Arun Kumar Behera, interacted with

Pradhan calls for Paradip's accelerated growth

PNS ■ PARADIP
Union Education and Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan visited Paradip on Monday and emphasised the need to accelerate development in the region under the "double-engine government" model. Addressing a gathering of party workers during a Karyakarta Sammelan, he highlighted Paradip's pivotal role in fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2016 vision of initiating the Eastern Region's development from Paradip. Pradhan noted Jagatsinghpur district's sig-



nificant support for the BJP as evident from the party's stronghold in both Assembly and Lok Sabha seats. He highlighted recent advancements, including the expansion of Paradip Port's capacity and the initiation of mega petrochemical projects

such as those led by IOCL. The event saw the participation of prominent leaders, including Jagatsinghpur MLA Amarendra Das, Paradip MLA and Industries Minister Sampad Swain and Jagatsinghpur MP Bibhu Prasad Tarai alongside a large gathering of BJP workers. Pradhan was welcomed to the conference with a grand rally. Pradhan reiterated the government's commitment to ensuring sustainable development and transforming Paradip into a key economic hub in Eastern India.

Free eye camp by Rotary Club, B'pur



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
In a bid to provide quality eye care services to the people of Kukudakhandi and surrounding areas, the Rotary Club of Brahmapur, in association with Seva Bharati, Kukudakhandi, and supported by Eye Care Hospital, Brahmapur, organized a free eye camp at Kukudakhandi on Sunday. The eye camp offered free glaucoma and cataract eye screening and operations.

More than 70 patients benefited from the camp, with doctors from Eye Care Hospital, Brahmapur providing expert treatment. The project was conducted under the chairmanship of Rotarian Sisir Patnaik of Rotary Club of Brahmapur. Club president RL Tarun, secretary KVG Ravi Kumar, treasurer V Satyanarayana, past president V Santosh Kumar and members Gopi Krishna, Santosh Rath, Anibh Tripathi, and J Balaji attended the camp.

Vizag-Malkangiri direct flight services soon

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The tribals-dominated district of Malkangiri in Odisha is most likely to be connected with direct flight services from the Visakhapatnam International Airport soon. If everything goes well, the authorities are planning to start the flight services in 2025. As of now, pre-operational arrangements have been initiated to operate a nine-seater jet from IndiaOne as the Malkangiri airport is not yet fully operational for commercial (non-scheduled) flights. It is only operating flights such as for ministers or in case of any emergency services but not scheduled flights like those carrying regular passengers.

If everything falls into place, tourists and people from across Odisha can get a faster mode of transport from Visakhapatnam to Malkangiri. Currently, IndiaOne operates a nine-seater jet from Visakhapatnam and Jaipur for Malkangiri. The flight services to Malkangiri can be a great boost to Odisha and can also be used for logistical supplies of government authorities like police, medical and health in emergencies as Malkangiri is a Naxal-affected area. Meanwhile, Malkangiri residents have demanded better and direct train services between the two cities, apart from flight services.

In JSpur dist Deer destroy ripe paddy crops; farmers worried

KAHNU NANDA ■ JAGATSINGHPUR
Farmers of Raghunathpur block, 10 km from here, are a worried lot as deer continue to damage paddy crops over hundreds of acres of land. The Forest Department has failed to control the menace, and the absence of a barbed wire fence around the forest area is compounding farmers' woes, sources informed. Dhartangagada's proposed reserve forest area located under Raghunathpur block has been home to thousands of deer and other animals for

years. But during the harvest season from November to December animals especially deer stray into agriculture fields in search of food and water, damaging paddy and vegetables and resulting in heavy losses to local farmers. "This year the situation is alarming. Apart from paddy, the animals feast on green gram, brinjal, cucumber, and okra crops. So we have stopped cultivating vegetables due to deer menace," informed many farmers. Reports said that thousands of farmland in Ramchandrapur, Eradanga,

Tainra, chikinia, Redhua, Nalibara, Ganailo, Puruna Basanta, Tarapur, Gopalpur and Chhapada villages which are near the Dhartangagada forest have been affected by the menace. Local farmers alleged that the residents of at least 20 villages are spending sleepless nights due to the deer menace during the current harvesting season. Hundreds of spotted deer are invading paddy fields at night and allegedly damaging the ripe paddy ready for harvesting and vegetables in the area, informed the farmers. The villagers have been

trying to drive away the animals and deer by beating drums, blasting crackers, and lighting fire at night. Some are sitting in paddy fields braving the winter chill. But there is no result, informed Babaji Moharana, a farmer. The barbed wire fence around the forest area is under progress. Our staff are guarding the forest to stop the deer straying into paddy fields. Besides, the Forest Department has a provision to provide compensation to farmers for crop loss, said the Range Officer in charge of Dhartangagada forest.

GM University opens new art gallery

NIMAI CHARAN SAHU ■ SAMBALPUR
A new art gallery and alumni connect hall was inaugurated Sunday at the Gangadhar Meher University's Utility Centre. The gallery, which is now open to the public, aims to showcase art and strengthen alumni ties. The inauguration ceremony was graced by Revenue Minister Suresh Pujari, who officially opened the gallery. He said, "This unique gallery stands out among Odisha universities and will play a key role in promoting art and architecture." Other dignitaries present included the university's Vice-Chancellor Prof N Nagaraju, Registrar Sanat Kumar Nayak, Deputy Registrar Dr Umacharan Pati, renowned artist Bholanath Nayak and

former English Professor Nandkishore Pujari. Several invited artists and alumni also attended. Over 100 alumni and art enthusiasts visited the gallery on its opening day, expressing their admiration for the initiative. One visitor, Asish Kumar said, "It's a proud moment for us. This gallery will inspire future generations." Prof Pradeep Kumar Panda of the Bheem Bhoi Research Centre and Vandana Panda, Director of the Art Centre, played key roles in establishing the gallery. With this new addition, GM University aims to become a hub for artistic talent and cultural exchange in the region. The gallery is open during university hours and invites everyone to explore its rich collection of artworks. The university has recently introduced a new art and craft curriculum.

391-category college staffs' meet held at Baripada

Genuine demands discussed
KAVI VISHNU SATPATHY ■ BARIPADA
The 391-category Block Grant college Principals, Lecturers and non-teaching employees, drawn from different parts of Mayurbhanj, held a meeting here on Sunday. Sri Jagannath Higher Secondary School Principal Santosh Kumar Das presided over it. Different college related issues were discussed in the meeting and the participants were informed that their legitimate claim to a better pay structure and service conditions is under active consideration of the present State government.



Besides, it was told that the genuine demands of the Block Grant employees have been conveyed to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan, Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling and Higher Education Minister Suryavanshi Suraj. 391 Category College Lec-

turers' Association State president Aswini Meher was the chief guest on the occasion and vice-president Dr CH Sudhakar and working president Srikanth Ballabh Samant attended as special guest and chief speaker respectively. Higher Education Department's proposal favouring their cause has already been sent to the Finance Department, they revealed.

The Lecturers and Principals who actively took part in the deliberations include Dr Ashok Kumar Dutta, Sumant Kumar Behera, Gyanendra Nath Dutta, Paresch Chandra Jena, Satyanarayan Bhatta, Dr Chandrasekhar Mohanta, Rajat Kumar Giri, Sanjay Giri Ghanashyam Hati, Vikash Kar Mohapatra, Rajesh Sahu, Narayan Poddar, Biswanath Sejpada and Ranjit Mohanty.

OAV Pallahara holds 6th annual day fest



PNS ■ PALLAHARA
The 6th Annual Day celebration of the Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya (OAV) Pallahara was held here. While convenor of the event and Principal OAV Asit Mali presided over the meeting, MLA Pallahara Ashok Mohanty attended as the chief guest and Dr Prasanta Sahu, HOD Department of History, was the chief speaker on the occasion. BDO Pallahara Nishan Mishra, lawyer Tanmaya Sahu and ABEO Basanta Kumar Sasini at-

tended as guests of honour. The National Education Policy (20-20) will be implemented in OAV to develop quality education and create sincerity among the students and teachers, said MLA Mohanty. The annual report was read out by Summan Ekka. 52 students who were winners in annual sports and 27 in other competitions were awarded by the guests. Senior teacher Pradeep Sahu welcomed the guests while Subhalipsa Sahu gave the vote of thanks. A cultural programme was organised.

Lack of specialists hits patient care in Khariar SDH

Also, hosp has no blood bank
AJIT PANDA ■ NUAPADA
Community leaders and activists of Khariar have appealed to the CDMO, Nuapada to address some critical issues of the Sub-Divisional Hospital (SDH) in Khariar, a vital healthcare hub in Nuapada district. The hospital, which serves patients from Khariar region and parts of Balangir district, is in urgent need of government attention to address critical gaps in services due to

a lack of specialists. The SDH manages an average of 12 institutional deliveries daily, yet lacks a full-time gynaecologist. Currently, Dr Bhubaneswar Mishra, a retired doctor posted under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), is the only available gynaecologist. However, allegations of neglect and prioritization of private practice over hospital duties have raised concerns. Akshaya Nanda, a political activist, and Niranjana Sharma, a senior citizen of Khariar, drew attention of the CDMO, Nuapada and called



for Dr Mishra's removal and the appointment of a dedicated, full-time gynaecologist to ensure quality maternal healthcare. The denizens also addressed the need of a Blood Bank in the SDH. "Absence

of a blood bank is critically affecting patients, especially those with sickle cell disease and complicated pregnancies. Many are forced to travel to private facilities or the Kantabanji health center for blood transfusions, often facing delays due to the need to arrange donors" they said. The hospital has been functioning without a Medical Superintendent since its inception. Currently, Dr Ranjit Rout, MD, is juggling dual responsibilities as both an attending physician and acting Medical Superinten-

dent, which is hampering his ability to provide dedicated medical care to patients. The denizens urged for immediately appointing a Medical Superintendent to streamline hospital operations and improve patient services. The Evangelical Mission Hospital, a prominent healthcare provider in the region, remains outside the purview of the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY). Activists argued that including the hospital under the scheme would make quality healthcare accessible to poor people of the area.

Congress running smear campaign against Shah, accuses BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday accused the Congress of running a smear campaign against Union Home Minister Amit Shah and said, instead of indulging in such "drama", it should apologise for always "insulting and humiliating" B R Ambedkar.

It also accused the Congress of using out of context a small portion of Shah's recent speech in the Rajya Sabha in a bid to "establish its political identity".

The Congress has launched a weeklong nationwide campaign against Shah, alleging that he insulted Ambedkar with his remarks while participating in a debate on the Constitution in the Rajya Sabha last week.

As part of the "Ambedkar Samman Saptah", Congress workers and leaders will hold marches and press conferences to remember Ambedkar's legacy, the party said on Saturday.

Hitting back, senior BJP leader and former Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad alleged that the Congress, which "always" insulted Ambedkar during his lifetime, was doing a "drama" of remembering his legacy.

"The Congress, which always insulted B R Ambedkar, is holding press conferences across the country... Stop this drama. Stop this hypocrisy," Prasad said in a press conference at the party headquarters.

"The Congress must tender an unconditional apology for all the insults and humiliations



done to B R Ambedkar during his lifetime and to his legacy after his death. First of all, publicly apologise and then hold press conferences," he added. The BJP leader asserted that the people of the country were very mature. "Its (Congress) efforts will not succeed."

Prasad said the BJP would hold press conferences around the country to "expose" the Congress by telling people how the party and its leaders insulted Ambedkar. "We have all the proof," he added.

The BJP leader also slammed Congress general secretary KC Venugopal for describing as a "badge of honour" the FIR against Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi in connection with last week's face-off between

ruling and opposition MPs on the Parliament premises.

"A case was filed against Rahul Gandhi for pushing and shoving (BJP) MPs and a Congress general secretary, who is very close to him, said it was a badge of honour in their fight to honour the legacy of BR Ambedkar... What a bundle of lies," he said.

Rahul Gandhi is wearing "badge of dishonour for insulting and humiliating the legacy of Ambedkar", he charged.

Prasad said the BJP believed that all those who made "some honest efforts" to build the nation should be respected. "This is the difference (between the Congress and the BJP)... We honour even our staunch rivals who have tried to build the nation in their own ways. We published a book on EMS

Namboodiripad [CPI(M) leader and Kerala's first chief minister] when Atal Bihari Vajpayee was prime minister," he said.

After the BJP assumed power under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Lok Janshakti Party chief Ram Vilas Paswan was conferred with the Padma Bhushan and Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) supreme Sharad Pawar the Padma Vibhushan, he added.

Asked about Jawaharlal Nehru, Prasad said, "The biggest proof of honouring our rivals is the prime ministers' memorial and museum. Earlier, only Nehru's memorial was there. Now, there is (a memorial of) every prime minister. The country should remember all the prime ministers."

Nearly 10 lakh Govt jobs provided in mission mode: PM Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said his government has provided nearly 10 lakh permanent government jobs to youths in the last one or one and a half years which, he asserted, is a record.

Addressing recruits at a Rozgar Mela through a virtual event, where over 71,000 people were given appointment letters, he said never before in the tenure of any previous government were jobs provided in such a "mission mode".

The young population is at the centre of his government's policies and programmes, he said, adding honesty and transparency have driven the recruitment process.

The prime minister said 'Rozgar Melas' (recruitment drives) are empowering the youth and unlocking their potential. "The youth of India today is full of new confidence, succeeding in every sector."

Noting that a large number of recruits are women, Modi said it is the endeavour of his government that they become self-dependent in every field.

The government's decision to grant 26-week maternity leave to women has helped them a lot in their careers, he said and



underscores that women are the majority owners of the house constructed under the 'PM Awas Yojana'. Women-led development is taking place in the country, he said.

Modi said making maximum use of the Indian youths' abilities and talent is a priority of his government, and that they are at the centre of a host of schemes, be it start-up India, digital India or reforms in space and defence sectors.

The National Education



Policy has taken steps for the development of youngsters, he said, highlighting its emphasis on the use of mother tongues.

His government has ensured that language is not a barrier by ensuring that youngsters can take recruitment exams in 13 Indian languages, he added.

Noting that former prime minister Charan Singh, whose birth anniversary is being observed on Monday, stood

category.

The backward classes recruitment has seen a 27 per cent rise under the Modi government compared to the UPA's 10 years in power, he said. The Schedules Castes and Scheduled Tribes accounted for 15.8 and 9.6 respectively for Monday's recruitments, Singh added.

In his address, Modi said the development of a country relies on the hard work, capability, and leadership of its youth, and India is committed to becoming a developed nation by 2047 as its policies and decisions focus on empowering its talented youth.

He said India is now the world's fifth-largest economy and the third-largest start-up ecosystem. Similarly, youths pursuing careers in sports have confidence that they will not fail because they now are supported by modern training facilities and tournaments.

Modi said the country is undergoing a transformation across various sectors, becoming the second-largest in mobile manufacturing.

India is also making strides in renewable energy, organic farming, space, defence, tourism, and wellness, creating new opportunities and reaching new heights in each area, he added.

CISF launches new transfer-posting policy to ensure 'better work-life balance'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The CISF on Monday said it has unveiled a new organisational transfer and posting policy in order to ensure a "better work-life balance" for its personnel who guard some of the most vital assets and infrastructure in the country.

The policy will "impact" over 98 per cent of the paramilitary force's about 1.70 lakh workforce with personnel to retire within two years being the first category to be given "choice or preference posting" followed by women staffers, working couples and the remaining falling in the fourth category.

The policy, to kick in from December 31, is meant for non-gazetted officials (NGOs) in the ranks from constable to inspector, as grievances related to this issue is "higher" in these ranks, officials said.

"The policy is aimed to satisfy the force members when it comes to their transfer and posting, and place of work... Without compromising on the operational requirements of the force," CISF Inspector General (Administration) K C Samantary briefed the media.

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has replaced the last such policy that was enacted in 2017. "The policy has been



made after conducting extensive consultations on the ground. We aim to make the CISF a future ready force to cope with emerging security challenges with training and building expertise in various security domains.

"We also see that there is a profound shift in social norms and family dynamics and work-life balance is not desirable but essential," the IG said. He said "more and more women" were joining the force and that "working couples" are increasing in the force and hence the policy is borne out after considering all such issues.

The IG said special care will be taken to ensure that the education of the children of the force personnel does not suffer and transfer orders will be issued in such a time that the academic cycle of their wards does not get affected.

"Choice-based posting in CISF has been made a rule as compared to being an exception earlier. Personnel who want to get a choice transfer or posting will have to opt for it," he said.

As per the CISF officials, personnel retiring within two years will be given the first preference while issuing posting orders followed by women personnel, then working couples and the rest will fall in the last category.

The IG said "domain experts and personnel who are highly talented" will also get preference in their choice posting due to their skills and demanding nature of work.

The domain experts are those who are adept in areas like information technology, cyber security, data science, aviation security, anti-drone solutions, weapons and tactics, among others.

PM Modi, Dhankhar, Yogi pay tributes to Charan Singh on birth anniversary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh (UP) Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday paid tributes to former prime minister Charan Singh on his birth anniversary.

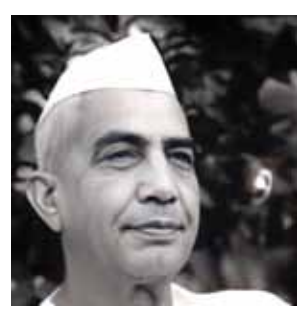
Dhankhar recalled Charan Singh's contribution to the agri sector. Talking to reporters at Kisan Ghat here after paying tributes to Singh on his 122nd birth anniversary, Dhankhar said it is an occasion for everyone to take a resolve that agriculture is necessary for India's rise.

Agro sector and farmer welfare are fundamentals for a passage to a developed nation at 2047," he said. Dhankhar said as Singh was committed towards holistic development of farmers, it was time for all of us to "converge our energies and get into the job that these celebrations are festive occasions for the farmer and would be game changer for the country's economy."

In his tributes, Prime Minister Modi described Charan Singh as a true well-wisher of the poor and farmers. In a social media post, Modi said Singh's dedication and spirit of service to the country will continue to inspire everyone.

Born in 1902 to a Jat family in western Uttar Pradesh, Singh went on to become a prominent leader, especially in north India, and an axis of anti-Congress politics after he quit the Congress. He also served as chief minister of Uttar Pradesh.

The Modi government bestowed the Bharat Ratna on him this year, acknowledging his contribution to public life. His grandson Jayant Singh is a minister in



the BJP-led NDA government. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said in a social media post "Humble tributes to former prime minister 'Bharat Ratna' Chaudhary Charan Singh ji on his birth anniversary. He dedicated his life to the upliftment of villages, poor and deprived and farmer welfare! Heartiest greetings of 'Farmers' Day' to the people of the state and the farmers who provide food!"

The chief minister also attended a programme marking the 122nd birth anniversary of the former prime minister. He said, "Chaudhary Charan Singh's birth anniversary has been observed as 'Kisan Samman Diwas' in Uttar Pradesh since 2002."

He recalled Singh's belief that India cannot prosper if its farmers remain poor, emphasising that the prosperity of the nation is integral to the well-being of its 'Annadata' farmers.

"The initiatives launched in 2014 are now recognised globally as a model for agricultural development", he stated.

Reflecting this vision, the double-engine government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been relentlessly working to uplift farmers, he added.

Adityanath paid floral tributes to Singh's statue at the Vidhan Sabha and distributed new tractors to 11 farmers under the Chief Minister Krishak Uphaar Yojana.

Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas to be showcased at R-Day Parade 2025

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas will be showcased through tableaux at Kartavya Path during Republic Day Parade 2025, defence ministry said here on Monday.

Every year states/UTs and Union government ministries/ departments showcase their tableaux on Kartavya Path as part of Republic Day Celebration (RDC). For RDC-2025, the theme for tableaux has been decided as 'Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas,' it said.

Since the beginning of this year, a consultative process has been adopted by the Ministry of Defence to decide on various aspects related to tableaux. A meeting at senior official level was held in April 2024 to deliberate on



improvement of tableaux quality. Various suggestions received during meeting has been included in process. Theme for tableaux was also decided based on suggestions from State/UTs.

There is a well-established system for selection of tableaux for participation in the Republic Day Parade as per which Ministry of Defence invites proposals for tableaux from all State/ UTs and central ministries/ departments.

The tableaux proposals received from various State/ UTs and central ministries/ departments are evaluated in a series of meetings of the Expert Committee, comprising eminent persons in the field of art, culture, painting, sculpture, music, architecture, choreography etc. Tableaux are one of the

important components of Republic Day Parade. Due to time allotted for tableaux in the overall duration of parade, shortlisting of tableaux is done by the Expert

Committee.

While evaluating the tableaux ideas presented by various states/UTs and ministries, key aspects like conceptual uniqueness and novelty, creative expression with a clear, communicable message, combining subtlety as well as directness, striking balance between Virasat and Vikas in each tableau, exclusion of repetitive ideas, special attention to details like colors, forms, textures, flow, rhythm, proportions and balance, ensuring a well-composed aesthetic experience of grand scale were taken into consideration for selection.

Following 15 states/ UTs have been selected for showcasing their tableaux on Kartavya Path for RDC-2025: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chandigarh, Dadar Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu, Goa, Gujarat,

Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

In addition, 11 Ministries/ Department of Union government have also been selected for RDC-2025.

All the states/UTs, irrespective of their selection for Kartavya Path, are invited to display their tableaux during Bharat Parv in Red Fort (26th-31st January 2025).

The entire selection process is robust, fair, transparent, based on merit and free from any bias. The selected tableaux would showcase India's diverse strengths and its constantly evolving cultural inclusiveness marching into glorious future, showcasing 'Swarnim Bharat - Virasat aur Vikas' to the world audience.

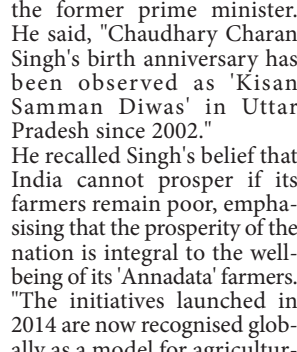
Delhi HC denies anticipatory bail to former IAS probationer Puja Khedkar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi High Court on Monday refused to grant anticipatory bail to former IAS probationer Puja Khedkar in the criminal case lodged against her for cheating and wrongly availing of OBC and disability quota benefits in the civil services examination.

"Anticipatory bail plea is dismissed. Interim protection from arrest is vacated," Justice Chandra Dhari Singh said while ruling on the plea.

Justice Singh said a strong prima facie case was made out against Khedkar and investigation was required to unearth the conspiracy. It was a classic case of fraud committed on a constitutional body as well as society, the judge said. Khedkar is accused of misrepresenting



information in her application for the UPSC Civil Services Examination, 2022, to get reservation benefits.

The counsel for the Delhi Police as well as the complainant, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), opposed the plea for pre-arrest bail.

The UPSC was represented by senior advocate Naresh Kaushik and lawyer



Vardhman Kaushik. The UPSC initiated a series of actions against Khedkar in July, including lodging a criminal case, for availing exemption in the civil services exam by faking her identity.

The Delhi Police registered an FIR under provisions of the Indian Penal Code, Information Technology Act and Right of Persons with Disabilities Act.

NHRC questions TN Govt about death by electrocution of two labourers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Taking suo motu cognisance of a media report that two persons, working as contract labourers with the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco) died due to electrocution, The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued notices to the State Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police, Tamil Nadu calling for a detailed report in the matter within two weeks.

The NHRC noted that while repairing a high-tension overhead power line near Olaiyur Ring Road in KK Nagar, Tiruchi in the Southern State on December 18.

"The Commission has observed that the contents of the media report, if true, indi-



cate gross negligence on the part of the electricity department resulting in the death of two labourers," said the Rights body in a statement issued here.

The Commission has also noted that such incidents have occurred earlier too in the state. This is a serious human rights violation and a matter of concern for the Commission, it further added.

The notice is expected to include the status of the FIR registered in the matter and

compensation, if any, provided to the next of kin of the two victims, said the statement.

The Commission would also like to know the steps taken/proposed by the State government and Tangedco to ensure that such incidents do not recur, it added.

According to the media report, as per the preliminary investigations, the power supply to the cable was not fully turned off during the repair work. The workers were on the job without any protective gear.

In a similar incident, a worker was electrocuted to death while repairing a transformer in the Theothukudi district of Tamil Nadu last year. Last month, a migrant worker was reportedly electrocuted during Cyclone Fengal and his body was found near an ATM in Muthialpet, pointed out the NHRC in a statement.

Open merit aspirants protest outside J and K CM's residence, demand rationalisation of reservation quota

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Demanding rationalisation of reservation quota in government jobs and scholarships, a large number of open merit aspirants led by a Member Parliament from Srinagar Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi Monday laid a siege to the official residence of Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for several hours.

Braving inclement weather conditions under sub-zero temperatures these aspirants staged a peaceful demonstration holding placards which read 'Stop Genocide Against Open Merit'.

PDP legislator Waheed Ur Rehman Parra along with other party leaders including Iltija Mufti also joined the peaceful protest outside the CM's residence.

Kashmir's chief cleric Mirwaiz



Umar Farooq had also extended support to a sit-in protest called to demand rationalisation in the reservation policy in Jammu

and Kashmir. While expressing concern, Mirwaiz said that the matter should be addressed with justice and fairness by those at

the helm. Reacting to the developments taking place outside his residence, the Chief Minister invited a group of students.

After briefing them on various steps initiated by his newly formed government Omar promised the student delegation that the government would address the reservation issue within the period of six months. "Chief Minister Omar Abdullah assured the protesting student delegation that their demands would be addressed and the sub-committee would submit its report within 6 months", the Spokesman of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference posted on X (earlier Twitter).

JKNC MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi also termed the time frame given by chief minister Jammu & Kashmir a 'positive development'. "I'm thankful to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah who listened to students over the reservation issue and gave a time frame of six months to

solve this grave and sensitive issue," MP Ruhullah said. He said the time frame set by CM Abdullah doesn't mean it will take a full six months. "It may take two or three months only. As one month has already passed, I'm hopeful that the matter will be resolved in the coming five months," he said.

Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi also maintained that the rationalisation of reservation quota should be ensured as per population proportion, and that he is not satisfied with the formation of the cabinet sub-committee, but satisfaction of students matters to him. Earlier addressing a student gathering he said that there should be no discrimination in reservation policy, and the policy should be ensured as per the Supreme Court ruling or as per the population proportion.

Shimla receives second snowfall of the season, brings cheer to tourists and farmers alike



PTI ■ SHIMLA

Himachal Pradesh's capital, Shimla, on Monday witnessed the second light snowfall of the season, bringing cheer to tourists, locals and farmers. Residents called in woolen clothes stepped out to enjoy the snowflakes under an overcast sky, as icy winds swept through the region. Tourists were seen reveling in the snowfall at The Ridge and mall road in town. Snowfall was also occurred in nearby tourists spots of Kufri and Narkanda besides higher reaches including Kharapathar, Chaurdhar and Chanshal, the weather officer said.

The local meteorological department had forecast rain and snow in mid and higher reaches on Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday. Snowfall, often termed "white manure" for apples, has raised hopes for good yields among farmers in the upper Shimla region. Apple farming contributes about Rs 5,000 crore to Himachal Pradesh's economy. The snowfall is expected to boost tourist footfall in the state providing a fillip to local tourism business. A local hotelier Sushant Nag said that hotel occupancy is set to rise as snowfall draws tourists.

Another Shimla-based hotelier Rahul Chawla said that snowfall ahead of Christmas and predictions of more in the coming days could lead to a 50 per cent increase in tourist arrivals. Shimla Hotel and Tourism Stakeholders Association president M K Seth had earlier said that there are heavy bookings for Christmas and over 30 per cent

advance booking for New Year.

Meanwhile, intense cold wave persisted in the lower hills of Himachal Pradesh, with Una, Hamirpur, Chamba and Mandi experiencing cold wave conditions and Sundernagar reeling under severe cold wave. Shallow fog was witnessed in Mandi and Sundernagar areas, the meteorological department said. The department on Monday issued an orange alert for severe cold in Bilaspur, Una, Hamirpur and Mandi districts till Thursday. Tabo was coldest place in the state at minus 10.6 degrees Celsius while Sumdo, Kusumseri and Kalpa recorded lows of minus 5.3 degrees Celsius, minus 3.7 degrees Celsius and minus 2.5 degrees Celsius, respectively, it said. A yellow warning for dense fog over parts of the Bakra Dam reservoir area and Balh valley in Mandi has been issued from Tuesday to Thursday. According to the weather station. Thick ground frost is expected in isolated parts of the lower hills during this period, it added.

The weather office said an active western disturbance is likely to affect the western Himalayan region and adjoining plains from Friday. Light rain and snow are likely at isolated places over the state on Monday and Tuesday and at many places on Friday and Saturday, causing a gradual fall in temperatures, it said. High-altitude tribal areas and mountain passes continued to experience biting cold, with temperatures 14 to 18 degrees below freezing point, the Met office said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh pays tribute to former Haryana CM Om Prakash Chautala



PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday visited Teja Khera in the Sirsa district and paid tributes to former Haryana chief minister Om Prakash Chautala, who passed away last week. Singh reached the Chautala family's farmhouse in the Teja Khera village and met the departed Indian National Lok Dal chief's sons Abhay Singh Chautala, who is an INLD leader and Ajay Singh Chautala, who heads the JJP party. He also met O P

Chautala's younger brother and former Haryana minister Ranjit Singh Chautala and offered condolences to the Chautala family. Ex-chief minister Chautala was former deputy prime minister Devi Lal's eldest of the four sons. Chautala, who was a five-time chief minister, died in Gurugram on Friday. He was 89. Speaking to reporters at Teja Khera, Singh recalled his association with O P Chautala and said he shared "deep relations" with him. He said that as chief minister of Haryana five times, he not

only served people of the state, but the services which he rendered for the farming community can never forget that. "He was son of a great leader (Devi Lal), but in the political sphere, he carved out his own identity," said Singh about Chautala, whose party was part of the NDA earlier. He said that Chautala was a flag-bearer of the anti-Congress front all his life. He also said that Chautala walked the path shown by Sir Chhotu Ram, Chaudhary Charan Singh and Chaudhary Charan Singh and Chaudhary Devi Lal (all of whom were considered the messiahs of farmers). On Saturday, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Singh Dal were among prominent personalities who reached Teja Khera to attend the last rites of the departed leader.

Gurugram traffic police gear up for Christmas and new year celebrations, focus on curbing drunken driving

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ GURUGRAM

Ahead of Christmas Day and New Year celebrations the Gurugram Traffic Police has made special preparations for smooth traffic operation in the city. Traffic officials said special attention would be kept on drinking and driving. For this, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Traffic Virender Vij, has assigned the duties of traffic police officers to celebrate Christmas Day and New Year safely and peacefully. The DCP has issued guidelines to all the officers posted in traffic to perform their duties with more vigilance during Christmas Day and New Year celebrations. He also gave necessary directions to the traffic personnel to keep an eye on drinking and driving.

Meanwhile, a total of 57 people, including 06 traffic inspectors, 12 zonal officers, 33 ORS and 06 RSOs, have been deployed in the traffic police during Christmas Day, which also includes 6 traffic check posts. Apart from this, a total of 105 traffic police officers will be appointed especially for the New Year, including 11 zonal officers, 83 ORS, and 11 other traffic employees, which also includes 10 traffic checkpoints. Traffic policemen would be deployed at ten traffic posts in Sector 29 and the MG Road, keeping traffic arrangements in mind. Notably, there are more than 150 pubs in the city, where young men and women attend in large numbers for the New Year celebrations. Cranes and ambulances have been put on standby in accident-prone areas, and arrangements have been made against drinking and

driving. Parking would be arranged along the Leisure Valley and adjacent areas. Also, concerned traffic official of the area will set up alcohol checkpoints in their respective areas so that Christmas Day and New Year 2025 can be celebrated with joy as well as safely and peacefully. According to data released by the Gurugram traffic police, a total of 25,615 drivers, including 218 female drivers, who were driving after consuming alcohol, have been challenged from 1 January 2024 to 22 December 2024. "We requested people to celebrate Christmas Day and New Year celebrations peacefully and give their cooperation to the Traffic Police Gurugram. Traffic Police Gurugram is always ready for their service and security. Be careful and be safe. It is important to follow traffic rules.

Truck runs over people sleeping on footpath, killing three and injuring six

PTI ■ PUNE

Two toddlers and a man were killed and six other persons injured after a truck ran over people sleeping on a footpath in Maharashtra's Pune city in the wee hours of Monday, police said. The incident took place at 12.55 am on the footpath in Wagholi area where several persons were sleeping, they said. The victims comprised labourers and their family members hailing from Amravati. The labourers had come to Pune a couple of days back in search of jobs, the police said. The truck driver, identified as Gajanan Totre (26), was arrested after the incident and his medical test was being done to ascertain if he was driving under the influence of alcohol, an official said.

"There were many people sleeping on the footpath near Keshavnand Phata area, most of them labourers. They were run over by a truck, leading to the death of three persons," a senior police official said. The deceased have been identified as Vaibhavi Pawar (1), Vaibhav Pawar (2) and Vishal Pawar (22), the police said.

The six injured persons - Janki Pawar (21), Rinisha Pawar (18), Roshan Bhosale (9), Nagesh Pawar (27), Darshan Vairal (18) and Aalisha Pawar (47) - were admitted to the Sassoon General Hospital, they added. Additional Commissioner of Police (East Region) Manoj Patil said the truck driver lost control over the wheels near Wagholi police station and rammed his vehicle into several people sleeping on the footpath at 12.55 am.

"Prima facie, the people who were injured and died were labourers and their family members from Amravati district.

NCP's Chhagan Bhujbal meets CM Devendra Fadnavis amid Mahayuti government row

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Senior NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal, who is sulking over not being included in the new Mahayuti government in Maharashtra, met Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis here on Monday. Talking to reporters after the meeting, Bhujbal said he had an elaborate discussion with the CM on the prevailing political and social atmosphere in the state. The former state minister was accompanied by his nephew Sameer Bhujbal during the nearly 30-minute meeting with Fadnavis at the latter's 'Sagar' bungalow in Mumbai. "Fadnavis told me that the Other Backward Classes have played an important role in the landslide victory of the Mahayuti in the assembly elections (held on November 20) and he will take care that

the OBC community's interest is not harmed," Chhagan Bhujbal said. He also said Fadnavis has sought some time to think over the issues pertaining to OBCs. "He (Fadnavis) said he would arrive at some decision in 10 to 12 days," the NCP leader added. OBC leaders are opposed to activist Manoj Jarange's demand for reservation for the Maratha community in the Other Backward Class (Kunbi) category. Bhujbal has also been vocal about his opposition to the demand. Asked if he was planning to switch over to the BJP, Chhagan Bhujbal refused to elaborate and said he has already spoken his mind on the issue of him being ignored in the ministry expansion. On Sunday, representatives of OBC organisations from different parts of Maharashtra met him in the city.

Brick kiln wall collapse kills four children in Haryana's Hisar



PTI ■ HISAR

Four children were killed when a wall of a brick kiln collapsed on them while they were asleep in Budana village of Haryana's Hisar district, police said on Monday. A girl was critically injured in the incident that took place on Sunday night in the Narnaund police station area. The deceased were identified as Nisha (3 months), Suraj (9), Nandini (5) and Vivek (9), they said. According to sources, many families of labourers from Uttar Pradesh work at the kiln

in Budana. The work of making bricks and installing pillars near the chimney is going on at the kiln. The children and some labourers were sleeping near the wall of the brick kiln when it collapsed on them. While Suraj, Nandini and Vivek died on the spot, Nisha succumbed on the way to the hospital, said Superintendent of Police (SP), Hansi, Hemendra Kumar Meena. The condition of a five-year-old girl, Gauri, is critical. She is undergoing treatment at Hisar Civil Hospital. All five children hail from Badhav village in Ambedkar Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh, police said. SP Meena visited Hisar Civil Hospital after the incident and met the families of the deceased. "The victims' families have not given any written complaint in the matter. If a complaint is received, action will be taken accordingly, he said.

BJP revamps Tripura leadership, appoints over 90 per cent new faces as mandal presidents

PTI ■ AGARTALA

The BJP has brought in over 90 per cent new faces as presidents of 'mandal' committees in Tripura, replacing old-timers, a party leader said on Monday. The change in the assembly-level organisational set-up was introduced after the party's tally in the 2023 state elections had decreased to 32 from 36 seats. Party's returning officer (RO) for the selection of 'mandal' presidents, Samarendra Chandra Deb on Monday announced the names of 60 'mandal' presidents. "During the selection of the 'mandal' presidents for 60 assembly segments, we ensured representation of all sections of people because the party believes in 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikash'. Women constitute three per cent of the newly selected 'mandal' presidents, 23 per cent belong

to ST, 18 per cent to SC and 36 per cent to the general category," he told reporters. Deb said almost all such committees got new heads as the party had put a restriction on the upper age limit at 45 for the post of 'mandal' presidents. BJP activists, who are below 45 years of age, are now eligible for 'mandal' presidents in Tripura as the party's central leadership instructed the state unit to bring new faces to strengthen the organisation in assembly segments. Those who had already completed two terms as 'mandal' presidents did not get another chance to lead the party at local levels, he said. "Around 90 per cent of the 60 'mandal' presidents are new faces. The party has followed a proper guideline to bring new faces to the forefront," he said. Chief Minister Manik Saha on Monday congratulated the

new 'mandal' presidents for all the 60 assembly constituencies. "Congratulations to newly appointed 'mandal' presidents. I firmly believe that under your able leadership, the party will be strengthened more," the chief minister wrote on Facebook. BJP's Tripura unit general secretary Amit Rakshit said the move to appoint new faces as 'mandal' presidents was introduced following instruction from Delhi to give a fair chance to young leaders to serve the party. According to him, over 11 lakh people have already enrolled their names online as BJP's primary and active members during a drive that commenced in October. Apart from online membership, the BJP has received over 2 lakh applications offline, seeking enrollment as primary members of the party.

Kumbh Mela 2025: No more 'Kumbh mein bichchrey bhai' drama as UP gears up with tech-savvy systems

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The age-old cinematic trope of loved ones getting separated in the chaotic crowds of the Kumbh Mela is set to become a thing of the past. The Uttar Pradesh government is pulling out all the stops to ensure that the Maha Kumbh 2025 in Prayagraj will be a secure and seamless experience for crores of pilgrims. Through meticulous planning and cutting-edge technology, the state administration aims to eliminate the fear of separation at the mega event. The Prayagraj Mela Authority, in collaboration with the Police Department, is rolling out an advanced lost-and-found system that prioritizes prevention and rapid reunions. At the forefront of this initiative are digital Khoya-Paya centers, which will



feature a robust digital registration system. Missing persons' details will be swiftly recorded and shared across multiple platforms, including popular social media channels like Facebook and X (formerly Twitter). Officials believe this tech-driven approach will replace heart-wrenching tales

of separation with reassuring stories of timely reunions. "Announcements at regular intervals and the use of digital platforms will ensure no family has to endure prolonged anxiety," said a senior official overseeing preparations. "Our aim is to redefine the Kumbh as a place

of safety and cherished memories." Special measures are being implemented to protect vulnerable groups, especially women and children. Any individual claiming a lost child or woman must provide verifiable identification. In cases of uncertainty, police

intervention will be immediate, leaving no room for error or potential harm. "This system eliminates the fears depicted in movies where lost individuals are taken away by the wrong people. Instead, we are ensuring their safety through a secure and organized process," the official added. The theme of siblings or loved ones getting separated at the Kumbh has been a staple in Indian cinema, from the 1943 classic Taqdeer to the 1970s hit Mela. The Maha Kumbh 2025, however, is poised to rewrite this narrative with its tech-powered approach. In cases where a missing individual remains unclaimed for over 12 hours, authorities will step in to provide shelter and care. "The dramatized chaos of separations will give way to a reality of safety and timely reunions," said a

government spokesperson. For the first time, advanced face recognition (FR) cameras, powered by artificial intelligence, will be installed at key railway stations catering to Maha Kumbh pilgrims. The Prayagraj Railway Division is spearheading this initiative, alongside the deployment of over 650 CCTV cameras and 100 FR cameras. "With nearly 10 crore devotees expected to travel by train, these FR cameras will play a crucial role in monitoring crowded areas and identifying suspicious individuals. This ensures prompt action in case of anomalies," said Amit Singh, PRO of Prayagraj Railway Division. The cameras, which will be operational by January, will cover all nine railway stations in Prayagraj, monitoring platforms, shelters, and access routes.

The comprehensive surveillance system is aimed at preempting security risks and ensuring the safety of pilgrims. The Uttar Pradesh government's proactive measures are set to transform the Maha Kumbh 2025 into a modern, secure, and unforgettable event. "With these advancements, pilgrims can enjoy a spiritually enriching experience without the fear of getting lost or encountering mishaps," said Rajesh Dwivedi, a senior police officer stationed in Kumbh Nagar. The Maha Kumbh, a confluence of faith and tradition, is now also becoming a showcase of technology and meticulous planning, ensuring that the 2025 event is not just memorable but also worry-free.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Attack and aftermath

Christmas market attack in Germany reigniting polarising debates about immigration and national security

A recent attack on a Christmas market in Magdeburg, Germany, has reignited contentious debates about immigration and national security, with far-right groups seizing the moment to push for mass deportation of immigrants. The tragedy, which claimed the lives of five individuals and left dozens injured, has sent shockwaves across Germany, leading to both solemn remembrances and polarising political rhetoric. On the evening of December 20, a car driven by Taleb al-Abdulmohsen, a 50-year-old psychiatrist originally from Saudi Arabia, careened into a crowded Christmas market. The attack lasted three harrowing minutes, during which over 200 people were struck, leaving 40 with critical injuries. Authorities arrested al-Abdulmohsen at the scene, and he now faces multiple charges of murder, attempted murder, and grievous bodily harm. Despite living in Germany for nearly two decades, the suspect's motives remain unclear. Investigators have yet to establish any ideological or political motivations.



In the wake of the tragedy, far-right groups have amplified their calls for stricter immigration controls and mass deportations. On December 21, approximately 2,100 demonstrators gathered in Magdeburg to voice their outrage. Protesters, some wearing black balaclavas, carried banners with slogans like "Reimmigration Now" and "migration kills." The term "reimmigration" has become a rallying cry for far-right factions advocating the forced removal of immigrants and individuals deemed non-ethnically German. Chants such as "Anyone who doesn't love Germany should leave" and "We must take back our cities, our villages, and our homeland" echoed through the streets. The incident has deepened divisions within Germany over immigration and integration policies. Critics argue that far-right groups are exploiting the tragedy to stoke xenophobia and advance their anti-immigrant agenda. Meanwhile, local communities have sought to counter the rhetoric of hate with acts of solidarity. A silent vigil was held at Magdeburg's Cathedral Square on the same evening as the protest, with participants lighting candles in memory of the victims. German authorities have called for calm and emphasised the need for a thorough investigation. Chancellor Olaf Scholz expressed condolences to the victims' families and condemned both the attack and the use of such tragedies to spread divisive ideologies. The attack has reignited debates over Germany's approach to immigration and the balance between openness and security. While far-right voices call for stringent measures, advocates for multiculturalism warn against the dangers of collective punishment. This incident underscores the fragility of Europe's social cohesion in times of crisis. As Germany mourns, the challenge lies in addressing security concerns without succumbing to fear-driven policies that erode the values of inclusivity and tolerance that underpin the nation's democratic fabric.

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PICTALK



People dressed as Santa Claus during Christmas celebration, in Chennai

Macau: The glittering gem in Xi Jinping's China



SANTOSH MATHEW

For the Chinese Communist Party, Macau is a beacon of controlled capitalism, showcasing the potential of the "One Country, Two Systems" framework

When Chinese President Xi Jinping landed in Macau, the world's gambling capital, the air was thick with anticipation. Macau, often dubbed the "Las Vegas of the East," is much more than a beacon of wealth and opulence. For Xi and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), it is a sparkling gem in the palm of China's vast and complex economic system—a model of the "One Country, Two Systems" framework that allows capitalist practices to thrive under the watchful eye of a socialist regime. Xi's visit underscored the stark contrasts between theory and practice in the CCP's governance and the lessons it offers not only for China's neighbours but for the world at large. Macau's significance lies in its unique identity. A former Portuguese colony, it returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1999 under the promise of autonomy. Today, its glitzy casinos, luxury hotels, and sprawling Special Economic Zone (SEZ) generate billions annually, contributing substantially to China's GDP. But while the dice roll and fortunes are made on Macau's gaming tables, the CCP's control remains unyielding.



The irony is palpable. The CCP, a party built on anti-capitalist ideology, oversees the largest SEZ in the world in Shanghai, nurtures capitalism in Hong Kong, and allows gambling—once condemned as a moral vice—to flourish in Macau. This duality reflects the pragmatic philosophy first espoused by Deng Xiaoping: "It doesn't matter if a cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice." This approach has been pivotal in transforming China into the world's second-largest economy. Yet it also lays bare the contradictions at the heart of CCP rule. As Xi extolled Macau's success, he also warned against complacency and stressed the need for "long-term stability," a euphemism for unwavering allegiance to the CCP. For the CCP, Macau and Hong Kong are not just economic engines; they are experiments in controlled capitalism. The success of these regions bolsters the

party's narrative that socialism with Chinese characteristics can coexist with, and even benefit from, capitalist mechanisms. The underlying contradictions are hard to ignore. The CCP's insistence on ideological purity clashes with its pragmatic embrace of market-driven policies. This duality is reflected in Xi's leadership, which combines Maoist centralisation with Dengist pragmatism. For Maoists, Naxalites, and urban Naxals in India, as well as other ideologues clinging to rigid dogmas, Macau stands as a testament to the power of adaptation. The CCP's ability to evolve, to reconcile its Marxist-Leninist roots with the demands of a modern, globalised economy, has been the cornerstone of China's rise. This is a far cry from the ideological purism that often paralyzes leftist movements elsewhere.



MACAU'S SIGNIFICANCE LIES IN ITS UNIQUE IDENTITY. A FORMER PORTUGUESE COLONY, IT RETURNED TO CHINESE SOVEREIGNTY IN 1999 UNDER THE PROMISE OF AUTONOMY

India, too, can draw inspiration from Macau. As the world's largest democracy grapples with its development challenges, it must consider the role of SEZs, MNC headquarters, and even industries like gambling in driving economic growth. While gambling remains taboo in much of India, the success of Macau shows how regulated gaming can become a major revenue source. Similarly, expanding SEZs and creating hubs for MNCs can

transform India into a global economic powerhouse. At the heart of this debate is the question of whether ideology should dictate policy. The CCP's approach—that opinion is not an iron rod—offers a compelling case for pragmatism. Yet, the party's intolerance for dissent, as seen in its suppression of Mao's "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom" campaign, highlights the dangers of unchecked authority. The CCP's success in economic management is undeniable, but its human rights record and stifling of democratic aspirations serve as stark reminders of the cost of its iron-fisted rule. As Xi Jinping departed Macau, the world was left pondering the paradoxes of modern China. Under his leadership, the CCP has doubled down on centralisation, curbing dissent while championing economic liberalisation. Macau's glittering casinos and towering skyscrapers are symbols of this duality, where capitalism thrives under the shadow of socialism. For Xi, Macau is more than a gem in China's palm; it is a symbol of the CCP's ability to adapt and endure. Whether in the neon-lit streets of Macau or the corridors of power in Beijing, the CCP's experiment in controlled capitalism continues to shape the future of China—and the world. (The writer is an associate professor; views are personal)

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CONTROVERSY OVER AMBEDKAR

Madam—The row over the insult to Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar is neither factual nor logical since the home minister never insulted Dr Ambedkar in his speech by words or intention; rather, the fact is that no leader from the BJP has ever insulted Dr BR Ambedkar publicly or in Parliament or state assemblies, whereas Congress has a documented history of opposition to Ambedkar. It is no secret that the first PM, J.L. Nehru, was never on good terms with Dr Ambedkar, and MK Gandhi too had an uncomfortable equation with Ambedkar, while it may be argued that the twin Congress leaders (Gandhi and Nehru) were right when it comes to national interest and the movement of Indian independence to oppose Dr Ambedkar. Unfortunately, the national politics has reached the spot where Dr BR Ambedkar has been established as a godly figure, though he never participated in any struggle for Indian independence for which the Congress claims sole credit and abuses Bharatiya JanaSangh and BJP for their nonparticipation, never mentioning Ambedkar for his nonparticipation because that would be politically incorrect. Neither making Ambedkar the god nor considering the Constitution a heavenly document would be democratically or even constitutionally correct.

Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala Cantt

APATHY AT ITS WORSE

Madam—This is our modern India. When a Jaipur gas tanker explosion left motor mechanic Radheyshyam Choudhary with 85 per cent burns. He bravely walked 600 meters while engulfed in flames, even calling his brother before succumbing to his injuries at SMS Hospital. Shockingly, by mid-morning, videos of the aftermath of the gas tanker explosion on the national highway were circulating online, with more than one showing a burning man struggling to stay on his feet as he scampered for help amid

Indian diaspora remits \$129 billion



In 2024, Indian expatriates achieved a historic milestone by sending \$129 billion in remittances. This amount not only surpasses India's vast defence budget and foreign direct investment but also exceeds the combined budgets of Pakistan and Bangladesh. This flow of funds symbolises not just economic support but also the hard work, dedication, and unwaver-

ing love of Indians for their homeland. Remittances have unlocked new avenues for development in rural and urban areas, fostering investment in education, healthcare, and infrastructure. It has provided stability to rural economies while empowering small and medium enterprises. Indians living abroad establish their identity on foreign soil through resilience and courage. By dedicating a significant portion of their income to the development of their families and nation, they exemplify cultural values and familial commitment. This inflow strengthens India's foreign exchange reserves and energises local businesses. With strong policy measures, the government can further enhance this success. Remittances are not merely economic contributions; they represent the collective effort and national pride of Indians across the globe.

RK Jain | Barwani

ACTION AGAINST MINING MAFIA

Madam—The operation of the mining mafia is a well-known fact for a long time to both the governments of Rajasthan and Haryana, including the efforts put forth by the general public in complaining against such acts with no stoppage of the bringing down of the Aravalli hills. However, a common man hesitates to lodge an FIR, as he is aware of the consequences he will face with negligible police protection for a limited time and the creation of animosity with the mafia, resulting in a threat to his life and discouraging him from fighting with such a large force. Sending inspecting teams to the blasted site from both the government is purely an eyewitness in the eyes of the public until concrete action is taken at a national level involving the NIA. A strategic policy with amendments to the existing mining rules is required to be pondered upon to make it pragmatic and not theoretical to be effective.

RS Narula | Patiala

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Navigating the intersection of technology, law and human rights

In a world increasingly shaped by digital technologies, the concept of 'digital arrest' has emerged as a controversial tool in cyberspace



SHAINY SHARMA

The term 'Digital Arrest' often referred to as the restriction, monitoring, or apprehension of individuals through online mechanisms extends beyond the confines of traditional legal systems to encompass actions in cyberspace, such as freezing digital assets, blocking online accounts, or limiting access to certain platforms or limiting individual freedom in a virtual or online environment.



As technology permeates every aspect of life, the implications of digital arrest have grown even more significantly, offering both opportunities and challenges in governance, security, and individual rights in dismantling operations such as ransomware groups, hacking collectives, and online marketplaces for illegal activities. For instance, international efforts have led to the closure of dark web platforms such as Silk Road and the apprehension of their operators. Also, Cryptocurrencies and digital financial assets have brought about new forms of digital arrest, where govern-

ments or agencies freeze digital wallets associated with criminal activities thereby preventing the illicit flow of funds and supporting global financial regulations. While the concept is still evolving, digital arrest encompasses aspects of cybersecurity, legal frameworks, and the social consequences of living in a highly digitised world. At its core, this kind of arrest involves leveraging technology to enforce restrictions or punish actions taken in the digital sphere. Various government agencies, corporations, and even individual users can

participate in acts akin to digital arrest, raising questions about authority, power dynamics, and accountability in cyberspace. To balance security and individual rights in the digital era, taking measures such as establishing transparent and enforceable regulations that define the scope of digital arrest; overseeing the use of digital arrest mechanisms to ensure accountability and prevent misuse; developing universal guidelines for promoting fairness and consistency across jurisdictions and most importantly raising public awareness about digital rights and responsibili-

ties can equip individuals with the knowledge and tools needed to engage effectively and securely in the digital world. As the digital world continues to evolve, so too will the methods of enforcement and resistance. New technologies, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, may influence how digital arrests are carried out and challenged. Transparency in enforcement, the right to appeal, and global cooperation on ethical standards are essential steps in creating a just digital society. There is no denying that digital arrest represents the intersection of technology, law, and human rights in the digital age. While it offers tools for enforcing order and combatting crime, it also poses risks to freedom and privacy. As society becomes increasingly reliant on digital infrastructure, the concept of digital arrest will likely continue to evolve, demanding thoughtful and ethical approaches to its implementation.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

SUCCESS THROUGH WORKPLACE INTELLIGENCE

It is the ability to adapt to the work environment through emotional and cognitive intelligence



SAKSHI SETHI

In today's dynamic work environment, workplace intelligence has become a cornerstone for achieving personal growth, team cohesion, and organisational excellence. Workplace intelligence refers to the ability of individuals and organisations to navigate, adapt, and thrive in the professional environment through effective understanding, communication and decision-making. It encompasses emotional intelligence, social intelligence, and cognitive intelligence blended together with technological advancements thereby creating a comprehensive approach towards addressing the root causes of toxicity and fostering a positive workplace culture. There is no denying that such intelligence not only plays a pivotal role in creating a healthy, harmonious and productive professional environment but also equips individuals and organisations with the tools to identify, mitigate and prevent toxic behaviours that can undermine morale, collaboration and overall success.

It is often believed that employees with high workplace intelligence can manage their tasks efficiently and adapt to new challenges with minimal disruption. By leveraging cognitive and emotional intelligence, they can prioritize effectively and maintain focus, leading to improved productivity. Also, social and emotional intelligence enables them to work harmoniously with others, promoting effective communication and minimizing conflicts. Strong teamwork followed by leaders with workplace intelligence inspires trust, and motivation and navigate through complex challenges with clarity and empathy. It even enhances creativity, innovation and the achievement of their collective goals and even reduces stress, boosts morale, and contributes to overall job satisfaction. In an era of rapid technological advancements and shifting market dynam-



ics, workplace intelligence equips employees and organisations with the resilience and adaptability needed to stay competitive. By fostering emotional and social intelligence, workplace intelligence helps identify and mitigate toxic behaviours, thereby ensuring a positive and respectful work environment.

By promoting training and development, organisations can invest in training programmes that focus on emotional intelligence, communication skills and technological proficiency. Open and constructive feedback mechanisms help the employee grow and refine their workplace intelligence over time. Emphasising diversity and inclusion helps individuals develop social intelligence by interacting with people from different backgrounds and perspectives. Encouraging continuous learning and adaptability ensures that employees remain agile and open to new ideas and methods. Remember, a workforce with high workplace intelligence is more likely to generate creative solutions and drive innovation. Employees are more likely to stay in organisations where they feel valued, supported, and empowered. Today, companies such as Heineken, Cooley, Cruise Automation, Urban Company, Amazon, Chipotle and many more are known for fostering workplace intelligence to attract top talent and build trust with stakeholders.

By investing in the development of workplace intelligence, organisations can create environments that promote collaboration, innovation, and sustainable success, ensuring they remain agile and competitive in an ever-evolving world. As organisations continue to navigate the complexities of globalisation and digital transformation, the importance of workplace intelligence will only grow. Artificial intelligence, remote work and diverse teams are shaping new paradigms that demand a more nuanced understanding of interpersonal and technological dynamics but organisations that invest in fostering workplace intelligence will gain a competitive edge, as their employees will be better equipped to adapt, innovate, and lead in an ever-changing world.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

A roadmap for financial sustainability of India Post



SUBHASH CHANDRA AGARWAL

India Post is at a crossroads. As private courier services continue to expand their market share with speed and convenience, it must adapt to stay competitive



India Post, a vital lifeline in connecting citizens across the country, needs to undergo a comprehensive review of its services. This reform should focus on introducing innovation, ensuring greater revenue generation for the Department of Posts (DoP), and maintaining affordability for the public. As private courier services continue to gain traction due to their convenience and efficiency, India Post must adapt to remain competitive and relevant in a rapidly changing environment.

Rationalising Postal Tariffs and Eliminating GST on Select Services

The current structure of postal services includes highly subsidised offerings, such as postcards priced as low as 50 paise. While such subsidies aim to make communication accessible, they are often exploited. For instance, during Lok Sabha elections in 2019, political parties used postcards extensively, resulting in significant costs to the public exchequer. Similarly, postcards are frequently misused for commercial purposes, such as reminders by chit-fund companies. These subsidised services, rarely used by the common man, burden taxpayers without corresponding benefits.

To address this, printed or rubber-stamped postcards should be discontinued unless they are sponsored. The introduction of sponsored Meghdoot postcards priced at Re1 and printed postcards priced at Rs10 could ensure a sustainable revenue model. Similarly, the tariff for registered newspapers could be rationalised to Rs1, reflecting the increased cost of inputs for small newspaper production.

Additionally, while normal postal services are exempt from GST, applying GST on premium services like Speed Post is counterproductive. It results in a redundant transfer of funds between government departments. Rationalising tariffs for Speed Post to Rs 20 or Rs 30 per 50-gram weight slabs and aligning other domestic and international postal tariffs in multiples of Rs 10 would streamline the system and reduce inefficiencies. International postal rates could follow a consistent structure, with uniform tariff increases per weight slab for air and sur-



THE 'MY-STAMP' INITIATIVE, WHICH ALLOWS INDIVIDUALS TO PRINT PERSONAL IMAGES ON POSTAGE STAMPS, HAS BEEN MISUSED. REPORTS INDICATE INSTANCES OF NOTORIOUS INDIVIDUALS OBTAINING STAMPS WITH THEIR PHOTOS, TARNISHING THE PROGRAM'S CREDIBILITY

Generating Revenue Through Sponsored Postal Stamps

To boost revenue, the DoP should introduce sponsored postal stamps. These stamps, carrying advertisements or approved messages, could be issued in bulk to sponsors at a fixed charge per printed stamp. This initiative could attract businesses, encouraging them to utilise postal services over private courier companies.

Additionally, a new series of definitive postal stamps and stationery could be launched annually on the first day of the financial year. These stamps should maintain consistent color schemes for specific denominations while showcasing new designs based on a selected theme. Commemorative stamps, previously issued in arbitrary denominations like Rs 12 and Rs 41, should be standardised to denominations in multiples of Rs 10. Furthermore, the practice of printing stamps of different denominations on the same sheet, except for miniature sheets, should be discontinued as it complicates usage. Miniature sheets, being collectible items, should be priced higher than the face value of the stamps they contain. Such measures could not only enhance revenue through philately but also rekindle public interest in postal services.

Replacing 'My-Stamp' with Sponsored Stamps

The 'My-Stamp' initiative, which allows individuals to print personal images on postage stamps, has been misused. Reports indicate instances of notorious individuals obtaining stamps with their photos, tarnishing the program's credibility. Since no robust mechanism exists to screen applicants' backgrounds, the programme is susceptible to abuse. Discontinuing the 'My-Stamp' concept in favor of sponsored stamps could address this issue. Sponsored stamps would

not only ensure better regulation but also offer a significant revenue stream.

Enhancing Consumer Convenience with Sticker Receipts

Currently, receipts issued by the Postal Department include a sticker only on the portion retained by the Department, leaving the consumer without one. Adding stickers to consumer receipts would eliminate the need for gum to paste them onto dispatch registers or documents. This small change could save public resources and improve the user experience, especially for organisations that rely heavily on postal services.

Introducing RTI Stamps and Rationalising Postal Orders

Postal orders in low denominations such as Rs 1, Rs 2, Rs 5, and Rs 7 were discontinued due to high handling costs. For example, the handling cost of a postal order in 2011-12 was Rs 37.45, far exceeding its value. To minimise losses, higher denominations like Rs 100, Rs 200, and Rs 500 could be introduced. Furthermore, RTI-specific stamps in denominations of Rs 2, Rs 10, and Rs 50 could replace postal orders for fees under the RTI Act, streamlining the payment process. This approach aligns with recommendations from the Central Information Commission and addresses the issue of unfeasible copying charges below Rs10 due to the absence of lower-denomination postal orders.

Managing Inoperative and Matured Accounts

Unclaimed deposits in post office accounts often remain unnoticed due to deceased account holders failing to inform legal heirs. This creates a risk of fraud, as unscrupulous individuals may attempt to claim such funds in collusion with postal employees. To mitigate this risk, the Postal Department should send registered letters to account holders who have not operated

their accounts or claimed matured deposits for over three years. If no response is received within three months, the funds should be frozen in fixed accounts and made accessible only after rigorous verification. Publishing details of such accounts could help legal heirs claim their rightful amounts, subject to stringent scrutiny. The introduction of successive nominations, as practiced by LIC of India, would further safeguard deposits and simplify inheritance processes.

Expanding Postal Services Through Bank Counters

The closure of post offices in key commercial areas, such as Chandni Chowk in Old Delhi, has caused inconvenience for businesses that rely on Registered and Speed Post services. With banks increasingly adopting government savings schemes, their branches could be utilised for booking postal services. Offering banks a nominal commission for hosting these services would not only enhance accessibility but also integrate postal and banking ecosystems more effectively.

Revamping the Postal Ecosystem for Sustainability

India Post's transformation should emphasise efficiency, innovation, and customer-centricity. Rationalising tariffs, eliminating wasteful subsidies, and leveraging sponsored services are crucial steps toward financial sustainability. Additionally, addressing operational inefficiencies and improving service delivery will help India Post reclaim its position as a trusted and competitive communication medium.

By embracing these changes, India Post can not only secure its financial future but also continue serving as a cornerstone of India's communication network.

(The writer is a Guinness World Record holder and RTI Consultant; views are personal)

India's math geniuses shine bright in international math competition 2024

India, a nation with a rich legacy of mathematical brilliance, added another feather to its cap by triumphing at the UCMAS International Competition 2024

India has long been a land of great mathematicians, from Aryabhata to Ramanujan to Bhaskara, each leaving an indelible mark on the world with their mathematical ingenuity. Today, India continues to excel in the field, as evidenced by its stellar performance at the Universal Concept of Mental Arithmetic System (UCMAS) International Competition 2024 in New Delhi, where the country bagged both the highest individual and team trophies.

The competition, the world's largest event for Abacus and Mental Arithmetic, brought together over 6,000 students from nearly 30 countries. Participants faced the challenge of solving 200 arithmetic questions in just eight min-



SARIKA JHA

utes, relying solely on the Abacus or mental math techniques—a feat that truly felt like magic. For the second time, the World's Largest Abacus & Mental Arithmetic Event- UCMAS International Competition 2024 was held in India at the Delhi University Multipurpose Hall. Students from across the world competed with each other showcasing their men-

tal prowess in solving a very large number of mathematics problems in the quickest possible time to win the awards. This landmark event reaffirms its global significance in nurturing young minds in mathematics.

The competition aimed at promoting brain development, enhancing cognitive skills, and demonstrating the incredible abilities students can achieve through Abacus and Mental Arithmetic. Presenting the trophies to top performers, former Union Minister Meenakshi Lekhi rightly said, "Smart brain produces smart solutions for every problem and prosperity is moving forward only when we have smart brains." Commending the efforts of the young participants, Lekhi emphasised

the importance of such initiatives and said, "UCMAS is enhancing cognitive skills and academic excellence." The blend of the ancient tool of the Abacus with modern teaching methodologies creates a unique educational experience.

Over 3 million children across the world have benefited from the Abacus and Mental Arithmetic curriculum, which encourages creativity, visualisation, and focus while developing strong arithmetic abilities.

In today's competitive academic environment, maintaining mental wellbeing has become an uphill battle for many children. The relentless pressure to excel often leads to stress, anxiety, and even depression. In some heartbreaking cases,



it drives students to take extreme steps, as seen in recent reports from Rajasthan's Kota district—a hub for competitive exam preparations. However, innovative educational programmes like the Abacus and Mental Arithmetic course are emerging as a ray of hope, helping children manage stress while fostering mental stability and

self-confidence. According to Dr Snehal Karia, CEO of UCMAS India, the course is designed to enhance children's mental stability by boosting their concentration, focus, and memory. It equips them with the confidence to understand and embrace their individuality, effectively reducing anxiety and depression. The Abacus & Mental Arithmetic program's key lies in its structured approach to building self-assurance through innovative teaching methods.

The encouragement and skills imparted during the training play a pivotal role in shaping a child's bright future. The program comprises eight levels, each lasting three to four months. Children attend weekly classes guided by

trained instructors, working through specially designed books and activities. Unlike conventional education, the course serves as a supplementary learning system to enhance cognitive abilities. There is an urgent need to complement the school's curriculum by focusing on brain development. The course improves memory, sharpness, and alertness.

As a result, students perform better academically and approach challenges with greater confidence. In a world where competition often overshadows creativity and self-worth, programs like Abacus & Mental Arithmetic provide children with the tools they need to thrive—mentally, emotionally, and academically. Alexan Wong, CEO of

UCMAS International Corporation, said, "The competition not only tests their skills but also serves as a platform to demonstrate their creativity, visual memory, and focus—all of which will shape their future success." The competition itself is a testament to the transformative power of such programs, where students not only test their math skills but also demonstrate the broader cognitive benefits that shape their academic and personal growth.

Ultimately, the world needs such initiatives to nurture well-rounded individuals who are prepared to face the challenges of the future with confidence and creativity. *(The author is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal)*

Bethlehem plans another somber Christmas under the shadow of war in Gaza

AP ■ BETHLEHEM (WEST BANK)

The Nativity Store in Manger Square has sold handmade olive wood carvings and religious items to people visiting the traditional birthplace of Jesus since 1927. But as Bethlehem prepares to mark its second Christmas under the shadow of the war in Gaza, there are almost no tourists, leaving the Nativity Store and other businesses unsure of how much longer they can hold on.

For the second straight year, Bethlehem's Christmas celebrations will be somber and muted, in deference to ongoing war in Gaza. There will be no giant Christmas tree in Manger Square, no raucous scout marching bands, no public lights twinkling and very few public decorations or displays.

"Last year before Christmas, we had more hope, but now again we are close to Christmas and we don't have anything," said Rony Tabash, the third-generation owner of Nativity Store.

Israel's war against Hamas has been raging for nearly 15 months, and there still is no end in sight. Repeated ceasefire efforts have

stalled.

Since the war began, tourism to Israel and the Israeli-occupied West Bank has plummeted. And after Israel barred entry to most of the 150,000 Palestinians in the West Bank who had jobs in Israel, the Palestinian economy contracted by 25% in the past year.

The yearly Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem — shared among Armenian, Catholic and Orthodox denominations — are usually major boons for the city, where tourism accounts for 70% of its yearly income. But the streets are empty this season.

Tabash said he continues to open the store every day, but often an entire week will go by without a sale. Tabash works with more than 25 local families who create hand-carved religious items out of the region's storied olive wood. But with no buyers, work has dried up for these families.

Lots of room at the inn: The number of visitors to the city plunged from a pre-COVID high of around 2 million visitors per year in 2019 to fewer than 100,000 visitors in 2024, said Jiries Qumsiyeh, the spokesperson for the Palestinian

tourism ministry.

According to the Christmas story, Mary was forced to give birth to Jesus in a stable because there was no room at the inn. Today, nearly all of Bethlehem's 5,500 hotel rooms are empty.

The city's hotel occupancy rate plunged from around 80% in early 2023 to around 3% today, said Elias Al Arja, the head of Bethlehem Hoteliers Association. At his own hotel, the Bethlehem Hotel, he said he has laid off a staff of more than 120 people and retains just five employees.

The city hosts more than 100 stores and 450 workshops dealing with traditional Palestinian handicraft, Qumsiyeh said. But just a week before Christmas, when the city should be bursting with visitors, Manger Square was mostly empty save for a few locals selling coffee and tea. Only two of the eight stores in the main drag of the square were open for business.

Qumsiyeh worries that when the war ends and tourism eventually rebounds, many of the families that have handed down traditional skills for generations will no longer be making the items that reflect



Palestinian heritage and culture. Many are leaving the region entirely. "We have witnessed a very high rate of emigration since the beginning of the aggression, especially among those working in the tourism sector," said Qumsiyeh.

A Christmas without joy: Almost 500 families have left Bethlehem in the past year, said Mayor Anton Salman. And those are just the families who moved abroad with official residency visas. Many others have moved abroad on temporary tourist visas and are working illegally, and it's unclear if they will return, Salman said.

Around half of the population in the

Bethlehem area, including nearby villages, works in either tourism or in jobs in Israel.

The unemployment rate in Bethlehem is roughly 50%, said Salman. Unemployment across the West Bank is around 30%, according to the Palestinian Economy Ministry.

Canceling Christmas festivities is one way to draw attention to the difficult situation in Bethlehem and across the Palestinian territories, said Salman. "This year we want to show the world that the Palestinian people are still suffering and they haven't the joy that everybody else in the world having," said Salman.

It is another blow to the Holy Land's dwindling population over the decade due to emigration and a low birthrate.

Christians are a small percentage of the population. There are about 182,000 in Israel, 50,000 in the West Bank and Jerusalem and 1,300 in Gaza, according to the US State Department.

Finding the light in the night: Father Issa Thalji, the parish priest of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Church of the Nativity, said many families are struggling financially, leaving them unable to pay rent or school fees, much less buy Christmas presents or celebrate the holiday in other ways. The church's social services have tried to help, but the needs are great, he said.

Thalji said his Christmas message this year focused on encouraging Palestinians in Bethlehem to stay despite the challenges.

"A church without Christians is not a church," he said, as workers hand-polished the ornate brass candelabras in the cavernous, empty church a week before the holiday. "The light that was born when Jesus Christ was born here is the light that

moves beyond darkness, so we have to wait, we have to be patient, we have to pray a lot, and we have to stay with our roots because our roots are in Bethlehem," he said.

Some families are finding ways to bring back pockets of joy. Bethlehem resident Nihal Bandak, 39, gave into her three children's requests to have a Christmas tree this year, after not having one last year. Decorating the tree is her favorite part of Christmas of her youngest daughter, 8-year-old Stephanie.

Mathew Bandak, 11 was thrilled his family brought back some of their traditions, but also torn.

"I was happy because we get to decorate and celebrate, but people are in Gaza who don't have anything to celebrate," he said.

Rony Tabash, the third-generation owner of Nativity Store, said he will continue to open the store, because it's part of his family's history.

"We are not feeling Christmas, but in the end, Christmas is in our hearts," he said, adding that the entire city was praying for a ceasefire and peace. "We have a big faith that always, when we see Christmas, it will give us the light in the night."

Trump threatens to try take back Panama Canal

Panama's president balks at the suggestion

AP ■ PHOENIX

Donald Trump suggested Sunday that his new administration could try to regain control of the Panama Canal that the United States "foolishly" ceded to its Central American ally, contending that shippers are charged "ridiculous" fees to pass through the vital transportation channel linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Panama's conservative president José Raúl Mulino, who was elected in April on a pro-business platform, roundly rejected that notion as an affront to his country's sovereignty.

The Republican president-elect's comment came during his first major rally since winning the White House on Nov. 5. He also basked in his return to power as a large audience of conservatives cheered along. It was a display of party unity at odds with a just-concluded budget fight on Capitol Hill, where some GOP lawmakers openly defied their leader's demands.

Addressing supporters at Turning Point USA's AmericaFest in Arizona, Trump pledged that his "dream team Cabinet" would deliver a booming economy, seal U.S. borders and quickly settle wars in the Middle East and Ukraine. "I can proudly proclaim that the Golden Age of America is upon us," Trump said. "There's a spirit that we have now that we didn't have just a short while ago."

His appearance capped a four-day pep rally that drew more than 20,000 activists and projected an image of Republican cohesion despite the past week's turbulence in Washington with Trump pulling strings from his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida as Congress worked to avoid a government shutdown heading into the holidays. House Republicans spiked a



bipartisan deal after Trump and Elon Musk, his billionaire ally, expressed their opposition on social media. Budget hawks flouted Trump's demand that they raise the nation's debt ceiling, which would have spared some new rounds of the same fight after he takes office on Jan. 20, with Republicans holding narrow control of the House and Senate. The final agreement did not address the issue and there was no shutdown. Trump, in his remarks in Phoenix, did not mention the congressional drama, though he did reference Musk's growing power. To suggestions that "President Trump has ceded the presidency to Elon," Trump made clear, "No, no. That's not happening."

"He's not gonna be president," Trump said. The president-elect opened the speech by saying that "we want to try to bring everybody together. We're going to try. We're going to really give it a shot." Then he suggested Democrats have "lost their confidence" and are "befuddled" after the election but eventually will "come over to our side because we want to have them."

Atop a list of grievances — some old, some new — was the

Panama Canal. "We're being ripped off at the Panama Canal," he said, bemoaning that his country "foolishly gave it away." The United States built the canal in the early 1900s as it looked for ways to facilitate the transit of commercial and military vessels between its coasts. Washington relinquished control of the waterway to Panama on Dec. 31, 1999, under a treaty signed in 1977 by President Jimmy Carter. The canal depends on reservoirs to operate its locks and was heavily affected by 2023 Central American droughts that forced it to substantially reduce the number of daily slots for crossing ships. With fewer ships using the canal each day, administrators also increased the fees that are charged all shippers for reserving a slot. With weather returning to normal in the later months of this year, transit on the canal has normalized. But price increases are still expected for next year.

Mulino, Panama's president, has been described as a conservative populist who aligns with Trump on many issues. Panama is a strong US ally and the canal is crucial for its economy, generating about one-

fifth of that government's annual revenue.

Still, Trump said, that, once his second term is underway, "If the principles, both moral and legal, of this magnificent gesture of giving are not followed, then we will demand that the Panama Canal be returned to the United States of America, in full, quickly and without question."

"I'm not going to stand for it," Trump said. "So to the officials of Panama, please be guided accordingly."

He did not explain how that would be possible. Shortly after Trump's speech, Mulino released a video declaring that "every square meter of the canal belongs to Panama and will continue to belong" to his country.

Without mentioning Trump by name, Mulino addressed Trump's complaints over rising fees for ships crossing the canal, saying they are set by experts who take into account operational costs, and supply and demand factors.

"The tariffs are not set on a whim" Mulino said. He noted that Panama has expanded the canal over the years to increase ship traffic "on its own initiative," and added that shipping fee increases help pay for

improvements.

"Panamanians may have different views on many issues" Mulino said. "But when it comes to our canal, and our sovereignty, we will all unite under our Panamanian flag."

The canal aside, Trump's appearance at Turning Point's annual gathering affirmed the growing influence of the group and its founder, Charlie Kirk, have had in the conservative movement. Kirk's group hired thousands of field organizers across presidential battlegrounds, helping Trump make key gains among infrequent voters and other groups of people that have trended more Democratic in recent decades, including younger voters, Black men and Latino men.

"You had Turning Point's grassroots armies," Trump said. "It's not my victory, it's your victory," Trump on Sunday also announced several new members of his incoming administration, most notably: Stephen Miran, who worked at the Treasury Department in Trump's first term, to lead the Council of Economic Advisers, an executive branch agency charged with providing objective economic advice to the president.

Callista Gingrich to be the US ambassador to Switzerland. Gingrich is US ambassador to the Holy See in Trump's first term. She is married to former House Speaker Newt Gingrich. Separately, Australian billionaire Anthony Pratt announced he was donating \$1.1 million to Trump's inaugural fund to complement the \$14 million that he said he already had given to the Make America Great Again Inc. super political action committee — making him one of the president-elect's top donors.

Pratt is chairman of Pratt Industries, which uses recycled paper and boxes as a raw material in a process that produces new cardboard.

Pak govt, Imran's party agree to continue talks to resolve contentious issues

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

The Pakistan government and the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party in their maiden meeting on Monday agreed to continue talks to address contentious issues, including the release of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan.

The long-anticipated talks between the committees representing the government and the PTI were chaired by the National Assembly (NA) Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, who had last week announced to facilitate the two sides in their effort to defuse the prevailing political tension.

Those who attended from the government side include Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, PM's political aide Rana Sanaullah, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, former premier Raja

Parvez Ashraf, former minister Naveed Qamar, lawmaker Farooq Sattar and Privatisation Minister Aleem Khan.

PTI was represented by former speaker Asad Qaiser, Sahibzada Hamid Raza, and Senator Raja Nasir Abbas.

Sadiq thanked the government's leadership and senior leaders of the opposition for holding the talks. He announced that the next session would be held on January 2 and PTI's team would present a charter of their demands in the next meeting.

"We discussed things about past and present and I hope that if we work together for the country's betterment, it will strengthen the political stability, strengthen democracy and help in dealing with challenges faced by Pakistan," he said after the meeting.

Senator Irfan Siddiqui read out the communiqué regarding

the talks that both sides described the talks as a positive development and emphasised the importance of keeping the negotiations ongoing.

Both committees expressed goodwill, saying that Parliament is the appropriate forum for resolving issues, the handout said. PTI's Qaiser informed the members that several members of his committee could not attend due to court proceedings.

It was agreed that both sides stand united in the fight against terrorism. A tribute was also paid to the martyrs for their sacrifice. There was also a declaration of support for standing alongside the forces in the war against terrorism.

The talks began amidst the ongoing political tension between the government and PTI as the latter was demanding the release of all political leaders, including Imran Khan.

Albanian prime minister says TikTok ban was not 'rushed reaction to single incident'

AP ■ TIRANA (ALBANIA)

Albania's prime minister has said that the ban on TikTok his government announced on Saturday was "not a rushed reaction to a single incident."

Prime Minister Edi Rama said Saturday the government will shut down TikTok for one year, accusing the popular video service of inciting violence and bullying, especially among children.

Authorities have held 1,300 meetings with teachers and parents since the November stabbing death of a teenager by another teen after a quarrel that started on social media apps. Ninety per cent of them approve of the ban on TikTok.

"The ban on TikTok for one year in Albania is not a rushed reaction to a single incident, but a carefully considered decision made in consultation with parent communities in schools across the country," said Rama on Sunday.

Following Tirana's decision, TikTok asked for "urgent clarity from the Albanian government" in the case of the stabbed teenager. The company said it had "found no evidence that the perpetrator or victim had TikTok accounts, and multiple reports have in fact confirmed videos leading up to this incident were being posted on another platform, not TikTok."

"To claim that the killing of the teenage boy has no connection to TikTok because the conflict

didn't originate on the platform demonstrates a failure to grasp both the seriousness of the threat TikTok poses to children and youth today and the rationale behind our decision to take responsibility for addressing this threat," said Rama.

"Albania may be too small to demand that TikTok protect children and youth from the frightening pitfalls of its algorithm," he said, blaming TikTok for "the reproduction of the unending hell of the language of hatred, violence, bullying and so on."

Albanian children comprise the largest group of TikTok users in the country, according to domestic researchers. Many youngsters in Albania did not approve of the ban.

Israeli airstrikes on Gaza kill at least 20 people

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Palestinian medics say Israeli airstrikes on the Gaza Strip have killed at least 20 people. One of the strikes overnight and into Monday hit a tent camp in the Muwasi area, an Israel-declared humanitarian zone, killing eight people, including two children. That's according to the Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan Younis, which received the bodies. Hospital records show another six killed in a strike on people securing an aid convoy and another two killed in a strike on a car in Muwasi. One person was killed in a separate strike in the area.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central city of Deir al-Balah said three bodies arrived after an airstrike on a school-turned-shelter in the built-up Nuseirat refugee camp. The Israeli military says it only strikes militants, accusing them of hiding among civilians. It said late Sunday that it had targeted a Hamas militant in the humanitarian zone. The war began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking around 250 hostages. Around 100 captives are still inside Gaza, at least a third of whom are believed to be dead. Israel's air and ground offensive has killed over 45,200 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. The ministry says women and children make up more than half the dead but does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its tally. The military says it has killed over 17,000 militants, without providing evidence. **Lebanon's caretaker**

er prime minister visits military positions in the country's south: Lebanon's caretaker prime minister has begun a tour of military positions in the country's south, almost a month after a ceasefire deal that ended the war between Israel and the Hezbollah group that battered the country. Najib Mikati on Monday was on his first visit to the southern frontlines, where Lebanese soldiers under the US-brokered deal are expected to gradually deploy, with Hezbollah militants and Israeli troops both expected to withdraw by the end of next month. Mikati's tour comes after the Lebanese government expressed its frustration over ongoing Israeli strikes and overflights in the country. "We have many tasks ahead of us, the most important being the enemy's (Israel's) withdrawal from all the lands it encroached on during its recent aggression," he said after meeting with army chief Joseph Aoun in a Lebanese military barracks in the southeastern town of Marjayoun. "Then the army can carry out its tasks in full." The Lebanese military for years has relied on financial aid to stay functional, primarily from the United States and other Western countries. Lebanon's cash-strapped government is hoping that the war's end and ceasefire deal will bring about more funding to increase the military's capacity to deploy in the south, where Hezbollah's armed units were notably present. Though they were not active combatants, the Lebanese military said that dozens of its soldiers were killed in Israeli strikes on their premises or patrolling convoys in the south. The Israeli army acknowledged some of these attacks.

Palestinian security forces man killed

AP ■ JENIN (WEST BANK)

The Palestinian Authority says a second member of its security forces has been killed in the West Bank town of Jenin during clashes with Palestinian militants.

Brig Gen Anwar Rajab, the spokesman for PA security forces, said 1st Sgt Mehran Qadoos was killed on Monday by "outlaws" in the volatile northern town, where the security forces launched a rare crackdown earlier this month. A member of security forces also was killed on Sunday. An Associated Press reporter in Jenin heard heavy gunfire and explosions, apparently from a battle between the security forces and Palestinian militants. There was no sign of Israeli forces in the area.

Militant groups had earlier called for a general strike across the territory, accusing the security forces of trying to disarm them in support of Israel's half-century occupation of the territory. The Western-backed Palestinian Authority is internationally recognized but deeply unpopular among Palestinians, in part because it cooperates with Israel on security matters. Israel accuses the authority of incitement and of failing to act against armed groups.

Biden gives life in prison to 37 of 40 federal death row inmates

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden announced Monday that he is commuting the sentences of 37 of the 40 people on federal death row, converting their punishments to life imprisonment mere weeks before President-elect Donald Trump, an outspoken proponent of expanding capital punishment, takes office.

The move spares the lives of people convicted in killings, including the slayings of police and military officers, people on federal land and those involved in deadly bank robberies or drug deals, as well as the killings of guards or prisoners in federal facilities.

It means just three federal inmates are still facing execution. They are Dylann Roof, who carried out the 2015 racist slayings of nine Black members of Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, 2013 Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev and Robert Bowers, who fatally shot 11 congregants at Pittsburgh's Tree of life

Synagogue in 2018, the deadliest antisemitic attack in US history.

"I've dedicated my career to reducing violent crime and ensuring a fair and effective justice system," Biden said in a statement.

"Today, I am commuting the sentences of 37 of the 40 individuals on federal death row to life sentences without the possibility of parole. These commutations are consistent with the moratorium my administration has imposed on federal executions, in cases other than terrorism and hate-motivated mass murder."

The Biden administration in 2021 announced a moratorium on federal capital punishment to study the protocols used, which suspended executions during Biden's term. But Biden actually had promised to go further on the issue in the past, pledging to end federal executions without the caveats for terrorism and hate-motivated, mass killings. While running for president in 2020, Biden's campaign website

said he would "work to pass legislation to eliminate the death penalty at the federal level, and incentivize states to follow the federal government's example."

Similar language didn't appear on Biden's reelection website before he left the presidential race in July. "Make no mistake: I condemn these murderers, grieve for the victims of their despicable acts, and ache for all the families who have suffered unimaginable and irreparable loss," Biden's statement said. "But guided by my conscience and my experience as a public defender, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, vice president, and now president, I am more convinced than ever that we must stop the use of the death penalty at the federal level."

He took a political jab at Trump, saying, "In good conscience, I cannot stand back and let a new administration resume executions that I halted." Indeed, Trump, who takes

office on Jan. 20, has spoken frequently of expanding executions. In a speech announcing his 2024 campaign, Trump called for those "caught selling drugs to receive the death penalty for their heinous acts." He later promised to execute drug and human smugglers and even praised China's harsher treatment of drug peddlers. During his first term as president, Trump also advocated for the death penalty for drug dealers.

There were 13 federal executions during Trump's first term, more than under any president in modern history, and some may have happened fast enough to have contributed to the spread of the coronavirus at the federal death row facility in Indiana.

Those were the first federal executions since 2003. The final three occurred after Election Day in November 2020 but before Trump left office the following January, the first time federal prisoners were put to death by a lame-duck president since Grover Cleveland in 1889.

UN 2024: India calls for change at UN as conflicts persist

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

As the United Nations prepares to celebrate its 80th anniversary next year, India stressed that reform is "key" to the organisation's "relevance" in addressing current and future global challenges, as world leaders signed off on an ambitious pact in 2024 to transform global governance and drive sustainable action.

When world leaders descended at the UN Headquarters in September for the high-level 79th session of the General Assembly, they adopted by consensus the landmark 'Pact of the Future' - a document that covers themes from peace and security, sustainable development to climate change, digital cooperation, human rights, gender, youth and future generations, and transformation of global governance.

Underlining the need for reform, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said, "We don't need a crystal ball to see that 21st Century challenges require problem-solving mechanisms that are more effective, networked and inclusive. We can't create a future fit for our grandchildren with systems built for our grandparents." India has been at the forefront of years-long efforts calling for reform of the Security Council, including expansion in both its permanent and non-permanent categories, saying the 15-nation Council, founded in 1945, is not fit for

purpose in the 21st Century and does not reflect contemporary geo-political realities. Delhi has underscored that it rightly deserves a permanent seat at the horse-shoe table. A polarised Security Council has failed to deal with current peace and security challenges, with Council members sharply divided on conflicts such as the Ukraine war and the Israel-Hamas war.

Guterres noted that many of today's pressing issues were not foreseen when the UN's multilateral framework was created 80 years ago. India's message to the international community was that reforms in global institutions are essential for global peace and development. "Reform is the key to relevance... Global action must match global ambition," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his address to the UN's Summit of the Future, where the Pact was adopted. Modi's clarion call for change from the UNGA lectern came amid ongoing global conflicts, including the Ukraine war entering its third year, the Israel-Hamas war, and escalating global threats like terrorism, climate crises, economic inequality, and attacks on women's rights.

Amid these global challenges, India consistently advocated dialogue and diplomacy to arrive at solutions and resolve conflicts. When Modi met Ukraine's President Volodymyr

Internet rife with fake reviews; will AI make it worse?

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The emergence of generative artificial intelligence tools that allow people to efficiently produce novel and detailed online reviews with almost no work has put merchants, service providers and consumers in uncharted territory, watchdog groups and researchers say.

Phony reviews have long plagued many popular consumer websites, such as Amazon and Yelp. They are typically traded on private social media groups between fake review brokers and businesses willing to pay. Sometimes, such reviews are initiated by businesses that offer customers incentives such as gift cards for positive feedback.

But AI-infused text generation tools, popularized by OpenAI's ChatGPT, enable fraudsters to produce reviews faster and in greater volume, according to tech industry experts.

The deceptive practice, which is illegal in the US, is carried out year-round but becomes a bigger problem for consumers during the holiday shopping season, when many people rely on reviews to help them purchase gifts.

company behind an AI writing tool and content generator called Rytr, accusing it of offering a service that could pollute the marketplace with fraudulent reviews. The FTC, which this year banned the sale or purchase of fake reviews, said some of Rytr's subscribers used the tool to produce hundreds and perhaps thousands of reviews for garage door repair companies, sellers of 'replica' designer handbags and other businesses.

It's likely on prominent online sites, too: Max Spero, CEO of AI detection company Pangram Labs, said the software his company uses has detected with almost certainty that some AI-generated appraisals posted on Amazon bubbled up to the top of review search results because they were so detailed and appeared to be well thought-out. But determining what is fake or not can be challenging. External parties can fall short because they don't have "access to data signals that indicate patterns of abuse," Amazon has said.

Pangram Labs has done detection for some prominent online sites, which Spero disclosed to name due to non-disclosure agreements. He said he evaluated Amazon and Yelp indepen-



CHANGE OF NAME

I, Balbir Singh, son of Shri Jagat Singh, residing at Plot No. 31 B, Dilshad Garden, Near Flora Dale Public School, Delhi-110095, was previously known as Balbir Singh. However, I have now changed my name to Balbir Singh Jaswal. In the future, I shall be known and identified by this name.

PD(1129)C

I, YOGESH, S/O, KANHAIYALAL VANI, R/O, J-75, JAHANGIRPURI DELHI, 110033, THAT, I HAVE CHANGED MY MINOR SON'S NAME FROM PIYUSH YOGESH WANI TO PIYUSH PERMANENTLY

PD(1130)C

I, Kumari Menka Kanwar, W/o- JC-473064 N/S Sub Amar Singh Rajput, R/o- Vill- Seemla, Teh- Baswa, Dist- Dausa, Rajasthan - 303315, have changed my name from Kumari Menka Kanwar to Menka Kanwar, vide affidavit dated 23/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1131)C

I, Sadashiv, Father of JC-857058X Sub(OPR) Arjun Bhoi, R/o- Vill-PO- Nanadi, Tal- Chikodi, Dist- Belagavi, Karnataka- 591244, have changed my name from Sadashiv to Sadashiv Bhuyi, vide affidavit dated 23/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1132)C

I, Subhadra, Mother of JC-857058X Sub(OPR) Arjun Bhoi, R/o- Vill-PO- Nanadi, Tal- Chikodi, Dist- Belagavi, Karnataka- 591244, have changed my name from Subhadra to Subadra Sadashiva Bhuyi, vide affidavit dated 23/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1133)C

I, Pratibha W/o- JC-857058X Sub(OPR) Arjun Bhoi, R/o- Vill-PO- Nanadi, Tal- Chikodi, Dist- Belagavi, Karnataka- 591244, have changed my name from Pratibha to Pratibha Bhoi, vide affidavit dated 23/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1134)C

I, JC-857058X Sub (OPR) Arjun Bhoi, R/o- Vill-PO- Nanadi, Tal- Chikodi, Dist- Belagavi, Karnataka- 591244, have changed my name from Preetam to Preetam Bhoi, vide affidavit dated 23/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1135)C

I, SURENDER SINGH S/o Bhagot Singh R/o G-85 3rd Floor, East Vno Nagar, Delhi- 110091, hereby declare that in my son School documents my name wrongly mention as Surender Sing Rawat. My correct Name is Surender Singh.

PD(1136)C

Magdeburg mourns Christmas market attack victims as fears swirl of deeper social divisions

AP ■ MAGDEBURG (GERMANY)

Mourners laid flowers near the scene of the deadly Christmas market attack on Monday as investigators puzzled over the motive of the suspect and fears swirled that the rampage could deepen divisions in German society.

The Johanniskirche, a church a short walk from the scene of the attack, has become a central place of mourning since the suspect drove a car into the busy market on Friday evening, killing five people and injuring 200. A carpet of flowers now covers the broad sidewalk in front of the church.

Nancy Faeser said Sunday that "the views and statements that the perpetrator expressed are being investigated, as are the tipoffs and proceedings with various authorities and the justice system." She said "the right conclusions" will then have to be drawn.

The country's vice chancellor voiced fears that the attack will fuel online misinformation ahead of a national election expected in late February. He urged people to "take time for the truth" and said: "Don't let yourselves be infected by hatred."

"There is still a lot we don't know and a lot is unexplained, including the exact motive," Robert Habeck said in a video posted Sunday. "All the same, I fear that the distrust that was immediately propagated on the net against Muslims, foreigners and people with a history of immigration will entrench itself deeper in society."

On Sunday night, police in the port city of Bremerhaven said they detained a man who threatened crimes at a Christmas market there in a TikTok video. German news agency dpa reported that he had said he would stab any people of Arabic appearance there on Christmas Day.

China warns Philippines over mid-range missile deployment plan

AP ■ BEIJING

China said a plan by the Philippines to deploy midrange missiles would be a provocative move that stokes regional tensions. The Philippines top army official told reporters in Manila earlier on Monday that the military plans to acquire a mid-range system to defend the country's territory amid tensions with China in the South China Sea.

"Yes, there are plans, there are negotiations, because we see its feasibility and adaptability," Lt Gen Roy Galido said. The US deployed its Typhon mid-range missile system in the northern Philippines in April and troops from both countries

"It is an extremely irresponsible choice for the history and people of itself and the whole of Southeast Asia, as well as for the security of the region," she told a daily briefing. The Philippines would not necessarily buy the Typhon system, Galido said.

The army is working not only with the United States but with other friendly countries on a long list of weapons platforms that it plans to acquire, he said. The Philippines defence plan includes protecting its exclusive economic zone, which reaches 200 nautical miles (370 km).

Office of the Managing Director Uttarakhand Co-Operative Dairy Federation Ltd.
Mangal Parao, Haldwani - 263139 (Nainital) Uttarakhand
E-Tender Notice No.: 23(1-9)/UCDF/2024-25, Date- 23-12-2024
E-tenders are invited by the undersigned, from only experienced, reputed and financially sound Authorized Manufacturers/Dealers for the supply, installation, testing and commissioning of various Milk and Milk products Testing equipments for laboratory of various milk union and central dairy lab. I/alkun following items so as to reach this office on or before 01.01.2025 up to 5.00 PM. The tenders will be opened on 02.01.2025 at 11:00 AM.

S. No.	Name of Work
1.	SITAC of analytical balance, digital B.R. meter hand, electrical garbar machine, R.M.value set, QPCR(RT-PCR), Digital Butoyoro Refractometer, Laboratory Mill, FTIR Based Milk Analyzer for liquid and semi solid dairy products, Real Time Self Life Detector/Randocid Tester.

Tender details/documents may be downloaded/uploaded from E-tender portal <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>

NOIDA New Okhla Industrial Development Authority
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida G.B Nagar, (U.P.)
Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com

E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors / firms for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened / downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website : www.noidaauthorityonline.in & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these website for any changes / amendments & corrigendum etc.

Sr. No.	Job Number	Name of Work	Amount (Lac)	Publishing Time
(1)	15/GM/PE (PH-II)/ET/2024-25	Cleaning of covered drains & culvert with super sucker machine in PH-II area, Noida.	Rs. 58.36	2 nd Time

The above tender can be uploaded From dated 23/12/2024 to 30/12/2024 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-Qualification shall be opened / downloaded on dated 31/12/2024 at 11.00 AM.

महत्वपूर्ण सूचना-
नवीन ओखला औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण के अधिसूचित क्षेत्र में शासन से स्वीकृत मास्टर प्लान एवं उत्तर प्रदेश औद्योगिक क्षेत्र विकास अधिनियम, 1976 के विपरीत ब्लॉकिंग या बिली भी प्रकार का अन्य निर्माण पूरी तरह अशुद्ध है। जनसामान्य को आगाह किया जाता है कि इस प्रकार का अशुद्ध कॉलोनीयों एवं अशुद्ध निर्मित बवनों में भूखण्डों / अपार्टमेंट / दुकान / गोडाऊन / फर्महाउस की खरीद-फरोख्त से परहेज सचेत रहें तथा कॉलोनी/इंजर्जर के लुभावने एवं भ्रामक विज्ञापनों से बचें। साथ ही नौअका अधिसूचित क्षेत्र के रिपण्डन एवं यमुना नदियों के डूब क्षेत्र (Flood Plain Zone) में अनधिकृत/अशुद्ध ब्लॉकिंग एवं फ्लॉड एवं फ्लॉड को कारोबार में सलिन भूमाफियाओं के चंगुल में न फँसे।

General Manager (Public Health) Noida.

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

kotak Kotak Mahindra Bank
NOTICE
Locker Hired by MANREET SINGH having address at 120, TAGORE PARK DELHI-110009 with KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK B-1, GUJRANWALA, NEW DELHI - 110009 remains un-operated and the rent due for the last 4 years.

kotak Kotak Mahindra Bank
NOTICE
Locker Hired by PARVEEN KAUR having address at 120, TAGORE PARK DELHI-110009 with KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK B-1, GUJRANWALA, NEW DELHI - 110009 remains un-operated and the rent due for the last 4 years.

kotak Kotak Mahindra Bank
NOTICE
Locker Hired by KUNAL KHANNA having address at B-52 DERAWAL NAGAR, DELHI-110009 with KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK B-1, GUJRANWALA, NEW DELHI - 110009 remains un-operated and the rent due for the last 4 years.

kotak Kotak Mahindra Bank
NOTICE
Locker Hired by MANREET SINGH calling upon him to clear dues and to operate the locker has returned unreserved and he is not contactable.

kotak Kotak Mahindra Bank
NOTICE
Locker Hired by PARVEEN KAUR calling upon her to clear dues and to operate the locker has returned unreserved and she is not contactable.

kotak Kotak Mahindra Bank
NOTICE
Locker Hired by KUNAL KHANNA calling upon him to clear dues and to operate the locker has returned unreserved and he is not contactable.

kotak Kotak Mahindra Bank
NOTICE
Locker Hired by MANREET SINGH calling upon him to clear dues and to operate the locker has returned unreserved and he is not contactable.

kotak Kotak Mahindra Bank
NOTICE
Locker Hired by PARVEEN KAUR calling upon her to clear dues and to operate the locker has returned unreserved and she is not contactable.

Public Notice
Change in Partnership
Maruti Authorized Service Station
M/s. Wig Automobiles, Delhi
(Mass Code 8012) as below:

Public Notice
Information is given to general public at large that Mohd. Iqbal & Md. Zubair Alam who is/are purchasing the Property No. 923 E/A, Gali No. 8 (part of Property No. 923/B), area measuring 30 sq. yds., comprised of Khass No. 60039, Sonapat, Kalka, New Delhi 110019 from Ali Hassan S/o Fida Hassan & Gurdul Ali S/o Lyakut Hussain who was the owner of property by virtue of Sale Deed dated 07.06.2006 (Doc. No. 8820) executed by Mr. Amir Singh S/o Late Mr. Quli Saif Khan to mortgage the same against the financial assistance from Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited. Original registered General Power of Attorney dated 08.05.1997 (Document No. 6281), Agreement to Sell Notarized on dated 16.05.1997 & Will of the subject property are not available with Seller i.e. Ali Hassan S/o Fida Hassan & Gurdul Ali S/o Lyakut Hussain. To comply the requirements of BANK/BFC, we give this public notice that if any person(s) having any objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property is/are hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 07 days at below address:

NCR LAW ASSOCIATES
Advocates & Consultants A-98, Sector-9, New Vajay Nagar, Ghaziabad, (U.P.)-201009, MOB- 999982627, 9999721152

Public Notice
In order to clear extra rush of passengers, Northern Railway has decided to run the following Special Train as per details given below :-

Train No. 04082/04081	Hazrat Nizamuddin-Thiruvananthapuram	02		
Central-Hazrat Nizamuddin SF Reserved Special Express Train		TRIPS		
Train No. 04082	STATIONS	Train No. 04081		
ARR. DEP.		ARR. DEP.		
---	19:20	Hazrat Nizamuddin	06:45	--
19:45	---	Thiruvananthapuram	---	07:50

Days of Run : 04082 Ex Hazrat Nizamuddin on 28.12.2024 (Saturday) and 04081 Ex Thiruvananthapuram Central on 31.12.2024 (Tuesday)

Stoppages : Kola Jn., Ratlam Jn., Vadodara Jn., Udhana Jn., Vasai Road, Panvel, Roha, Chiplun, Ratnagiri, Kankavali, Thivim, Madgaon Jn., Karwar, Kumta, Mookambika Road Byndor, Kundapur, Udipi, Mangalore Jn., Kasaragod, Kannur, Kozhikkode, Shoranur Jn., Thrissur, Aluva, Ernakulam Town, Kottayam, Tiruvalla, Chengannur, Kayankulam Jn., Kollam Jn. & Varkala Shivagiri stations

Accommodation : 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC & General

For detailed information regarding stoppages and timings of above trains, please call RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit enquiry website: www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in

RailMadad Helpline No. 139
Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in
Download Railmadad App

NORTHERN RAILWAY
Your Convenience - Our Concern
Visit us at : www.nriindianrailways.gov.in

WORKS DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, EASTERN CIRCLE (R&B), BALASORE
e-mail: seec_bis@rediffmail.com
Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. CCEEC- 10/ 2024-25
No:- 4725 Dt: 20.12.2024

WORKS DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, EASTERN CIRCLE (R&B), BALASORE
Nature of work:- Roads Works
Number of works: 1No Roads Work
Amount put to Tender: Rs. 7,83,58,667
Class of Contractor: - "A" Class & "Special" Class
Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal: - Dt.04.01.2025 at 10:00 AM
Last Date / Time of receipt of bid in the portal: - Dt.18.01.2025 up to 05:00 PM
Date of opening of bid: - Dt.19.01.2025 at 11:00 AM
Name & address of the Office inviting bid: - Chief Construction Engineer, Eastern Circle (R&B), Balasore

BSES Yamuna Power Limited, Delhi
... A joint venture with Govt. of NCT of Delhi
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Date: 24.12.2024
E-tenders under two Bid System (Unpriced & Priced) are invited as per the following details:

NT No.	Tender Description	Estimated Cost (₹)	Cost of EMD (₹)	Due Date & Time of Submission	Date & Time of Opening
CMC/BY/24-25/RS/SKSI/SAP/751	IMPLEMENTATION OF OT SECURITY 'REAL THREAT & VULNERABILITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM' IN BYPL	6.75 Crore	6.75 Lakh	16.01.2025 15:00 Hrs	16.01.2025 15:30 Hrs

Cost of each Tender Document: ₹ 1,800/-
For details in respect of Equipment/BOM/Services, Qualifying requirements, Terms & conditions, purchase/submission of tender documents, corrigendum etc. please visit our website www.bsesdelhi.com -> BSES YAMUNA POWER LTD-> Tenders-> Open Tenders
Regd.Off: BSES Yamuna Power Ltd, Shakti Kiran Building, Karkardooma, Delhi-110032 | CIN: U04910DL2001PLC111525
Website: www.bsesdelhi.com

Sensex climbs 500 points after five days of fall

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded sharply on Monday after five days of steep decline amid value buying at lower levels and a rally in global markets. Besides, hectic buying in blue-chip stocks ITC, HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries also helped in market recovery.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 498.58 points or 0.64 per cent to settle at 78,540.17. During the day, it soared 876.53 points or 1.12 per cent to 78,918.12. The NSE Nifty surged 165.95 points or 0.70 per cent to 23,753.45. From the 30 blue-chip stocks,



ITC, Tech Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, IndusInd Bank, Titan, State Bank of India and ICICI Bank were the biggest gainers. New entrant Zomato, Maruti,

Nestle, HCL Tech, Bajaj Finserv and Tata Motors were among the laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory while Shanghai

ended lower. European markets were trading mostly lower. Wall Street ended higher on Friday. In the past five sessions last week, the BSE benchmark tanked 4,091.53 points or 4.98 per cent, and the Nifty slumped 1,180.8 points or 4.76 per cent. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,597.82 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.44 per cent to USD 73.26 a barrel. The 30-share BSE benchmark tumbled 1,176.46 points or 1.49 per cent to settle at 78,041.59 on Friday. The Nifty tanked 364.20 points or 1.52 per cent to 23,587.50.

Nissan, Honda announce plans to merge

AP ■ TOKYO

Japanese automakers Honda and Nissan have announced plans to join forces, forming world's third-largest automaker by sales as the industry undergoes dramatic changes in its transition away from fossil fuels. The two companies said they had signed a memorandum of understanding on Monday and that smaller Nissan alliance member Mitsubishi Motors also had agreed to join the talks on integrating their businesses. "We anticipate that if this integration comes to fruition, we will be able to deliver even greater value to a wider customer base," Nissan's CEO Makoto Uchida said in a statement. Automakers in Japan have lagged behind their big rivals in electric vehicles and are trying to cut costs and make up for lost time. News of a possible merger surfaced earlier this month, with unconfirmed reports



saying that the talks on closer collaboration partly were driven by aspirations of Taiwan iPhone maker Foxconn to tie up with Nissan, which has an alliance with Renault SA of France and Mitsubishi. A merger could result in a behemoth worth more than \$50 billion based on the market capitalisation of all three automakers. Together, Honda and the Nissan alliance with Renault SA of France and smaller automaker Mitsubishi Motors Corp would gain

scale to compete with Toyota Motor Corp and with Germany's Volkswagen AG. Toyota has technology partnerships with Japan's Mazda Motor Corp. And Subaru Corp. Even after a merger Toyota, which rolled out 11.5 million vehicles in 2023, would remain the leading Japanese automaker. If they join, the three smaller companies would make about 8 million vehicles. In 2023, Honda made 4 million and Nissan produced 3.4 million. Mitsubishi Motors made just

over 1 million. Nissan, Honda and Mitsubishi announced in August that they would share components for electric vehicles like batteries and jointly research software for autonomous driving to adapt better to dramatic changes centred around electrification, following a preliminary agreement between Nissan and Honda set in March. Honda, Japan's second-largest automaker, is widely viewed as the only likely Japanese partner able to effect a rescue of Nissan, which has struggled following a scandal that began with the arrest of its former chairman Carlos Ghosn in late 2018 on charges of fraud and misuse of company assets, allegations that he denies. He eventually was released on bail and fled to Lebanon. Speaking Monday to reporters in Tokyo via a video link, Ghosn derided the planned merger as a "desperate move".

Sebi to auction 28 properties of five companies next month

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi will auction 28 properties of five companies, including Bishal Group and Sumangal Industries, on January 27, to recover money illegally collected from investors by these companies. The properties will be auctioned for a reserve price of Rs 28.66 crore. Ravi Kiran Realty India, Mangalam Agro Products, and Purusattam Infotech Industries are the other companies, whose properties will be auctioned. The properties that will go under the hammer include flats, residential property and flats, land parcels, plots, and land with building structures located in West Bengal and Odisha. These properties will be auctioned at a reserve price of Rs 28.66 crore, according to a notice issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on December 19. The markets watchdog invited



Sebi said the auction will be conducted online on January 27, 2025, from 11 am to 1 pm. The regulator has asked the bidders to make their independent enquiries regarding the encumbrances, litigations, title of the properties put on auction and claims before submitting their bid. These entities had mobilised money from the investors without complying with the market regulations. Going by Sebi's earlier orders, Mangalam Agro had raised Rs 11 crore from the illegal issuance of secured non-convertible debentures (NCDs) to around 4,820 investors during 2011-2012, while Sumangal had collected Rs 85 crore from investors through illegal collective investment schemes (CIS). Bishal Distillers had raised funds of Rs 4 crore, Bishal Agri-Bio Industries and Bishal Horticulture and Animal Projects mobilised Rs 3 crore and Rs 2.84 crore, respectively.

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Claims ratio of non-life insurers dips to 82.52 per cent in FY24: Irdai report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Net incurred claims to earned premium (claims ratio) of non-life insurance industry stood at 82.52 per cent during 2023-24 as against 82.95 per cent in the preceding fiscal year, as per the Irdai's annual report. According to the Annual Report 2023-24 of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai), during 2023-24, the non-life insurance industry underwrote a total direct premium of Rs 2,90 lakh crore in India registering a growth of 12.76 per cent from previous year. The contribution of public sector general insurers increased 8.88 per cent from Rs 82,891 crore in 2022-23 to Rs 90,252 crore in 2023-24. Private sector insurers, including standalone health insurers, have underwritten Rs 1.88 lakh crore as against Rs 1.58 lakh crore in 2022-23. The aggregate profit of the



non-life insurance sector was Rs 10,119 crore as against a net loss of Rs 2,566 crore in 2022-23. During 2023-24, the aggregate net incurred claims saw a 15.39 per cent increase to Rs 1.72 lakh crore from Rs 1.49 lakh crore. "The incurred claims ratio (net incurred claims to net earned premium) of the non-life insurance industry was 82.52 per cent during 2023-24 as against 82.95 per cent of the previous year," the report said.

The incurred claims ratio for public sector insurers was 97.23 per cent for 2023-24 as against the previous year's incurred claims ratio of 99.02 per cent. The incurred claims ratio for private sector general insurers, standalone health insurers and specialised insurers were at 76.49 per cent, 63.63 per cent, and 66.58 per cent, respectively, for 2023-24 as compared to the previous year's ratio of 75.13 per cent, 61.44 per cent and 73.71 per cent, respectively.

The report also said that the life insurance industry paid total benefits of Rs 5.77 lakh crore in 2023-24, constituting 70.22 per cent of the net premium. The benefits paid on account of surrenders/withdrawals increased 15.29 per cent to Rs 2.29 lakh crore in 2023-24 of which public sector life insurer accounted for 58.36 per cent. During 2023-24, a total of 18 life insurance companies reported profits. Profits of the life insurance industry grew 10.79 per cent in 2023-24 with profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 47,407 crore as against Rs 42,788 crore in 2022-23. Public sector life insurers reported an 11.75 per cent increase in profits while private sector life insurers reported a rise of 5.32 per cent in profit in 2023-24. Irdai said in 2023-24, the country's insurance penetration was at 3.7 per cent as compared to 4 per cent in 2022-23.

Gold climbs ₹570 to ₹78,700 per 10 gm

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices recovered Rs 570 to Rs 78,700 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid value buying by stockists and investors following a firm global trend, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal ended at Rs 78,130 per 10 grams on Friday. Silver surged Rs 1,850 to reclaim the Rs 90,000 per kg mark on increased offtake by industrial units and coin makers. The white metal finished at Rs 88,150 per kg in the previous trading session. The price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity also jumped Rs 570 to Rs 78,300 per 10 grams on Monday. It closed at Rs 77,730 per 10 grams in the previous session on Friday. Value buying by stockists and jewellers for the ongoing wedding season supported the uptrend in both gold and silver prices, traders said. In futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) on Monday, gold contracts for February delivery slipped Rs 48, or 0.06 per cent, to Rs 76,372 per 10 grams. However, silver contracts for March delivery climbed Rs 637, or 0.72 per cent, to Rs 89,029 per kg on the commodities exchange. Comex gold futures fell USD 6.70 per ounce, or 0.25 per cent, to USD 2,638.40 per ounce in the overseas markets. "Gold and silver prices recovered from one-month and three-and-a-half month lows in a highly volatile session. The dollar index and the bond yields showed profit taking which supported precious metal," Rahul Kalantri, VP Commodities, Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

India's data centre capacity to more than double by FY27, on rising digitalisation: Crisil Ratings

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's data centre capacity is set to more than double to 2-2.3 GW by 2026-27, led by increasing digitalisation as organisations increase their investments in cloud storage, Crisil Ratings said in a report on Monday. Further, the report stated that rising penetration of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) will drive the demand over the medium-term. To support the strong demand, the incremental capital expenditure would be supported by a higher proportion of debt funding, which will result in a moderate increase in debt levels, it said.



Data centres cater to the computing and storage infrastructure demand as enterprises rapidly shifting their businesses to digital platforms, including cloud, a trend that has accelerated post Covid-19 pandemic, it said.

The other major factor is that increased accessibility of high-speed data has led to a surge in internet usage, including social media, over-the-top (OTT) platforms and digital payments, it added. Notably, mobile data traffic logged a compound annual

growth rate (CAGR) of 25 per cent over the last five fiscals, standing at 24 GB per month at end-fiscal 2024, and is expected to rise to 33-35 GB by FY26, the Crisil Ratings report said. In addition to the ongoing demand, it said that the rapid advancement of GenAI, which requires higher computational power and low latency than traditional cloud computing functions, will also provide tailwind to the data centre demand in India. "To meet the growing data centre demand, an investment of Rs 55,000-65,000 crore is required over the next three fiscals, primarily towards land and building, power equipment and cooling solutions.

Dhanuka Agritech hosts Farmers' Day programme to honour farmers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To honour farmers of the country on the occasion of KisanDiwas, Dhanuka Agritech Limited successfully hosted a Farmers' Day program at the Dhanuka Agricultural Research and Technology Centre (DART) at Palwal. The event aimed to provide insights into modern farming techniques to facilitate knowledge sharing and to discuss the future of Indian agriculture with leading scientists. The event showcased Dhanuka's unwavering and continuous commitment to empowering farmers and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. It



included demonstrations and training sessions focused specifically on Rabi crops such as wheat, vegetables, and mustard. Farmers had the unique opportunity to learn advanced techniques and engage with experts in the agriculture field. Speaking on the occasion, Vipul Goyal, Minister for Revenue & Disaster Management, Urban Local Bodies & Civil Aviation,

Cabinet Minister, Haryana inaugurated the program. The Guest of Honour Dr. P.K. Singh, Agriculture Commissioner, Deptt. Of Agri & Farmers' Welfare, Govt. of India was elated to see the huge gathering of farmers and their willingness to learn new techniques. Their presence highlighted the significance of initiatives like these in supporting the agricultural community by making farmers aware of new and advanced farming practices. This program also encouraged practical solutions that contribute to the growth and sustainability in agriculture, ultimately benefiting farmers and the broader farming ecosystem.

FMCG industry expects consumption revival in 2025

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The FMCG industry hopes for a revival in consumption growth in 2025 with some 'green shoots' already visible, after having a challenging year amid escalating input costs and a double-digit rise in food inflation, which ultimately slowed down the pace of the urban market growth in the second half of 2024. Soaring prices of commodities such as palm oil, coffee, cocoa and wheat forced FMCG players to go for a hike of 3 to 5 per cent or resort to shrinkflation by reducing pack sizes and grammage to retain attractive price points, fearing a volume loss. The makers also expect a shot in the arm in the upcoming annual budget, which would help the stressed middle-income group and stimulate consumption, besides a good monsoon and continued rejuvenation of the rural market. A resurgence of high food

inflation once again in 2024 disrupted consumption patterns, particularly among mass-segment consumers, said Emami Vice Chairman & MD Harsha V Agarwal, adding elevated food inflation continues to pose a significant challenge. "Consumption among the lower-middle and middle-class segments has remained subdued, with approximately 75 per cent of average retail spending directed towards food and grocery, leaving only 25 per cent for discretionary purchases," he said. Agarwal, who is also the President of industry body FICCI, said 'positive signs' are emerging on the consumption front as food inflation has begun to ease. "A revival in consumption growth looks promising, supported by a good crop and increased government spending on large-scale infrastructure projects and rural schemes in the December quarter," he said. Dabur India CEO Mohit



Malhotra also said that rising food inflation and a squeeze in urban demand were the key concerns during 2024. "While rural demand has been growing quarter on quarter, we expect a recovery in urban demand as the new year progresses. Premiumisation is expected to continue, and this will help improve value growth in 2025," he said. Moreover, the FMCG makers also expect the trends of premiumisation, where a customer is ready to pay extra

for better quality products, particularly in urban India along with a high growth coming from quick commerce channels, which has transformed the grocery market. "Consumers are willing to pay a premium for products that offer better quality, unique features, or enhanced experiences. Premiumisation is expected to continue, and this will help improve value growth in 2025," said Malhotra.

Tata Consumer Products Ltd (TCPL) MD and CEO Sunil D'Souza said he is 'optimistic' about 2025 and maintains a sharp focus on driving profitable growth and building future-ready capabilities. "In India, consumer trends such as premiumisation, health & wellness and convenience are expected to gather pace. Quick commerce has seen exponential growth, but physical distribution continues to stay extremely relevant at the same time," said D'Souza. Gen Z and millennials are expected to contribute to an increasing share of consumption, by some estimates, 76 per cent of consumption by 2030. "This presents an opportunity for cooking aids, packaged food, healthier and guilt-free snacking and mini-meal options, all of which we have added to our portfolio in the last few years. It will also require shorter innovation cycles," he said. Marico MD & CEO Saugata Gupta said shifts in consumer

behaviour have been profound, with sustainability, premiumisation and personalisation emerging as key trends. "The direct-to-consumer ecosystem continues to thrive, with digital-first and premium brands demonstrating resilience and growth. The channels are undergoing a tremendous transformation with the consumer shifts that the industry is witnessing. The medium-term growth outlook for the industry is very much intact," he said. Gupta expects rural consumption to steadily grow and urban consumption to revive in a couple of quarters. "Innovation, affordability, and availability will be key drivers of growth going forward," he said. Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) CFO Aasif Malbari said: "Despite these challenges, we remain committed to navigating near-term headwinds while investing strategically for long-term growth."

Tata Power Club hosts National Urja Mela

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reflecting the spirit of National Energy Conservation Day, Tata Power on Saturday hosted the National Urja Mela 2024 at New Delhi, bringing together 1000+ students and teachers comprising 150 schools from 10 states across India to champion innovation and sustainability, while fostering the next generation of leaders to drive energy conservation efforts. This annual event is a flagship initiative under Tata Power's award-winning Club Enerji program, highlighted the pivotal role of youth in creating a sustainable future in line with the company's 'Sustainable is Attainable' movement. The event featured an exciting array of activities, including competitions, workshops, and cultural performances designed to inspire students to become eco-conscious leaders. Mr. Himlal Tewari, CHRO,



Chief-Sustainability & CSR at Tata Power, said, "Sustainability begins with awareness, and the National Urja Mela reflects our commitment to nurturing innovation and responsibility in young minds. This initiative emphasizes the critical importance of energy conservation and environmental protection, empowering youth from across the country to drive a greener, more sustainable future. In collaboration with Tata Power, they will shape the new energy landscape, advancing a future centered on sustainability and the goal of achieving carbon net-zero."

Real Madrid's 4-2 win over Sevilla in the Spanish league

AP ■ MADRID

Kylian Mbappé added to his scoring streak with a superb strike in Real Madrid's 4-2 win over Sevilla in the Spanish league to finish the year on a positive note after hitting what he called "rock bottom" in early December. Mbappé sent a right-footed shot into the upper corner 10 minutes into the match for his fourth goal in as many games with Madrid in all competitions. It was Mbappé's sixth goal in his last eight matches with Madrid. He struggled early on with his new club, and Mbappé said his lowest point came when he missed a penalty kick in the team's 2-1 league loss at Athletic Bilbao on Dec. 4. "I know I have a lot more to give," Mbappé said Sunday. "The last few games I've played better, I took a lot of positives from the Bilbao game, when I hit rock bottom." The France star said that made him realize "I have to give my all for this jersey and play with personality."

Mbappé said he feels his period of adjustment with the club is finally over. "I think we now know each other better," he said. "I've joined the team and that changed a lot of things. The settling-in period is over, as the coach says. I feel very comfortable in the team and I play better with the others on the field. The team is playing much better." Federico Valverde, Rodrygo and Brahim Díaz also scored in the comfortable home victory that allowed Madrid to finish the year one point behind Spanish league leader Atletico Madrid. Atletico rallied to shock Barcelona 2-1 Saturday with a stoppage-time goal by Alexander Sorloth. Third-place Barcelona is two points behind Madrid, having played an extra game. Valverde scored in the 20th and Rodrygo in the 34th before Sevilla got on the board with Isaac Romero in the 35th. Díaz extended Madrid's lead in the 53rd and Dodi Lukebakio got the visitors' other goal in the 85th at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium. "It was a well-played game, with



many scoring situations, a good end to the year," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "That was what we wanted, to be near the top and get some good rest for 2025." Madrid next faces Valencia on Jan. 3 in a match postponed because of the deadly floods that

hit Valencia in October. Sevilla, sitting in 14th place, had won two of its last two games in all competitions. Navas' farewell</hl2>It was the last game for Sevilla and Spain great Jesús Navas, who is officially retiring at the end of the year. The defender was honored by Sevilla and Madrid players and fans at the Santiago Bernabeu. Players from both teams made a guard of honor for Navas before the match, lining up as he entered the field, and Madrid's veteran midfielder Luka Modric handed him a jersey of the club signed by players. Fans gave Navas a standing ovation during the ceremony. Substitute Navas came on midway through the second half. "What happened today was spectacular," the 39-year-old Navas said after the match, unable to hold back tears. "I had never seen anything like it in my life on a rival field. It was crazy. In those last few minutes I couldn't see anything. I was looking at the ground recalling all the moments I've went through and the joy I've been able to give to Sevilla and

the national team." Navas helped Sevilla win four Europa League titles and Spain clinch the 2010 World Cup and the 2012 and 2024 European Championships. He was with Manchester City when it won the 2014 Premier League. "Navas really deserves it," Ancelotti said. "Navas is an example for everyone." Valencia draws late Second-to-last Valencia salvaged a 2-2 home draw with Alaves, thanks to a goal by Dani Gómez eight minutes into second-half stoppage time after the visitors had taken the lead with Joan Jordán in the 88th. The setback drew more protests from Valencia fans who have been unhappy with the administration of team owner Peter Lim. Other results Thierno Barry scored a hat trick and Gerard Moreno and Pau Cabanes added one goal each as fifth-place Villarreal won 5-2 at Leganes, while Las Palmas won 1-0 against 18th-place Espanyol. Ninth-place Real Betis was held by 12th-place Rayo Vallecano to a 1-1 draw at home.



Manu Bhaker missing from Khel Ratna nominees; Sports Ministry says no final list yet

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Amid reports that double Olympic-medallist Manu Bhaker has been shockingly ignored for this year's Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award, a top sports ministry source has asserted that the names are yet to be finalised and she is likely to be there when the list is unveiled in a week's time. In August, Bhaker became independent India's first athlete to win two medals in a single edition of the Olympics with her bronze-winning show in the 10m air pistol individual and 10m air pistol mixed team events. Reports of her omission from the national honours evoked shock with her family insisting that application was duly submitted. "There is no final list of nominees at this point. Sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya will decide on the recommendations in a day or two and her name, in all likelihood, will be there in the final list," a ministry source said. The award selection committee is a 12-member panel headed by retired Supreme Court judge Justice V Ramasubramam. It includes former athletes like women's hockey captain Rani Rampal among others. The ministry norms allow athletes to self-nominate instead of relying on federations and other institutions for it. The

selection committee is, however, allowed to consider names which may not be among the applicants. While the ministry claimed that Bhaker did not apply for the award, her father Ram Kishan Bhaker, a chief engineer in Merchant Navy, said the youngster had followed the due process. "There is no worth of playing Olympic sports in India because despite winning two medals in an Olympics, Manu has been ignored for the Khel Ratna award. There is no point in playing and winning rewards for your country and in turn beg for recognition," Ram Kishan told PTI. "She had been applying for all awards, say Khel Ratna, Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan for the last 2-3 years continuously and I have proof of that. This time too, I am confident she would have applied but I can't show anything as I am at sea right now. "But even if she hasn't, the committee should consider her looking at her achievements," he asserted. He blamed bureaucracy for the mess-up. "We form a committee but it is the bureaucrats who call the shots. This is not how sports function," he said. It is learnt that the committee has recommended India hockey captain Harmanpreet Singh, who led the country to a second consecutive Olympic bronze medal, for the Khel Ratna.

Olympian PV Sindhu marries entrepreneur Venkat Datta Sai

PTI ■ UDAIPUR

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu embarked on a new journey in life as she tied the knot with entrepreneur Venkata Datta Sai in a private ceremony here. The 29-year-old shuttler from Hyderabad, who won a bronze at the 2016 Rio Olympics and a silver at the Tokyo Olympics three years ago, married Datta, an executive director at Posidex Technologies, on Sunday in a traditional ceremony attended by close family and friends. Union Minister of Culture and Tourism, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, shared the first photograph of the wedding on 'X' on Monday. "Pleased to have attended the



wedding ceremony of our Badminton Champion Olympian PV Sindhu with Venkata Datta Sai in Udaipur last evening and conveyed my wishes & blessings to the couple for their new life ahead," Shekhawat tweeted. The celebrations commenced with a lively Sangeet ceremony on December 20,

featuring music and dance as the two families came together. This was followed by traditional rituals such as Haldi, Pellikuthuru, Mehendi, and other customs on December 21. Sindhu's wedding news came close on the heels of her victory at the Syed Modi International in Lucknow earlier this month, ending a long title drought. With five medals, including a gold, at the BWF World Championships, and two Olympic medals, Sindhu is widely regarded as one of India's greatest athletes. The couple has invited some of the top celebrities of the country for the wedding reception, including the likes of Sachin Tendulkar and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



US Open doubles champion Max Purcell suspended for anti-doping breach

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Two-time Grand Slam winning doubles player Max Purcell has entered a voluntary provisional suspension under tennis' anti-doping rules. The International Tennis Integrity Agency announced the sanction in a statement on Monday after the 26-year-old Australian admitted to violating Article 2.2 of the Tennis Anti-Doping Program "relating to the use of a Prohibited Method." The ITIA said the suspension came into effect on 12 Dec, and time served under provisional suspension will be credited against any future sanction. The length of time of the voluntary suspension was not specified by the ITIA. "During the provisional suspension, Purcell is prohibited from playing in, coaching at, or attending any tennis event authorized or sanctioned by the members of the ITIA (ATP, ITF, WTA, Tennis Australia, Fédération Française de Tennis, Wimbledon and USTA) or any national association," the ITIA statement read. Purcell, with compatriot Jordan Thompson, won the

U.S. Open in September and won Wimbledon with another Australian, Matthew Ebden, in 2022. He is currently ranked No. 12 in doubles. He also finished as a runner-up in the Australian Open doubles final twice, in 2020 and 2022. Purcell, ranked No. 105 in singles, was not listed on the Australian Open entry lists released earlier this month and did not receive a wildcard or feature on the qualifying entries. The ITIA did not say whether Purcell's absence from the draw of the tournament starting Jan. 12. Was due to the sanction. The latest doping violation in tennis comes just weeks after five-time Grand Slam champion Iga Swiatek accepted a one-month suspension after testing positive for the banned substance trimetazidine. Top-ranked men's player Jannik Sinner, winner of two Grand Slams this year, was exonerated by the ITIA after twice testing positive for a trace amount of an anabolic steroid in March with the World Anti-Doping Agency appealing the ruling.

Kho Kho World Cup to feature 21 men's and 20 women's teams

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A total of 21 men's teams and 20 women outfits will compete in next month's Kho Kho World Cup with the sport's governing body increasing the number of participating teams due to an overwhelming interest. India will host the inaugural edition of the event at the IGI Stadium from January 13 to 19. Initially, 16 men's and 16 women's teams were scheduled to participate. Teams from six continents -- Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Europe, and Oceania -- will feature in the m u c h - a n t i c i p a t e d tournament. "We are keeping the facilities with the foreign delegates in mind. We have devised meals and diet plan for our guests as per their dietary requirements and we are also providing



entire logistics, stay, and transport facilities for them, so that they do not face any issues during their stay here," KKF President Sudhanshu Mittal said in a release. "We have also made provisions for all countries to stay till the end of the tournament, irrespective of the results." The opening ceremony will take place on January 13, followed by the first match of the tournament between India and Pakistan. The league stage will run from January 14 to 16, with the quarterfinals and semifinals scheduled for January 17 and 18. The final will be held on January 19. Participating nations in Kho Kho World Cup 2025:

- Africa: Men's: Ghana, Kenya, South Africa Women's: Kenya, South Africa, Uganda
- Asia: Men's: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India (host), Iran, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, South Korea, Sri Lanka Women's: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India (host), Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, South Korea, Sri Lanka
- Europe: Men's: England, Germany, Netherlands, Poland Women's: England, Germany, Netherlands, Poland
- North America: Men's: United States of America South America: Men's: Argentina, Brazil, Peru Women's: Peru
- Oceania: Men's: Australia

Coaching crisis, heartbreaks and Olympic setbacks mark a disastrous year for Indian boxing

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian boxing endured a turbulent year marred by coaching turmoil, crushing defeats, and a medal-less Paris Olympics campaign, all of it made worse by the national federation's negligence that brought u n p r e c e d e n t e d embarrassment to the country. There were very few positives to count in a year when, after a widely successful 2023, expectations were sky high. Yet no boxer was able to add to the three bronze medals -- Vijender Singh (2008), M C Mary Kom (2012) and Lovlina Borgohain (2021) -- that India had secured in the previous editions of the Olympics. The Nishant Dev, unlucky to miss out on an Olympic medal, was India's top performer but the likes of world champions Nikhat Zareen and Lovlina disappointed despite widely

held belief that fortunes of women's boxing were following an upward trajectory. Outside the ring, the Boxing Federation of India's (BFI) negligence cost India an Olympic quota even as administrators globally scrambled to retain the sport on the Olympic roster. Controversy and coaching crisis The dismal performance at the first World Qualifying Tournament, where all nine boxers failed to secure a spot at the Paris Games, prompted High Performance Director Bernard Dunne to resign from his position while still in Italy, less than four months before the Olympics. It wasn't just the defeats that were troubling, but the manner in which the boxers lost that was truly disheartening. Frequent knockouts and RSC out-classed defeats pointed to inherent technical flaws

which had not been addressed. With the exception of Nishant, there was hardly any name in Indian boxing who could be spoken about as a success story. Adding to the woes, the country soon lost the women's 57kg Olympic quota, won by Parveen Hooda at the Asian Games last year, after the boxer was handed a 22-month suspension by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) for three whereabouts failures within a year. The 2022 World Championship bronze-medallist failed to submit her whereabouts for the period between April 2022 and March 2023, as mandated by WADA regulations. The BFI was also to blame for this unprecedented embarrassment given that federation is duly notified of such a lapse by the



international body. The federation ought to have intervened to ensure that the athlete submitted the required details on time. As a result, India had to fight afresh for qualification in the women's 57kg category, the spot ultimately going to Jaismine Lamboria in the final Olympic Qualifiers. There were wholesale changes for this event with former Asian Games gold-medallist Amit Panghal replacing Deepak Bhorla in the 51kg category. Eventually Panghal and Nishant made the cut for the quadrennial spectacle along with Jaismine, adding to the three quotas won by Nikhat

Zareen (50kg), Preeti Pawar (54kg) and Lovlina (75kg) last year. In all, six boxers qualified for Paris, a decline from the five men and four women who represented India in the 2021 Tokyo Games. Barren Olympics, Nishant's heartbreak Heading into the big event on the back of two consecutive World Championship titles, Zareen was hailed as one of India's strongest medal contenders. However, in the fiercely competitive 50kg category, the Telangana boxer was completely outclassed by China's Wu Yu in a brutally one-sided bout. Zareen, unable to match the relentless pace of her opponent, later said that she had "not eaten for the last two days to maintain weight" and felt weak. A win away from a second consecutive Olympic medal, Lovlina too went down to a

Chinese boxer. The Tokyo Games bronze winner couldn't get past familiar foe Li Qian. For Panghal, who was handed a fairly easy draw, it was deja vu as he made yet another pre-quarterfinal exit from the Olympics. The most heartbreaking loss, however, was endured by Nishant. The 23-year-old was defeated 1-4 by Mexico's Marco Verde Alvarez in the 71kg quarterfinal, despite appearing to dominate the bout. This outcome reignited the fierce debate and outrage over judging. The devastating result denied Nishant, the 2023 world championship bronze-medallist, a podium finish in his debut games as the Indian boxing contingent returned empty-handed from Paris. The sport has been dormant ever since. The boxers haven't competed in any tournament with the BFI deciding against

sending a team for the Asian Championships. India joins World Boxing With the International Olympic Committee (IOC) threatening to leave boxing out of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics if national federations continued to align themselves with the suspended International Boxing Association (IBA), India joined the breakaway World Boxing (WB). However, the Asian Boxing Confederation (ASBC) voted against leaving the IBA to join the rival association. But BFI reaffirmed its support in WB, which also has the backing of the IOC, by successfully bidding for the hosting rights of the World Boxing Cup Finals next year. The sport's future though remains shrouded in uncertainty and it remains to be seen whether it can manage to hold its place in the Olympics.

Shami not fully fit yet, ruled out of remaining two Tests in Australia

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India pacer Mohammed Shami has been ruled out of the last two Tests against Australia as he is yet to regain full fitness, the BCCI said on Monday. Shami, who last played for India in the ODI World Cup final in November, 2023, made a comeback from his right heel surgery during Bengal's Ranji Trophy match against Madhya Pradesh last month. With calls for his selection growing, Shami played all nine games for Bengal in the subsequent Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy. He is also part of Bengal's squad for the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy but did not play the opening game on Saturday against Delhi.

His fitness has been a subject of intense debate and speculation, so much so that India skipper Rohit Sharma had asked the physios at the National Cricket Academy to provide clarity on the matter following the Brisbane Test. Shami had developed swelling in his knees while playing the SMAT, and the clarification in



that regard finally came on Monday. "Based on the current medical assessment, the BCCI Medical Team has determined that his knee requires more time for controlled exposure to bowling loads. Consequently,

he has not been deemed fit for consideration for the remaining two Tests of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy," said the BCCI in a release. "Shami will continue to undergo targeted strength and conditioning work under the guidance of the medical

staff at BCCI's Centre of Excellence and build his bowling loads needed to meet the demands of the longest format of the game. His participation in the Vijay Hazare Trophy will depend on the progress of his knee." The medical team said the

veteran fast bowler has fully recovered from the heel injury that kept him out of action after the ODI World Cup. "The BCCI Medical Team at the Centre of Excellence has been working closely with Indian fast bowler

Mohammed Shami on his recovery and rehabilitation after his right heel surgery. Shami has completely recovered from this heel problem.

"However, his left knee has exhibited minor swelling due to increased joint loading from his bowling workload. The swelling is on the expected lines, owing to the increased bowling after a prolonged period," the BCCI said.

Shami bowled 43 overs in his comeback game in the Ranji Trophy.

Following that, he played in all nine games of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT), where he also engaged in additional bowling sessions on the sidelines to build his bowling volume in order to get ready for the Test matches."

The 34-year-old has taken 229 wickets in 64 Tests, 195 scalps in 101 ODIs and 24 wickets in 23 T20 Internationals.

With India relying heavily on Jasprit Bumrah in Australia, Shami's presence in the bowling attack would have provided a much needed boost.



Strike rotation and solid defence key to face Bumrah, says Simon Katich

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former cricketer Simon Katich has advised Australian batters to concentrate on rotating the strike and maintaining a solid defence to succeed against the peerless Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah. Katich noted that since Bumrah rarely bowls loose deliveries, the Australians must be strategically good in their approach.

"I know all the talk is around having more positive intent, and I think that's all well and good and it is certainly something they have to be mindful of. But against someone like Bumrah intent is not about just blazing him for fours, because he doesn't bowl many bad balls," Katich told SEN 1116.

"So a lot of that intent has to be about rotating strike and being able to defend really well, because you're not gonna be able to play with any intent if you aren't there after the tenth over. That's the challenge for all of these guys," Katich added.

To illustrate his point, Katich made a reference to Australia's second innings in the third Test at Brisbane, where the hosts attempted an aggressive approach but ultimately lost their wickets. "We saw it in the second innings in Brisbane. Australians came out with

really positive intent, trying to score more quickly and look what happened, 7/80 in no time.

"It's not easy to do against the red ball that moves around off the seam in a wearing wicket which the Gabba was starting to become with cracks.

"The top order has to be very careful and mindful of how they go about it. You're not going to score many runs if you're trying to take him on off the length, because he is so good," he added.

For the remaining two Tests, Australia has opted to place their trust in teenage sensation Sam Konstas, replacing opener Nathan McSweeney, who was given a maiden call-up ahead of the series.

"I know the young kid's (Konstas) got a lot of potential, and a lot of ability, but it'll be a challenge because not many guys around the world have been able to do that to that quality of bowling," Katich said. Marsh should make way for Webster

Katich also felt Mitchell Marsh's inability to bowl the expected volume of overs suggests he isn't "100%" fit and should be replaced by uncapped rookie Beau Webster for the Boxing Day Test against India. Marsh has been dealing with recurring back stiffness

since the white-ball tour of the UK in September. During the Perth Test, he bowled 17 overs in total, taking two wickets on the opening day but later pulled up sore.

In Adelaide, he bowled four overs while in Brisbane he rolled his arm for two overs. "I've been saying for a couple Tests, Mitch Marsh has not been able to bowl the volume of overs that everyone expected of him. Given the conditions and given he is a wicket taker," Katich said on 'SEN Breakfast'.

"We saw that in Perth, he bowled well on day one. Took some key wickets and then struggled to back up. I mean obviously the Aussie hierarchy know better than we do around where his fitness is at.

"But for him to bowl two overs the other day after Josh Hazlewood went down, that to me indicates something's not 100% right with him."

After Marsh had pulled up sore, 30-year-old Tasmania all-rounder Webster was added to Australia's squad. "At the end of the day, Beau Webster deserves to be in that squad," Katich said. "He's done very well for Tassie in the last few years, he's a genuine all-rounder given what his role is for Tassie and he plays that dual role with bat and ball," Katich added.

Tanush Kotian replaces recently retired Ashwin in India's squad

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Mumbai off-spinner Tanush Kotian is set to join the India squad in Australia as a replacement for the recently retired Ravichandran Ashwin. It is understood that the 26-year-old Kotian, who was part of India A's tour of Australia, has also been added as a cover for Washington Sundar.

"Kotian has been added as a safety net and also to keep the squad number intact for the last two games. He only comes into the picture if either among Washy or Jaddu (Ravindra

Jadeja) gets injured," a senior BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity. Kotian, who is currently in Ahmedabad for Vijay Hazare Trophy, is expected to leave Mumbai on Tuesday and will reach Melbourne before the start of Boxing Day Test.

The bowling all-rounder picked two wickets and scored an unbeaten 39 for Mumbai in their Vijay Hazare Trophy match against Hyderabad on Monday. Kotian has fond memories of the Melbourne Cricket Ground where he scored 44 batting at No. 8 for India A and looked the part.

He already has 101 wickets to his name and 1525 runs with two centuries in 33 first-class games. Originally, Axar Patel was supposed to be summoned to Australia but as per sources, the left arm spinner had sought a break after first two matches of Vijay Hazare Trophy due to a family commitment.

Kotian has been added to the squad following Ashwin's surprise retirement from international cricket following the draw Test in Brisbane. The 38-year-old ended his glorious career as the second highest wicket taker for India behind Anil Kumble.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER DEOGARH (R&B) DIVISION, DEOGARH
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB) E-mail ID: eepwdeogarh@gmail.com

Letter No. 5896 Dtd. 20.12.2024
Invitation for Bids
Bid Identification No. SE PWD DGR No. 19 of 2024-25

- The Superintending Engineer, Deogarh (R&B) Division, Deogarh, on behalf of Government of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in Single cover system in ONLINE MODE only, for Construction of Electric works as detailed below.
- Nature of work : Electric work
- No. of works : Electric work 02 Nos.
- Bid Cost : Rs. 6000/-
- Class of Contractor : H.T. Electrical
- Availability of Bid Documents in the website : From dt. 27.12.2024 to 17:00 hours of dt. 09.01.2025
- Date of Opening of Technical Bid : Dt. 10.01.2025 at 11:30 AM.
- The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: <http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in>. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.

Superintending Engineer Deogarh (R&B) Division
OIPR-34061/11/0008/2425

Government of Odisha 'e' procurement Notice
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, KORAPUT (R&B) DIVISION, KORAPUT
Bid Identification No. S.E. (R&B) KPT-12/2024-25

- Name of the work: Road and Building works
- Total No. of works: 02 Nos.
- Estimated cost: Rs. 14.46 to 27.98 Lakhs
- Period of completion: 02 to 03 (Two to Three) months
- Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal: From 30.12.2024 at 11.00 hours to 09.01.2025 upto 17.00 hours
- Last date/ Time for receipt of bids in the portal: 09.01.2025 upto 17.00 hours
- Date of opening of Tender: 10.01.2025 at 12.00 hours
- Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid: Superintending Engineer, Koraput (R&B) Division Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>

Superintending Engineer Koraput (R&B) Division
OIPR-34061/11/0008/2425

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION, JAJPUR
Letter No. 5859 / Date 17.12.2024

1st Corrigendum to Bid Identification No. Tender Online 07 JJPT of 2024-25 invited this office Letter No. 5621, Dtd. 04.12.2024.

The Change as detailed below are hereby made in the above N.I.T

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding		Last date & time of opening of tender clarification		Date & Time of opening of Technical Bid		Final Bid		
		From	To	As earlier	Modified	As earlier	Modified			
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Jajpur	Tender Online No. 07 JJPT of 2024-25	16.12.2024 at 10:00 AM	26.12.2024 at 10:00 AM	30.12.2024 up to 5:00 PM	08.01.2025 up to 5:00 PM	30.12.2024 up to 1:00 PM	4.01.2025 up to 2:00 PM	31.12.2024 at 11:30 AM	07.01.2025 at 11:30 AM	To be intimated later

Superintending Engineer R.W. Division, Jajpur
OIPR-28047/10/016/2425

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, GAJAPATI IRRIGATION DIVISION, PARALAKHEMUNDI, DIST. - GAJAPATI, ODISHA.
Phone/Fax: 06815-232349, Email Id: - eepkdgp@gmail.com
e - Procurement Notice No. SE-GID- 02/2024-25

- Type of work : Flood Protection Works
- Form of Contract : Percentage Rate
- Period of Completion : 02 (Two) Calendar Months

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Bid Amount Rs in lakhs	Availability & submission of Bids on line.
Superintending Engineer Gajapati Irrigation Division, Paralakhemundi	GID- 01, 02, 03, 04, & 05/ 2024-25 (Total 05 (Five) nos. of works)	Varies from Rs. 4.41 lakhs to 39.77 lakhs.	26.12.2024 at 10.00 A.M to 06.01.2025, 5.30 P.M

Date of opening of the Technical & financial Bid: 07.01.2025 at 11.00 A.M. further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in Date of Lottery (If required) - 17.01.2025 at 11.00 A.M.

Superintending Engineer Gajapati Irrigation Division Paralakhemundi
OIPR-32346/11/0002/2425

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF P.R & D.W
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
IDENTIFICATION No. - AGLB- 03 / 2024-25
E-mail address: - ori-bangul@nic.in

1. The Block Development Officer, Angul on behalf of the Governor of Orissa invites Percentage rate civil bid in single cover system for the works as detailed in the table, from the class of eligible contractors as mentioned in CoL4 (four), registered with the State Government and contractors of equivalent grade / Class registered with Central Government/ MES / Railway, to be eventually drawn up in PWD P-I form, for execution of Building (Civil Work). The proof of registration from the appropriate authority shall be enclosed along with the bid. If successful, the bidder who has not registered under State Government has to register under the State PWD in appropriate class of eligibility before signing the agreement. Bidders may submit bids for any or all the following works.

Sl. No	Name of works	Approx. Value of work. (Rs. In lakhs)	Class of contractor	Bid Security (Rs.)	Cost of documents (Non-refundable)	Period of completion
1	Construction of GPLF Building with Market Complex at Balasingha, GP- Balasingha	22.42	'B' or 'C'	22420.00		Six Calendar months
2	Construction of GPLF Building with Market Complex at Baragounia, GP- Baragounia	22.42	'B' or 'C'	22420.00		Six Calendar months
3	Construction of GPLF Building with Market Complex at Khinda, GP- Khinda	22.42	'B' or 'C'	22420.00		Six Calendar months
4	Construction of GPLF Building with Market Complex at Matiasahi, GP- Matiasahi	22.42	'B' or 'C'	22420.00		Six Calendar months
5	Construction of GPLF Building with Market Complex at Pokatunga, GP- Pokatunga	22.42	'B' or 'C'	22420.00		Six Calendar months
6	Construction of Model A.W.C. Building at Kangula-D, GP- Kangula Bentapur	15.27	'C' or 'D'	15270.00	Rs.6,000/- (Only be downloaded from www.angul.odisha.gov.in)	Six Calendar months

For detailed information, please visit the website <https://www.angulodisha.gov.in>

Sd/- 18.12.2024
Block Development Officer Angul
OIPR-19073/11/0003/2425

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER BHUBANESWAR (R&B) DIVISION NO III BHUBANESWAR
bbrrandb03@yahoo.com
60Estg.No - 7782 Date - 20.12.2024
Government of Odisha "e"-Procurement Notice No (34) of 2024-25
Bid Identification No. - C.C. (R&B) 03

Sl. No	Name of the Work	Remarks
1	Name of the Work	Road Work
2	Total No of works	1 no. work
3	Estimated Cost	Rs. 36,97,410.00
4	Class of Contractor	"C" & "B" Class Contractors
5	Period of Completion	2 [Two] Calendar Months
6	Type of Tender	Single Cover System [Online]
7	Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal	From 24/12/2024 at 10.00 A.M. to 03/01/2025 at 5.30 P.M.
8	Last Date & Time for Receipt of bids in the Portal	03/01/2025, upto 5.30 P.M.
9	Name & Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Dr. Gayatri Patel, Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No.III, Bhubaneswar

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>
N.B: Subsequent corrigendum / addendum if required shall be available in the website as indicated above

Superintending Engineer BSR (R&B) Division No. III, BSR
OIPR-34061/11/0008/2425

ଜଗତସିଂହପୁର ପୌରପାଳିକା, ଜଗତସିଂହପୁର
OFFICE OF THE JAGATSIINGHPUR MUNICIPALITY, JAGATSIINGHPUR
C-1311

No 4438 / Date 20.12.2024
e-Tender Notice
Tender Call Notice No : No. 4438 / dt. 20.12.2024
Bid Identification No: EOJ JSPURM W_02/2024-25
Tender Id: 2024_ORULB_106561
Nature of Work: Civil works
Number of Works: 01 (One) Nos
Pre-Proposal Meeting: Dt. 02.01.2025 at 11.00 hours
Available Period: Dt. 06.01.2025 from 16.00 hours to dt. 22.01.2025 by 16.00 hours
Technical Opening Date: Dt. 27.01.2025 at 16.00 hours

Bidders are requested read the NIT & DTCN and Participate with their DSC before closing date at www.tendersodisha.gov.in

Executive Officer, Jagatsinghpur Municipality
OIPR-13087/11/0009/2425

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, DEOGARH.
No. 1851 / Date. 21.12.2024
e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
BID REF No: SE MID,DGR /08 / 2024-25

Bid documents consisting names of Work, Estimated cost, Cost of tender paper, EMD, time of completion, Class of Contractor, the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.

Sl. No	Name of the works :-	Remarks
1	Name of the works :-	Civil Construction works.
2	No of Works :-	01 (One) No.
3	Estimated Cost :-	Approximately Rs. 31.27 lakh.
4	Period of completion :-	3 (Three) Calendar months
5	Date and Time of availability of bid documents in the portal:-	From Dt.24.12.2024 at 10.00 AM to Dt. 03.01.2025 up to 5.00 PM.
6	Last Date / Time of receipt of bids in the portal :-	Dt.03.01.2025 up to 5.00 PM
7	Date of opening of Bid :-	Dt.04.01.2025 at 11.00 AM onwards
8	Name and address of the OIT :-	Superintending Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Deogarh.
9	Mode of Payment of Bid Cost & Bid Security :-	Online

** Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement market place <http://tendersodisha.gov.in>

Superintending Engineer M.I. Division, Deogarh
OIPR-32289/11/0008/2425

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (AGRI.), KANDHAMAL DIVISION, PHULBANI
Email Id: eagrirkandhamal@gmail.com
Govt. of Odisha "e" procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.: E.E (A)- KANDHAMAL DIVISION -04/2024-25

The Executive Engineer (Agril.), Kandhamal Division, Phulbani, Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage Rate bids in Single cover system for the works in ONLINE MODE only.

- Estimated cost: Ranging from - ₹ 33,33,946/- (Excluding GST)
- Bid Cost : ₹ 6000/- Mentioned in Column - 04
- Period of completion: Mentioned against each work. (Column - 06)
- No. of works (Tender): 01 (one)
- Class of Contractor: B & C Mentioned in Column - 05
- Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal: 26.12.2024 at 10.00 AM up to 5.30 PM of 06.01.2025
- Last date / Time for receipt of bids in the portal: 5.30 PM of 06.01.2025
- Date of submission of original documents: 26.12.2024 at 10.30 AM to 09.01.2025 up to 5.30 PM. (working days only)
- Date & time of opening of online bids: 10.01.2025 at 11.00 A.M. onwards
- Name and address of the officer inviting bid: The Executive Engineer (Agril.), Kandhamal Division, Phulbani, Odisha

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tendersodisha.gov.in>

All the volumes / documents shall be uploaded in the portal by the Procurement Officer Administrator and published by Procurement Officer Publisher (Officer Inviting tender).
The Tender documents published by the Tender Inviting Officer (Procurement Officer Publisher) in the website "<http://tendersodisha.gov.in>" will appear in the Latest.
The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website "<http://tendersodisha.gov.in>". Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Executive Engineer (Agril.) Kandhamal Division, Phulbani
OIPR-04059/09/0002/2425

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

Tender Notice No. 6633/IF/2024
Date: 21.12.2024

Short Tender Notice for Construction of Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Residence Building at San Duhaniali, Athmalk under Athmalk Range of Athmalk Forest Division.

Sealed Tender is hereby invited by the undersigned on behalf of the Governor, of Odisha, invites Tender for following works from the eligible contractor as detailed below.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Tender Notice No.	Estimated Cost
1	1. Construction of Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Residence Building at San Duhaniali, Athmalk under Athmalk Range of Athmalk Forest Division	6633/IF/24 dt- 21.12.2024	37,29,129 lakh

- Place of Work: Athmalk Forest Division
- Period of Completion: 90 Days
- Commencement of download RFP document on website: www.odishaforests.in
Dt. 23.12.2024 Time: 11.00 A.M.
- Last Date of bid submission (by messenger/courier/post): Dt.06.01.2025 Time: 01.00 P.M. Office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Athmalk Division, PO/PS- Athmalk, Pin-759125, Dist. Angul.
- Date of General & Technical and Financial Bid opening: Dt.06.01.2025 Time:04.00 P.M. Office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Athmalk Division, PO/PS- Athmalk, Pin759125, Dist. - Angul.
- RFP document Cost (Non-refundable): Rs.6,000/- by DD issued by Nationalized Bank in favour of the Divisional Forest Officer, Athmalk Division, Payable at Athmalk.
- Address for Bid Submission- Office of the Divisional Forest officer, Athmalk Division, At-Athmalk, Angul- Pin-759125
- EMD (Refundable): Rs. 38,000/- by DD issued by Nationalized Bank in favour of the Divisional Forest Officer, Athmalk Division, Payable at Athmalk.
- Bid validity period: 3 Months from the last date of submission of Bid.
- Latest Tender document and addendum/corrigendum, if any, will be published at the websites www.odishaforests.in
- Disclaimer: Notwithstanding anything else contained to the contrary in this tender document, DFO Athmalk reserves the right to cancel/withdraw/modify fully or partially the "Invitation of Bids" or to reject one or more of the bids without assigning any reason and shall bear no liability whatsoever consequent upon such a decision.

Sd/-
Divisional Forest Officer, Athmalk Division.
OIPR-08125/10/013/2425