Established 1865 SUICE SUIDAY DECEMBER 29, 2024: PAGES 8

magazine

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War of words follow Manmohan Singh



The mortal remains of former PM Manmohan Singh being taken to Congress headquarters for party leaders and workers to pay their last respects

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA **NEW DELHI**

between the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Centre Congress-led Opposition parties over a memorial for the former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh who was cremated with full State honours on Saturday in the presence of top dignitaries from India and

While the Home Ministry claimed to assure the late PM's family in a communication for a memorial in due course, the Congress, Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) demanded that the last rites

should have been performed at a designated place where the Manmohan Singh's memorial could political row has erupted have been developed. Singh, 92, died on the night of December 26.

Simultaneously former President late Pranab Mukherjee's daughter Sharmistha too cried foul on the part of the grand old party which failed to honour the rights of Mukherjee who spent his entire life serving the

The Congress alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was "deliberately insulting" the first Sikh PM of the country by not designating a place for his funeral and memorial. While Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to have Singh's funeral at a place where his memorial can be built, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav and BSP president Mayawati urged the Central government to avoid any political controversy over the funeral and memorial of former prime minister Manmohan Singh. Demands for giving Singh a Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award, were also raised during the last ritual procession of Manmohan Singh.

'The tradition of honouring the country's former Prime Ministers must be upheld. There is no need for politics on this issue nor should there be any. Dr. Manmohan Singh's memorial should be constructed at presenting an inappropriate example of its narrow-minded thinking. History will never forgive them for this negative approach," he said.

BSP president Mayawati said the wishes of Singh's family should be respected. "The Central government should ensure that the funeral and memorial of Dr Manmohan Singh, the country's first Sikh prime minister, are conducted at a location preferred by his family. No politics should be done on this matter and the government must honour the sentiments of Singh's family and the

Sikh community."

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) also criticised the BJP for not allocating space within the Rajghat complex for the last rites of former prime minister Manmohan Singh and said that it "reflects poorly on India globally". AAP called on the BJP to clarify its stance and demanded an apology to Singh's family and the Sikh community.

"Manmohan Singh, a global icon and India's only Sikh Prime Minister, was denied even 1,000 square yards of land for his cremation and memorial at Rajghat. Almost all former Prime Ministers were cremated there, but the BJP government refused this basic courtesy to Singh," said AAP National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh accused the BJP of disrespecting the Sikh community and questioned the rationale behind the decision.

In a statement, the Ministry of Home Affairs assured that a place would be allocated for Singh's memorial and that his family and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had been informed.

BJP President and Union Minister JP Nadda attacked Congress and the Gandhi family for getting into petty politics when the entire nation mourns the demise of Dr. Manmohan Singh.

Delhi LG orders high-level inquiry into AAP's ₹2,100 dole for women

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a move that may once Lagain rattle Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener Arvind Kejriwal, and his party ahead of the upcoming assembly polls, Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena ordered has ordered a high-level inquiry into the AAP led Delhi government's proposed Mukhyamantri Maĥila Samman Yojana in which AAP's poll promise of Rs 2,100 to women if elected. The Lieutenant Governor also ordered that the Chief Secretary of the Delhi Government may bring the matter to the knowledge of the Election Commission of India (ECI) through the chief electoral office given that such canvassing is happening ahead of the election.

Saxena also issued instructions to investigate the alleged presence intelligence officials from Punjab outside Dikshit's residence with the objective of "intimidating" him and the alleged transfer of cash, in crores, from various parts of Punjab to Delhi with the Delhi Assembly elections around the corner. The Lieutenant Governor's order came in the wake of a representation from a former East Delhi Congress MP and party's opponent against former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal from the New Delhi Assembly constituency, Sandeep Dikshit, who made serious allegations against the AAP-led Delhi government and Kejriwal.



"This has reference representation dated 25.12.2024 received from Sh. Sandeep Dikshit... he has alleged that the Chief Minister of Delhi and Sh Arvind Kejriwal have been announcing that Delhi Government is going to give every female in Delhi (above the age of 18 years) an private amount of Rs 1000 per organizing month... If AAP is elected back in the 2025 Vidhan Sabha elections, they will raise the amount to Rs 2100..." the communication Meanwhile, the AAP, in from the LG's Principal Secretary to Chief Secretary Dharmendra and Delhi Police

stated. The communiqué read, "Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor has desired the Chief Secretary to get an inquiry conducted through Divisional Commissioner in the matter of collection of personal details and forms by non-government people."

Commissioner Sanjay Arora

Commissioner of Police may direct the field officers to take action as per law against the person who is breaching the privacy of gullible citizens by collecting their personal details in garb of giving benefits. DCP's may be advised to take action against individuals camps fraudulent enrollment of Government Schemes," the Lieutenant Governor's office

response, has alleged that the inquiry came not from the Delhi Lieutenant Governor but from the "office" of BJP leader Amit Shah. Addressing a press conference, AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal also rubbished an order by LG for enquiry into collection of details of women through registration under the scheme as "fake," saying the monetary promise was a poll announcement.

Heavy rainfall coupled with gusty winds continued to lash

Delhi in the early hours of

Saturday. Several areas, including Palam, Safdarjung,

Lodi Road, Mehrauli, and



Shift Dallewal to hospital: SC gives **Punjab Govt till December 31**

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on Saturday witnessed an unprecedented hearing on the issue of providing medical aid to Punjab farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who is on fast-unto-death for over a month at Khanauri border seeking legal guarantee of Minimum Support Price (MSP) of crops among other demands. The hearing was conducted by a vacation bench of justices Surya Kant and Sudhanshu Dhulia, which gave time till December 31 to the Punjab Government to shift Dallewal to a nearby makeshift hospital, in an attempt to save

Normally, the SC, during winter break, does not have vacation Benches to conduct urgent hearings on emergent issues, and sitting of a Bench on Saturday is unusual. The Bench pulled up the Punjab Government for allowing the situation to escalate and not complying with its earlier directions to provide medical assistance to Dallewal.

Expressing helplessness, the Punjab Government said it is facing huge resistance from protesting farmers who have encircled Dallewal and are preventing him from being taken to hospital. Punjab Advocate Gurminder Singh told the

bench that a team of experts visited the protest site and tried to persuade Dallewal to shift to hospital and take medical help.

"He (Dallewal) has refused any kind of medical aid, including (IV) drips, saying that it will undermine the cause of movement," he said.

Google maps misguides again: Highest single-day December rainfall in 101 years two injured in car accident

BISWAJEET BANERJEE

n yet another incident of

LGoogle Maps leading astray, accident occurred on an under-construction highway two people injured. The mishap took place in the Hathras Junction police station area near Vahanpur. According to the police, Bareilly residents Vimlesh Srivastava and Kushal Kumar were traveling to Mathura using Google Maps for navigation. Late at night, after passing through Sikandra Rao, they followed directions onto the underconstruction Mathura-Bareilly Highway. Due to the absence of reflective boards warning about roadblocks, their car collided with a heap of stones and soil, causing significant damage.

The injured duo promptly informed the police, who arrived at the scene, cleared the car from the highway, and rushed the victims to a hospital for treatment.

This is not the first time Google Maps has caused inconvenience or accidents. Recently, a family from



Meerut endured hours of distress while trying to reach Saharanpur from Haridwar

Vinod Kumar, a resident of Meerut's Shastri Nagar, was traveling with his wife and son. Initially, their journey via Google Maps was smooth until they reached Bhagwanpur. The app then suggested a shortcut through link road to Saharanpur. About 10 kilometers into this route, they encountered a dry but rocky stream, making it

impossible to proceed. The app redirected them to another route, leading to hours of wandering in forested areas. Eventually, they managed to contact a

relative near Bihari Garh, who guided them to safety. The family reached their destination close midnight, heaving a sigh of relief. Last month, Google Maps was blamed for a major accident in Bareilly when it directed a car onto an incomplete bridge, resulting in three friends falling off and sustaining

injuries. Such incidents highlight the risks of relying solely on digital navigation systems without verifying local conditions. Authorities and travelers are urged to exercise caution, especially construction routes.

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

Delhiites experienced an overcast and chilly day after the city recorded the highest single-day December rainfall in 101 years. The city received 41.2 mm of rain between 8.30 am on Friday and 8.30 am on Saturday, marking the highest single-day

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the Capital had last recorded the highest-ever rainfall on a single day in the month on December 3, 1923, at 75.7 mm. While rain in December is not unusual, it is usually light. As per IMD data, Delhi usually sees 8 mm of rain during the month over half a day. The rain in the city over the past 24 hours is over five times that.

also rains December 2024 the fifthhighest in terms of monthly rainfall since records began in 1901. In December 2024, Delhi logged 42.8 mm, the highest in the last 27 years when 71.8 mm of rain was seen in the month.

"The cumulative 24-hour rainfall ending at 8.30am today is the second-highest 1901 at Safdarjung. December's monthly rainfall is now the fifth-highest. The 24-

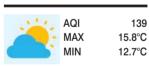


to the precipitation recorded over the past 24 hours ending at 8.30am IST on the given date," the IMD official explained. The rainfall largely attributed to an active western disturbance interacting with easterly winds, transformed the usual dry chill of December into an anomaly. "The interaction between a active western disturbance and a cyclonic circulation on the east, along with a few other factors, has brought about this unusual weather. November and December are the two driest months in Delhi. During these months, it is usually a western disturbance that brings rain to the capital. It is the different

weather systems clashing that

lead to heavy downpours," an

WEATHER



IMD scientist said. "Another western disturbance expected around January 1, but that may not bring rain," IMD further explained. The IMD has issued a yellow alert for Delhi, predicting more showers for Sunday in the capital, Noida, Gurugram and other places in the national capital region. The weather department has forecast very dense fog for Sunday, with the maximum and minimum temperatures

expected to settle at 17 and 9

degrees Celsius, respectively

Gurugram, reported uprooted trees, resulting in significant disruptions. In Sector-9, RK Puram, a portion of a road caved in, causing a motorcycle The last time December rains were this intense was in 1997 when the total monthly precipitation was 71.8mm. Going further back, the highest December rainfall was recorded in 1901 at 77.2mm, followed by 1967 (69.5mm) and 1936 (68.1mm). IMD classifies up 1936 to 15.5mm of rainfall in 24 hours as "light rain", 15.6-64.4mm of rainfall as "moderate", 64.5-115.5mm as "heavy rainfall" and 115.6-204.4mm as "very heavy

rainfall". Delhi witnessed incessant rainfall since Friday morning causing severe waterlogging and traffic snarls in several parts, leading to the mercury dropping in the National Capital. In June this year, Delhi has recorded 228.1 mm of rain in the 24 hours in one of the wettest spells the capital has recorded causing waterlogging in several parts of the National Capital.

CM directs officials for crop damage report by Dec 30

'All farmers, insured ornot, will receive financial aid'

NALINI SAHU BHUBANESWAR

hief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Saturday convened a high-level meeting at the State Secretariat to review the devastation caused by unseasonal rains across the State between December 20 and 28. The meeting was attended by ministers and senior officials from the agriculture, revenue, and cooperation departments.

'Today's review focused on

the crop damage caused by unseasonal rains. I have instructed officials from all relevant departments to compile a detailed crop damage report by December 30. Based on these reports, affected farmers will receive financial assistance through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system," Majhi told reporters after the meeting.

The Chief Minister urged farmers to register themselves on the 'Krushirakshak' mobile application to qualify for the financial assistance.

The meeting followed alarming reports of widespread crop destruction across the state. Distressing



accounts of farmers dying by suicide or succumbing to heart attacks after witnessing their ruined farmlands have further spurred the administration

"The State Government is fully aware of the immense losses farmers have suffered, particularly in Kharif crops

such as paddy and horticultural produce. We assure all farmers that they will receive due compensation as per the guidelines and provisions of the Union and State Governments," the CM said.

To streamline assistance, the government has introduced a toll-free helpline, 14447, for farmers to report crop loss.

The CM also revealed that 1.26 lakh farmers have already registered for crop damage compensation under the 'Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana'. He stressed that both insured and uninsured farmers would be eligible for government compensation.

Reports from across the State indicate that paddy farmers were the hardest-hit with crops that were ready for harvest and sale at government procurement centres submerged due to heavy rains caused by a low-pressure system over the Bay of Bengal. Vegetable and betel leaf farmers also faced severe losses as their crops could not withstand the relentless down-

Tragically, two farmers reportedly died of heart attacks while others, overwhelmed by debts taken to purchase seeds and agricultural inputs, ended their lives after witnessing the destruction of their crops.

In Jajpur

Farmer dies of cardiac arrest over crop loss

AKSHAY ROUT ■ JAJPUR

A farmer in Chikana gram panchayat under Binjharpur block in Jajpur district died of a cardiac arrest on Saturday allegedly over loss of his crop.

The deceased, identified as Manibhadra Mohanty, according to reports, had taken several loans from different sources to cultivate his land. However, the recent heavy rains destroyed his entire

Early on Saturday morning, Manibhadra went to inspect his farmland and was devastated to see the damage to his paddy crop. Overcome with stress and worry about his debts, he fainted due to the immense mental pressure, according to family members.

Manibhadra was rushed to the Binjharpur Community Health Centre (CHC), but the doctor declared him dead after some time. His family, while mourning his death, has demanded compensation from the government.

"My father went to the field and saw that the entire cultivation was ruined. He suffered a cardiac arrest because he had taken a lot of loans from cooperative societies and other sources. We don't know how we will survive now, and we appeal to the government to help us or else we will also face the same fate," said a family member.

Odisha Fire Services dept to have K9 squad

10 trained dogs to assist during disasters

PNS BHUBANESWAR

Odisha has become the first State in the country to include a dedicated K9 squad comprising 10 trained dogs in the Fire Services department.

According to sources, these sniffer dogs will be deployed in various rescue operations to enhance the efficiency of the Fire Services personnel.

The K-9 Dog Squad, comprising 10 Labrador and Belgian Malinois breeds from the State police, has been imparted special training to



carry out rescue operations.

These dogs have been specially trained to help firefighters find people trapped under debris following mishaps like earthquakes and landslides. Moreover, their performance would earn them rank, promotion and medals as well, the sources

Satyapir Behera, Fire Officer of Principal Training Centre in Naraj said, "During the Bahanaga train tragedy, we realised the importance of dog squads during the rescue activities. Keeping that in view, we have decided to include a K9 squad in the Fire Services

"After approval from the government, puppies were brought from Rajasthan's Dora. We received 10 dogs, three Belgian Malinois and seven Labradors. They have been imparted necessary training. They will be included in rescue operations during earthquakes and other natural disasters," Behera added.

Notably, earlier in October, the Fire Services department had added 22 ultramodern robots to its existing capabilities. These robots are called Fire-Fighting Robotic Monitors and they are capable of entering into raging flames Rains, fog predicted in State

Temp to plummet from New Year

PNS BHUBANESWAR

As people are bracing up to usher in the New Year, the State is expected to witness a rainy weather. Light to moderate rainfall is anticipated in the northern and north western regions over the next two days induced by a western disturbance.

As per the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), light to moderate rainfall is expected in several districts, which can result in precipitation for two days.

The Regional Office of the IMD here has forecast a frosty start to the New Year with

bone-chilling cold prevailing in Odisha. The IMD anticipates a cool yet dry start to January with residual effects of the western disturbance easing by then.

As per reports, weather conditions are projected to remain dry from December 30 to January 2 with a significant drop in temperature. While no major changes in night-time temperatures are expected over the next three days, the weather office forecasts dry periods accompanied by a rise in winter chill as the New Year

Meanwhile, a Yellow fog warning has been issued for Kandhamal, Balangir, Kalahandi and Nabarangpur districts for possible dense when they were detained by

'Sadhus' detained by

locals on suspicion

he series of street crimes like burglary, snatching and robberies in the capital city have made the citizens panicky; and spotting any stranger in their locality is triggering suspicion.

In city

In such an incident, locals on Saturday detained and alerted the Maitri Vihar police regarding the movement of some people dressed as 'Sadhus'. It was alleged that a group of four to five 'Sadhus' were trying to barge into houses on the pretext of seeking money and food items.

On getting information, a police team reached the spot and brought the group to the police station for verification. However, the Sadhus claimed that they hail from Rajasthan and were on their way to Puri

"We halt at places and were heading to Puri for darshan of Lord Jagannath when we were detained by police. We only seek dal, rice and other food items. We are not involved in any illegal activities," said a detained Sadhu.

A local resident alleged, "I have a video in which the group entered a house and threw some powder on a person. They are not Sadhus and we suspect that they could be robbers." However, no formal complaint has been lodged by the concerned person at whose residence there was the alleged trespassing by the group. The Maitri Vihar police station IIC said, "We have not received any formal complaint and we are verifying the

100-yr-old freedom fighter to get pension with arrears

Rules High Court

In much relief to a centenarian freedom fighter, who was denied pension and other benefits by the State and Union Governments for want of proof of his incarceration during the struggle for freedom, the Orissa High Court has ordered release of the benefits with arrears in his favour.

As per reports, Chakradhar Pradhan of Mayurbhanj had applied for a grant of the pension in 1988 claiming to have participated in the freedom movement of the country and remained underground from September 1, 1942 to October 5, 1943. He also stated to have faced imprisonment in the Baripada Central Jail during 1941-42 as a political prisoner.

However, the application was rejected. Subsequently, Pradhan filed a petition in the High Court in 2013. In a counter affidavit, the State Government said that to be eligible to get a pension under the 1980 scheme, a citizen must have suffered a minimum imprisonment of six months or remained underground for more than six

months. When the High Court sought information regarding Pradhan's imprisonment, the prison authorities replied that the information was not available in the records as it relates to more than 79 years back.

Considering the reply, Justice Sashikanta Mishra stated that it would be too much to expect the petitioner to produce clear-cut or cogent proof regarding his incarceration in jail nearly 80 years ago.

"It is therefore, necessary that the petitioner's claim must be considered favourably," ruled Justice

Govt constitutes State Law Con

IIT BBS holds Combined Convocation

Justice Rath to head six-member panel

Aim is to suggest changes and repeal obsolete laws

BHUBANESWAR

l he Odisha Government on Friday constituted a sixmember Law Commission chaired by Justice Biswanath Rath, a former judge, Orissa

As per a notification issued

Dharmendra

PNS BHUBANESWAR

The Indian Institute of

Bhubaneswar organised its

12th and 13th Combined Con-

vocation on Saturday. Union

Minister of Education

Dharmendra Pradhan deliv-

ered the Convocation Ad-

Prof Ajay Kumar Sood,

Principal Scientific Advisor,

Govt. of India; Dr Ajit Kumar

Mohanty, Chairman, Atomic

Energy Commission and Sec-

retary, Dept. of Atomic En-

ergy, Govt. of India; and Prof

Abhay Karandikar, Secretary,

Dept. of Science & Technol-

Rajendra Prasad Singh,

Chairman, Board of Gover-

addresses

graduates

Technology

by the state Law Department, the commission will have a total of six members, including the chairperson.

"The State Government do hereby appoint Justice Biswanath Rath as the Chairperson, Surya Prakash Mishra, Sr. Advocate and Soura Chandra Mohapatra, Sr. Advocate as Members of the Odisha State Law Commission," read the notifica-

This apart, Advocate General Pitambar Acharya and the Principal Secretary to Law Department will be ex-officio members of the commission. The Additional Secretary of the Law Department will be the member secretary of the

The commission has been constituted to review the existing State laws as well as the laws pertaining to the State in the Concurrent List. It will examine the necessity of continuance of the various State laws and recommend withdrawal, substitution and modification in part or in whole.

The commission will also examine any proposal for Rath told reporters.

modification in the existing laws and to invite suggestions from eminent persons or legal experts on the proposals for modifications. It will offer suggestions to the State Government for rectification of defects in the existing laws and repeal of laws which are no longer rel-

"The commission has been constituted to give opinion to the government about any changes needed in the State laws and repeal of obsolete laws," Justice Biswanath

3 women Maoists held in M'giri



Were carrying bounties on head NALINI SAHU

BHUBANESWAR

In a major breakthrough, the Odisha police on Saturday arrested three hardcore women Maoists, who carried bounties ranging from Rs 4 lakh to Rs 2 lakh on their heads, from their village in Malkangiri district.

Those arrested were identified as Swpana Khila, Sunita Khila and Babita Khila.

Swpana carried a bounty of Rs 4 lakh on her head while the remaining two carried one lakh rupees each.

According to Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Niti Sekhar, the Red rebel leaders, all belonging to joint operation by the State police and the District Voluntary Force (DVF). Sources said the three cadre

Chitrakonda police station,

were apprehended following a

Maoists were involved in multiple incidents of violence in Odisha and Chhattisgarh. "We had concrete intelli-

gence inputs that some Maoists had gathered at Dhakadpada village in Swabhiman Anchal. A joint team of State police and DVP raided the place. While some cadres managed to flee the place, three cadre rebels were captured," said the DIG, adding, their interrogation was on to ascertain their involvement in violence in Odisha and neighbouring States.

In Baleswar

 $oldsymbol{A}$ joint team of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) and police on Saturday rescued a 10-day-old male child who was allegedly sold by his parents to an issueless couple of Saikula under Udla block in Mayurbhani district.

the infant's parents sold him to the childless couple of Saikula under Udala in Mayurbhanj district for Rs 60,000 and a motorbike.

However, the infant's father Dharmu Behera and mother wife refuted the CWC's allega-

Infant sold by parents for Rs 60K, rescued tions and claimed that there was no monetary consider-

They gave away the child as they were suffering from acute poverty and it was a constraint for them to groom the child, said the infant's mother

Dharmu had a second marriage with Shanti three years

CWC Member Manmohan Pradhan asserted that the parents were involved in selling the child and they have been summoned to record their statements as a part of investigation.



(BoG), Bhubaneswar, presided over the convocation. Prof Shreepad Karmalkar, Director, IIT Bhubaneswar, presented the convocation report and awarded degrees to

The institute conferred deogy, Govt. of India; were grees on 1,388 students for the guests of honour. Dr academic years 2022-23 and

Speaking on the occasion,

Minister Pradhan said, "IIT Bhubaneswar should strive to become an institute of Knowledge, Research and Innova- presented a detailed report on tion. Graduates of IIT should various efforts and achievemake efforts towards becoming job creators rather than seekers." Bhubaneswar and its students should work towards boosting the start-up and entrepre-

neurial ecosystem to enhance

the growth process of Odisha

by 2036 and of the country by 2047," he added

Prof Shreepad Karmalkar ments of IIT Bhubaneswar.

An interaction meeting on "Exploring Pathways and Prospects for the Future of Research in India" with Prof Ajay Kumar Sood and Prof Abhay Karandikar was also organised.

Odisha's coastal ecosystem highly vulnerable

≺ he coastline in Odisha stretches to over 482 km, spanning over six districts namely Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapada, Puri and Ganjam

The overall statistics indicate that the coast of Odisha is largely accreting (46.8%) and 14.4% is stable, and the erosion (high, medium and low erosion) accounts for 36.8% of the coast. The stretches in Kendrapada, Puri and Ganjam districts are highly vulnerable to sea erosion. The Pentha and Satabhaya areas in Kendrapada district, the Konark-Chandrabhaga-Ramachandi and Astaranga areas in Puri district, the Podampeta, Rushikulya and Bahuda river mouth areas in Ganjam district, are highly vulnerable and many coastal villages, mostly the fishermen villages, have been devoured by the sea or are badly affected. Around 37-km stretch falls under very high coastal vulnerability which was 7.51 per cent of the total 482 km coastline of Odisha, as was indicated in the atlas of the Coastal



SUNDARA NARAYANA PATRO

Vulnerability Index (CVI) prepared in 2022.

In recognition of the resilience offered by the mangroves during the cyclonic storms, the Odisha Government is coming up with a plan for massive plantation of mangrove species and their associate species along the coast in order to arrest beach erosion.

Ever since the 1999 Super Cyclone followed by several cyclones, namely Phailin (2013), Hudhud

(2014), Titli (2018), Fani (2019), Bulbul (2019), Amphan (2020), Yaas (2021), Gulab (2021), Jaad (2021) and successive miserable events including the recent one 'Dana' in October 2024, Odisha has come out a long way and is now a leader in cyclone preparedness and management in the country. About 24 villages in coastal Odisha have been certified 'Tsunami Ready' by UNESCO. Tsunami Ready is a voluntary programme that recognises communities for their efforts to prepare for and respond to tsuna-

Many fishermen villages on the coast have been devoured by the sea, the most affected ones are in Kendrapada and Ganjam districts. In Rajnagar block of Kendrapada district, the Satabhaya gram panchayat villages and Pentha are affected the most. The Odisha Government has been relocating the people of the Satabhaya gram panchayat area since 2008 to the resettlement colony at Bagapatia, around 12 kilometres away. This year during the recent cyclone 'Dana' the resettlement colony was water logged. The State Government has taken steps for shifting of the Podampeta village in Ganjam district to a place named New Podampeta in the foot of the Humma hill which is about 7 km from there. Similarly, the villagers of Ramayapatna have been resettled at Chandbada Chowk, about 1.5 km away from their village. Out of the total length of 480 km of Odisha's coastline, 60 km is covered in the Ganjam district. Podampeta is in the northern end at the Rushikulya mouth and Ramayapatna is in the southern end at Bahuda river mouth, close to Srikakulaum district of Andhra

The entire Odisha coast and wetlands, namely Bhitarkanika, Gahirmatha and Chilika are rich with biodiversity. The coast is the best resort for Olive Ridley sea turtles, dolphins, horse-shoe crabs, crocodiles and myriads of marine fauna and flora. The northeastern coast of Odisha is home to the horseshoe crab, the concentra-

tion being at Balaramgadi and Chandipur in Baleswar district and at Hukitola, Ekakula, Satabhaya Madali beaches in Kendrapada. The protected areas of the Bhitarkanika mangrove swamp, Gahirmatha beach and Chilika lagoon have been declared as sanctuaries for conservation of flagship species of salt-water crocodiles, Olive Ridley turtles, dolphins, both resident and migratory birds, most of which are recognised as protected species under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972. Besides, there are myriads of species of flora and fauna of biological as well as commercial importance in these aquatic habitats. Chilika and Bhitarkanika are designated as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention due to their rich biodiversity. Besides, Chilika is in the list of tentative UNESCO World Heritage

In a move to protect the Olive Ridley turtles arriving on the Odisha coast for nesting from faroff seas, the Government has imposed a fishing ban along the coastal sea from November 1, 2023 to May 31this year. The nesting sites are around Gahirmatha and the river mouths of Devi, Rushikulya and Bahuda that join the Bay of Bengal. The sevenmonth prohibition restricts all fishing activities within 20 km off the shore, affecting many fishermen who are now concerned about the impact on their livelihoods. Under the Government order, motorized boats and trawlers are barred from operating within the protected 20 km zone. Fishing is the main livelihood for about 50 lakh people in Odisha. The fishing ban affects their livelihood support.

Coastal areas are of enormous socio-economic importance, because of marine fish and other resources, coastal biodiversity, tourist potential, commercial and residential development, and of late the sources of wave energy, off-shore mining and port development activities, etc. There are three ports on the coast namely Paradip (major port), Dhamra and Gopalpur, and many more ports are in the pipeline. Port activities, the Army Air Defence College in Gopalpur and INS Chilka, prawn and fish farming, tourism, the proposed airport in Puri, the Sagarmala projects and other developmental activities would definitely have ecological footprints on the coastal ecosys-

The UN's Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) is all about "Life below water". The goal's target is to "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development". There is a vast potency of the blue economy and to broaden it there is a need to encourage startups working in this area through increased research and support. While doing so the local community's knowledge, wisdom and skill have to be taken into confidence. The Odisha Government is developing a roadmap to enhance marine biotechnology.

(Dr Patro is president, Orissa Environmental Society, (M)

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BHUBANESWAR I SUNDAY I DECEMBER 29, 2024

nday pioneer

Nonagenarian hopes to meet hubby missing for 50 yrs!

Wears bangles, puts vermilion RAJESH BEHERA KENDRAPADA

She is at the twilight of her age, but she has been nursing a desire for the last five decades of a reunion with her missing spouse before she takes her last breath.

Meet the nonagenarian Sabita Mohapatra, wife of Kulamani Mohapatra of Basantapur village under Tendakuda gram panchayat of Garadapur block. Sabita (90), has a slender frame with a slightly stooped posture along with her skin showing the delicate lines of a life lived with lots of difficulties sans her spouse. Despite her age, she moved with surprising agility, her gait



the last and the most important wish of her life to get reunited with her hubby before she would close her eyes for-

According to Sabita, her spouse fled from the house 50 years ago. She has no information about her spouse till date. She did not have a single photo of her husband with her either. But still she is hopeful

that her spouse would come back and their reunion would be a reality. As such, she has been wearing bangles and putting vermilion on her head every day and has also been dedicating most of her time in worshiping and observing penance. She prays to Lord Jagannath for the good fortune and long life of her

Sabita has been leading a cursed life as she is a barren woman. She is getting subsidised food grains and an old age pension from the government and living at her nephew's house as she doesn't have one.

As per the provisions of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, a missing person is presumed dead after seven years. "I am very much sure that my spouse will return. If Maa Sabitri could save her husband from the god of death, Yama, persuading the deity to restore his life with her pativrata mahatmya, then why could not I fulfil my wish of a reunion with my spouse with the chastity and devotion towards my husband, along with prayer to Almighty?" asked Sabita.

BJP, BJD tussle over New Year gate erection Sec 163 of BNSS clamped;

forces deployed PNS KENDRAPADA

The district administration has imposed prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the BNSS at Durga Mandap Square of Aul Bazaar and its adjoining areas following a dispute between BJP and BJD over the erection of a New Year decorative gate.

The orders by the magistrate would remain in force until further notice. The order strictly prohibits any unlawful assembly or gathering.

The issue arose at the Durga Mandap Square, where the BJP members attempted to construct the gate. However, the BJD activists opposed the erection as they had been doing it over the

This led to a confrontation between the two groups that soon escalated to unrest in the area, necessitating police intervention to restore order.

Following the clash, both parties were called to the local police station in an attempt by officials to mediate the dispute. However, neither the BJP nor the BJD was willing to compromise on the

gate erection at the square. Security has been beefed up in the area as police forces have been deployed to ensure public order.

In Ganjam Large quantity of govt medicines found dumped



A large quantity of government-supplied medicines was found dumped on the roadside near Bijay Adigandapur under Sanakhemundi block in Ganjam district on Saturday.

According to sources, the discarded medicines range from tablets to syrups, triggering suspicion among lo-

Among the medicines, some were found to have expired while others were still within their expiry period between March and April 2025, the sources added.

These medicines are part of free distribution

While the reason behind such large-scale disposal of medicines was yet to be ascertained, the concerned authorities were yet to determine who was responsible for the act and why the medicines were discarded in this manner.

Expressing discontentment, locals said that such medicines are provided free of cost to people in need, but such kind of wastage deprives people of lifesaving drugs.

programme initiated by the government to benefit the

Threats to tiger populace escalate in D'nal forests

As 3 killed in recent months PNS DHENKANAL

missing husband.

he number of leopards in the Dhenkanal forests has surged, doubling over the past three years to reach over twelve. This marks a remarkable success for conservationists and local wildlife authorities. Initially, in 2021, the region was home to approximately six leopards.

Despite the positive trend, the local forest department now faces escalating threats, including tragic incidents of poaching and tiger deaths. Within recent months, two tigers have succumbed to

Health Department in

Nuapada district was held on

Thursday in the collectorate.

The meeting, presided over by

Collector

poachers' traps, raising alarms over the security of the majestic creatures.

A particularly disturbing incident occurred in the Hindol-Koi Reserve Forest, where a leopard met its end in an electric snare set by poachers. A similar fate befell another tiger in the Dudurkot village forest. The rise in poaching incidents has prompted concern from authorities keen to preserve the growing population.

In a separate incident at the Mahabir Road range, near the Dhenkanal and Keonjhar border, a leopard was found ensnared in a wire trap laid by poachers, and rescued in critical condition. The absence of clear leads in the ongoing investigation highlights the challenge of protecting the animals.

Conservationists have criticised the current patrolling and protection measures as inadequate. Without robust security interventions, experts fear the sustainability of the tiger population remains jeopardised. The District Forest Officer of Dhenkanal assured that measures are being intensified, including stern actions against poachers and initiatives aimed at safeguarding the ti-

"Though the number of leopards has increased in Dhenkanal forests, incidents of poaching have also increased considerably due to demand in the international market. The Forest Department has utterly failed to nab the poachers so far," rued Debabrata Patnaik, a wildlife lover in the area.

"We have made a detailed analysis in the last five-six months through camera traps. Following the analysis, we have received promising data about the leopard population in the district. The Forest Department officials have been patrolling during the day and night. We have been using AI-monitored camera traps and specific drones to poaching," curb

2 brothers arrested on rape charge in K'pada

RAJESH BEHERA KENDRAPADA

Two siblings were arrested by Derabish police on Friday for their alleged involvement in raping their aunt and her minor niece.

The arrested brothers have been identified as Sujit Sethy(25) and his younger brother, Rajkishore Sethy of Khamola village under Derabish police station.

The victim alleged in her complaint that Sujit lured her by giving false marriage promise and has been keeping physical relationship with her for last 8 months. Later, Suit denied to marry her and deserted her to fend for her-

The victim also alleged that on December 22 evening, while her 13-year-old niece was going to backyard of her house attend the call of nature, Rajkishore, the younger brother of Sujit, forcibly raped her and threatened to kill her if she disclosed the matter to anybody.

Acting on the FIR, Derabish police registered a case and arrested the duo brothers.

Derabish police sent the duo and the victims for medical examination. They were later produced before the local court where the accused were remanded in jail custody after their bail pleas were rejected by the court, informed Derabish police station IIC Kishore Tarai.

N'pada Health Dept meet: Key progs reviewed MKCG thyroid machine defunct for 6 months A review meeting of the

Patients affected KRUSHNA CHANDRA PANDA **BRAHMAPUR**

he thyroid machine available in the MKCG Medical College and Hospital, Brahmapur has gone defunct about six months ago and its repair and functionality are left to the mercy of the medical college authorities, sources

Repeated demands made by the patients to make it functional have gone unheeded. Due

operationalisation of the crucial component, thousands of patients of south Odisha are not only deprived of the benefits, but pay huge amounts at private nursing homes or diagnostic centers to get their desired tests done at a much higher price.



The so-called Nidan scheme of the Government, the main objective of which is to ensure assured diagnostic services in public health facilities has become a mockery. As a result, it forces the public/ patients to get their tests done at private nursing homes at a much higher price, said Binod Pradhan, a local.

Notably, neither the medical authorities nor the elected representatives have paid any heed to such a crucial issue of public importance. There is a strong public perception that the government should take stringent action against the erring official (s) of the medical college responsible for non-repairing of the machine.



Madhusudana Das, assessed the implementation and performance of various health programmes in the district. Key programmes under review included Reproductive and Child Health (RCH), Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD), Tuberculosis (TB), PCPNDT and the quality of services provided at different

district

health centers Additional District Medi-Officer (ADMO) Umakanta Meher, Dr Lalit Bishi, along with other medical professionals from Sub-Divisional Hospitals (SDH) and Community Health Centers (CHCs) from various blocks, attended the meeting.



DMRCH Mahanty presented a detailed PowerPoint on the progress of health initiatives in the dis-

During the discussion, the Collector emphasized on improving the district's health has been lagging. He urged the health functionaries to intensify their efforts to enhance the overall health conditions of the population.

Additionally, Kusumanjali Majhi, an ASHA worker from

Baijalpur; two ANMs, Anjali Ahir and Sabita Patel; CHO Sandiparani Sunani and Health Worker Dipesh Pati were felicitated during the meeting for their outstanding performances and contributions to improving health services in the district.

In Baleswar —

Doc held for involvement in tiger skin racket

Forest Department officials claimed to have busted a major wildlife smuggling racket in the State with the arrest of 12 persons and seizure of a Royal Bengal Tiger's (RBT) hide.

While 11 persons were arrested four days ago with the tiger hide in Baleswar district, a doctor was nabbed from Mayurbhanj district on Friday for his alleged involvement in the racket, officials said.

The doctor was identified as Maheshwar Das, posted at the Udala government hospital in Mavurbhani.

Chandipur Assistant Conservator of Forest (ACF) Jayashree Murmu said the doctor played a key role in wildlife smuggling and all financial transactions of the illegal racket led by one Pradip Nayak were done through Das.

After finding clues that Das had financial transactions with the arrested accused, a special team from Chandipur arrested him. After interrogation, he was forwarded to court, she added.

Earlier on December 23, a special forest team comprising officials from Balasore and Mayurbhanj had busted the illegal wildlife trade racket and held 11 persons with the tiger skin.

Initially, four persons were arrested from Soro under Barajadeuli beat in Talpada wildlife section in Baleswar. Preliminary interrogation led to the arrest of seven more accused from Mayurbhanj district. A country-made gun and eight mobile phones were seized from their possession, the officials said.

The accused were booked under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 (amended in 2022) and a case has been registered.

'Don't debar scribes from imp govt meetings'

Odisha Patrakar Sangha holds 15th anniver-

sary BADAL TAH ■ RAYAGADA

ournalists, who represent the fourth pillar of democracy, should be given their due. Like entry in Assembly and Parliament sessions, they should be allowed to be present in the important district level meetings to project analytical news for the development of the area. They should not be barred from various offices when it is their job to collect news," Koaput MP Saptagiri Shankar Ullaka while attending the 15th anniversary celebration of Odisha Patrakar Sangha here.

A scribe can write news against him, CM and even PM; but it should be fact based, he

He assured the journalists present to raise his voice in the Parliament for journalists'



Rayagada MLA Kadraka Appalaswamy, guest of honor on the occasion, said that he had already raised his voice for the rights of journalists in the Assembly and promised to do so in future. Bisam Cuttack MLA Nilamadhab Hikaka, guest of honour, complemented Appalaswamy and said that his fight for the interests of journalists will continue. The meeting was presided over by State vicepresident of the union Harprasad Das. State general secretaryRamdas

Lima moderated the sessions

and presented demands like

pension, insurance to be increased upto Rs 10 lakh including the parents of the scribe, railway and bus pass, housing and transport loan with low interest, children's higher education, a press lounge at district level, etc.

Senior journalist Dr Badal Kumar Tah, guest of honour, told about considering inclusion of all accredited journalists in Gopabandhu Insurance scheme

There are several unused and abandoned govt buildings in the dist headquarters one of which can be allotted by the district administration for use by the press reporters.

As Rayagada is a Naxalite area, the district administration should issue ID cards to all the working reporters for the sake of their security. To accomplish these needs, there is no need to have an additional budget, said Dr Tah.

Municipal Chairman Mahesh Kumar Patnaik, BJP district president Siba Patnaik, Watershed Project Director Dr Dayanitdi Bagh, Additional SP Bishnu Prasad Patra and Congress State general secretary Durga Prasad Panda among others spoke. The Sangh felicitated several people who have gained fame in various sectors of society.

Heritage cottage industry now on

verge of collapse PNS BHUBANESWAR

 $T_{
m he\ renowned\ traditional}$ bell metal or 'kansa' (a type of bronze) industry in the Balakati area of Khordha district lies on the verge of collapse. Of late, the heritage industry has witnessed a sharp decline in the number of artisans, with reports estimating the number of operational workshops slipping to below 50 from compared to 500 several years ago.

The unfortunate situation comes as a mix of various factors but the shortage of raw materials and an alleged lack of government incentives are being pointed out as the biggest contributing factor. Moreover, competition from steel utensils is also stated by local artisans as a major reason for the cur-

rent scenario. "Factories can produce



hundreds of steel utensils in a day with their heavy machinery but we rely on traditional methods and are unable to compete. Even if we wished to install machines, they would cost lakhs and we cannot afford that," said Basudev Behera, a bell metal artisan from Balakati.

Famous for its intricate craftsmanship, Balakati village was once a hub for bell metal production. Hundreds of artisans used to create utensils such as plates, bowls, glasses, pots and shields, supporting their families. However, the demand has

dwindled and many artisan families are now forced to seek alternative livelihoods, driving the industry to the brink. Several artisans blamed

government negligence for the deterioration of the centuriesold craft, stating that despite the rising cost of utensils and their sustained demand for religious and domestic purposes, artisans have seen no improvement in their livelihood. "We have inherited the art

from our previous generations but as of now, we are facing immense trouble in procuring raw materials and the government is not helping us in this regard," alleged Sunakar Sahu, another local artisan.

The artisans, however, stated that government support in the form of financial aid, access to modern technology, and training programmes are urgent needs to give a new leash of life to the industry.

Several Union Ministers and CMs to attend WEF at Davos

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Union Ministers Ashwini Vaishnaw, CR Patil, Chirag Paswan, K Ram Mohan Naidu and Jayant Chaudhary, alongside three Chief Ministers -- Devendra Fadnavis, Chandrababu Naidu and Revant Reddy, will join hundreds of Government and business leaders from across the globe in Swiss ski resort town Davos next month for the World for the Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2025. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Naidu will also be joined by his son and senior minister in his state Nara Lokesh, while Karnataka's Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, Tamil Nadu Minister TRB Rajaa and Uttar Pradesh Minister Suresh Khanna will also be there for the five-day annual congregation of the world's rich and powerful, starting January 20, 2025.

known for films like Dum Laga Ke Haisha, Toilet: Ek Prem Katha, Shubh Mangal Saavdhan, Pati Patni Aur Woh, Badhai Do and Saand Ki Aankh, would also be there. Besides over 50 Presidents and Prime Ministers from across the world, top officials of international organisations like the United Nations, IMF, World Bank, Interpol, NATO, European Central Bank and WTO are also expected to be in Davos for the WEF Annual Meeting 2025.

Senior ministers from Pakistan and Bangladesh, including Bangladesh Government's Chief Adviser and head of the interim government Muhammad Yunus would also be present. Vaishnaw, Minister for Railways, Information & & IT, had also attended the last WEF annual meeting, alongside Smriti Irani and Hardeep Singh Puri from the Union Council of Ministers.

joined by Jal Shakti Minister Food Processing Industries Minister Paswan, Civil Aviation Minister Naidu and Minister of State for Skill Development and Education Chaudhary

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also attended the meeting in the past, but there is no official word so far about his participation in the highprofile summit, for which the main theme this time will be 'collaboration for intelligent age'. Expected to be attended by nearly 50 heads of state and governments from across the world, the annual meeting would take place against the backdrop of a change of regime in the US and various geopolitical and macroeconomic issues, including the Ukraine war Broadcasting and Electronics and continuing West Asia

> Both Modi and Donald Trump attended the WEF Annual Meeting in 2018 for the first time as India's Prime



the US and President, respectively. While Modi became Prime Minister of India for the third consecutive term earlier this year, Trump is set to assume office for the second time on January 20, and his return is expected to be among the key topics of discussion at Davos. Maharashtra Chief Minister Fadnavis and Andhra Pradesh

Chief Minister Naidu have been to Davos multiple times, Telangana Chief Minister Reddy attended the WEF Annual Meeting in January 2024 as well. Besides Government leaders and civil society members, the Indian presence would comprise top business executives of conglomerates like Reliance, Tata, Adani, Birla, Bharti,

Mahindra, Godrej, Jindal, Bajaj and Vedanta groups. Besides Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani, the nextgeneration leaders from their groups are also expected to be present, while technology leaders, including Salil Parekh of Infosys, Rishad Premji of Wipro, as also Sumant Sinha of ReNew, Vijay Shekhar Sharma of Paytm and Adar Poonawalla of Serum Institute are expected in the Swiss

Geneva-based WEF, which describes itself as an international organisation for public-private cooperation, will convene leaders from government, business and civil society as well as scientific and cultural thinkers for its 55th annual meeting under the theme of for 'Collaboration Intelligent Age'.

Alpine resort town.

According to the WEF, the meeting will serve as a trusted global platform for dialogue cooperation, bring together a diverse community

connect the dots in an era of complexity and be firmly future-oriented -- both in terms of insights and solutions.

Several sessions are expected to be attended by Indian leaders, including one on 'India's Economic Blueprint'. As one of the world's fastestgrowing major economies, India has been growing at over 8 per cent, and this growth has been buoyed by a focus on promoting local innovation and startups in technology

manufacturing, representing a departure from traditional export-oriented models. The leaders would deliberate how India has capitalised on this new blueprint and to what extent it can continue to drive global growth.

According to the WEF, the annual meeting will take place at a time when geoeconomic fragmentation, geopolitical polarisation and divisions over values continue

communities across the world. At the same time, exponential innovation and deployment around whole sets of inter-connected technologies -- from AI and quantum to energy tech, biotech and health tech -offer an unprecedented opportunity to increase productivity and hence, standards of living. Reviving and reimagining

growth is critical to building stronger and more resilient economies, and the meeting would seek to discuss how to avoid avoid an Age of Fragmentation and instead work together on a can-do, people-centred agenda for an Intelligent Age. The global leaders would also deliberate on how to reinvent the muscle of collaborative innovation to get out of the current lowgrowth, high-debt world and address economy common challenges from

climate change to the ethical

PM CARES fund contributions fall to ₹912 crore in FY 23

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Actor Bhumi Pednekar,

crore in the fiscal year 2022-23, its lowest since the public charitable trust was created in March 2020 following the COVID-19 outbreak. A study of the audited

statements on the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) Fund website shows that the voluntary contribution peaked at Rs 7,184 crore in 2020-21 and then fell to Rs 1,938 crore in 2021-22, before declining further in 2022-23 as the Covid threat receded after 2021.

The fiscal 2022-23 is the last year for which the statement is available on the website.



Foreign contribution has seen a sharper decline, registering a high of Rs 495 crore in 2020-21, before falling to Rs 40 crore and Rs 2.57 crore in the next two

The total expenditure in 2022-23 was around Rs 439 crore, with Rs 346 crore of it the statement. used by the "PM Cares for The Children", a government government had set up the

initiative to support children who lost both of their parents, legal guardians or surviving parents to the Covid pandemic.

An amount of nearly Rs 92 crore was spent on the procurement of oxygen concentrators, according to

Modi Narendra

PM CARES Fund with the primary objective of dealing with any kind of emergency or distress situation, like the one posed by the Covid pandemic, and to provide relief to the affected. It was registered as a public charitable trust.

The prime minister is the exofficio chairman of the body and the fund consists entirely of voluntary contributions and does not get any budgetary support. The fund has been used over

the years to boost emergency care, including for setting up oxygen plants and purchasing ventilators in hospitals run by the central and state governments as part of the larger exercise to meet the challenges posed by the pandemic. In 2021-22, an amount of Rs

1,703 crore was spent on

pressure-swing adsorption oxygen plants, besides spending Rs 835 crore on ventilators, out of a total expenditure of nearly Rs 1.938 crore.

objective was undertake and support relief or assistance of any kind relating to a public health emergency or any other kind of emergency, calamity or distress, either man-made or natural, including the creation or upgradation of healthcare or pharmaceutical facilities, other necessary infrastructure, funding relevant research or any other type of support.

To render financial assistance, provide grants of payments of money or take such other steps as may be deemed necessary by the Board of Trustees to the

Indian Army contingent leaves for Nepal to participate in joint military exercise Surya Kiran

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

An Indian Army comprising 334 personnel departed for Nepal on Saturday to participate in 18th edition of battalion level joint military exercise Surya Kiran. The exercise will be conducted in Saljhandi, Nepal from December 31 to January 13, defence ministry said here adding it is an annual training event conducted alternatively in the two countries. The Indian Army contingent

is led by a battalion from the 11th Gorkha Rifles. The Nepal Army contingent will be represented by Srijung Battalion. The aim of the exercise is to enhance interoperability in jungle warfare, counter terrorism operational operations in mountains, and Humanitarian Assistance and

Through these activities, the troops will enhance their

Disaster Relief under United

Nations Charter. The exercise

will focus on enhancing

aviation aspects, medical

training, and environment

preparedness,

operational

conservation.

refine their combat skills and strengthen their coordination operate together in challenging situations.

This edition of the exercise follows successful visits by Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi to Nepal, and the visit by General Ashok Raj Sigdel, Chief of the Army Staff of Nepali Army to India.

him (Singh). He met our

president several times

during his tenure. He also

establishing the Palestinian

embassy in Delhi, gave support to build the

inaugurated it in 2012," Jazer

said."We appreciate his

land

provided

embassy,

support to

Mauritius announces flying flag at half-mast as mark of respect to Manmohan Singh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Mauritius has announced that its national flag will fly at half-mast at all government offices and institutions till sunset on Saturday as a mark of respect to India's former prime minister Manmohan Singh. Bhutan's national flag was flown at half-mast across the country, its embassies and consulates abroad, according to the Royal Bhutan government as a mark of respect to the departed.

In a note, Mauritius Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam's office also

urged the private sector to fly the flags at half-mast. Mauritius Foreign Minister Dhananjay Ramful travelled to Delhi and paid respects to the former prime minister. "Following the passing away of Dr Manmohan Singh,

public is hereby informed that the Mauritius Flag will be flown at half-mast on all government buildings until sunset today Saturday, the Bhutan's I Mauritius prime minister's attended the funeral of office said.

the private sector for all flags to be flown at half-mast," it said in the note. Singh, who served as the

prime minister from 2004 to 2014 and widely known as the architect of India's economic reforms, died on Thursday night. He was 92. India's relations with several key countries, including Mauritius, saw significant upswing during Singh's prime ministership.

Singh's last rites were held with full state honours on Saturday at the Nigambodh Ghat cremation ground in thousand butter lamps were Delhi. President Droupadi lit at the ceremony held in

former Prime Minister of Murmu, Prime Minister the Republic of India, the Narendra Modi and King of Narendra Modi and King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck were among those who attended Singh's funeral.

Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck former prime minister Manmo after leading the Himalayan nation in offering prayers for the Indian leader at a Buddhist monastery in Thimphu.Separate prayer ceremonies were held for the Indian prime at all 20 former minister Dzongkhags or districts of Bhutan, according to the Bhutan government.

Bhutan's national flag was flown at half-mast across the country and at its embassies, and consulates abroad, according to the Royal Bhutan government. A



Thimphu's Kuenrey of Tashichhodzong that was led by the King.

The prayer was attended by Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay, Indian ambassador Sudhakar Dalela, several members of the Royal family and senior officials of the Bhutanese government. "As a mark of respect to the late former prime minister and in solidarity with the government and people of India, all national flags across the country and at Bhutan's embassies, missions, and consulates abroad are being flown at half-mast," the Bhutanese government said in a social media post on Friday.

India's relations with several key countries including Bhutan saw significant upswing during Singh's prime ministership.

India and Bhutan enjoy strong bonds of friendship based on goodwill, trust and beneficial mutually cooperation.

India-Bhutan relations is the 'Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation' signed in 1949. It was renewed in February 2007, when Single was the 2007 when Singh was the prime minister. cooperation in the hydropower sector is one of the cornerstones of the relations.

The ongoing cooperation between India and Bhutan in the hydro-power sector is covered under the 2006 bilateral agreement for cooperation and its Protocol signed in 2009.

The pact and the protocol were inked during Singh's

CBI searches premises of

tenure as the prime minister. Meanwhile, Abed Elrazeg Abu Jazer, the charge d'affaires of the Palestine embassy in India, on Friday paid his last respects to the former prime minister and appreciated his support to Palestine. Jazer said Singh played a key role in Palestine in Delhi.

"We have a history of relationships. He (Singh) met Yasser Arafat in 1991 when he was finance minister, he met (State of President Palestine) Mahmoud Abbas several throughout times throughout his tenure," the diplomat told reporters outside the headquarters Congress where he paid tribute to the former prime minister on behalf of Palestine. He also laid a wreath on behalf of the president of the State of Palestine.

"We had good relations with

remembering contributions. We stand with the Indian people to show our respect for the leader," he added. Abbas visited New Delhi several times during the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government. In a speech before the UN General Assembly in September 2011, Singh had said India supported "the Palestinian people's struggle

for a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital".

As individuals age, singlehood may also bring economic, emotional challenges: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Although marriage or long-term relationships are often seen as the norm, remaining single for life is becoming an increasingly common choice. While singlehood can provide independence and freedom, a new study reveals that it may also bring economic and emotional challenges, particularly as individuals' age and become more dependent on others for

support. Published in the journal Psychological Science, the study highlights the lower life satisfaction and distinct personality traits of lifelong singles compared to their

partnered peers.
"When there are differences, they might be especially important in elderly people who face more health issues and financial issues," said Julia Stern, one of the lead authors, and a sonior authors and a senior researcher at the University of Bremen in Germany. "They need more help, and



partner."
The study used a survey of

more than 77,000 Europeans over the age of 50 and was the first of its kind to look across cultures and at people who had been single their entire lives. Stern and colleagues compared single people and partnered individuals on life satisfaction ratings and the Big Five personality traits (openness to experience, relationships, conscientiousness, socialization, extraversion, agreeableness, relationships could change neuroticism). The findings revealed that, in points to the former. Stern

satisfaction scores, lifelong singles are less extraverted, less conscientious, and less experience, compared to partnered

Although this study cannot definitively decipher if personality differences are due to selection, people with certain personality types may be more likely to start long-term

personalities, the evidence

that changes to personality from being in a relationship are small and temporary. For instance, although an extraverted person beginning a new relationship may be keen to stay in with their partner, eventually their extraversion comes back.

But she warned that the results are average effects and not necessarily descriptive of everyone; of course, there are single extraverts and introverts in committed relationships. For singles, living in a

society where marriage is the expectation may affect their life satisfaction. For instance, in countries with higher marriage rates (such as southern European countries), singlehood resulted in even lower life satisfaction scores, but the

effects were small. Stern suggested developing new kinds of programs to prevent loneliness that take these personality traits into consideration and help older singles meet like-minded

Assistant Director of ED in Shimla PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI

 $T^{\text{he CBI has searched the}}_{\text{premises of an Assistant}}$ Director of the ED in Shimla, who managed to give a slip to the agency during a trap operation on Sunday and escaped, officials said. The Assistant Director of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) posted at Shimla and his brother Vikas Deep, a senior manager in the Punjab National Bank in Delhi, had allegedly gone to Chandigarh to receive bribe money from a businessman, who is facing a case lodged under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA),

they said.
The businessman filed a complaint with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) about alleged extortion, based on which the Chandigarh unit of the agency planned the trap



CBI would nab the accused after the bribe was allegedly received by him, they said. The ED officer, who is on deputation from the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), got alerted during the operation and allegedly fled the spot with the cash, the officials said. The agency has been trying to locate him for six days. It has even launched technical

operation where the complainant was asked to give a bribe of Rs 55 lakh in cash to the officer with CBI sleuths keeping an eye, the officials said. It was planned that the

car used by the absconding officer to escape was also located at the ED office, the officials said. The CBI has arrested Vikas Deep in

connection with the case and produced him before a court, they said. The agency is questioning him regarding his alleged involvement in the case. Sources in the ED said the accused assistant director of its Shimla sub-zonal office and his supervisory officers -a deputy director and the joint director (based in Chandigarh) -- have been transferred to Delhi following

Principal Secretary to PM condoles Manmohan Singh's passing

PNS NEW DELHI

In his condolences on passing away of former Prime Minister Dr. Prime Minister Dr.
Manmohan Singh, Principal
Secretary to PM Dr PK
Mishra on Friday said the
country has lost a very
distinguished leader, an eminent economist and a great human being. "My memories of Dr. Manmohan Singh dates back

to the time when he was teaching at the Delhi School of Economics and I was in my M.A. first year. Seeing him among the stalwart professors in that era was reassuring for a student like me, having come from Sambalpur district in Odisha. Those were the days when very professors such as Amartya Mrinal Sen, Chaudhuri, A.M. Khusro, K.N. Raj, Chakraborty, Kumar and others were teaching there," Mishra said in a statement.

ED summons BRS Leader KT Rama Rao and others in formula-e money laundering case

The Enforcement Directorate has summoned Bharat Rashtra Samithi leader KT Rama Rao and some others for questioning next month in a money laundering case linked to alleged payment irregularities during a Formula-E race held in Hyderabad in February 2023 official sources said on Saturday The federal agency filed an enforcement case information report (ECIR) or FIR last week in the case under various sections of Prevention of Laundering Act (PMLA), taking cognisance of a Telangana Police Anticorruption Bureau (ACB)



Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president and son of former Telangana chief minister K Chandrashekhar Rao, Rama Rao has been asked to depose for recording of his been summoned on January 2 and January 3, respectively, they added.

The probe against 48-year-old Rama Rao, popular as KTR, pertains to alleged payments of about Rs 55 crore, some of it in foreign currency without approvals, to conduct a Formula-E race in Hyderabad during the previous BRS regime in February 2023. The Enforcement Directorate

(ED) is also probing possible foreign exchange violations in the case under the provisions Exchange Foreign Management Act (FEMA), as per the sources.

Rama Rao had denied any

wrongdoing, saying, "Where is the corruption in this? We have paid Rs 55 crore. They (Formula-E) acknowledged the payment.

He added that it was a "straightforward" account. "The HMDA has an account in Indian Overseas Bank and money has been transferred from that account..." he said while reacting to the ACB case. Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy also attacked Rama Rao for the alleged irregularities, saying about Rs 500 crore was saved with the state government under him deciding against further transfer of funds to the organisers of the racing event.

The Congress in Kerala on Saturday criticised Chief

Minister Pinarayi Vijayan for

participating in an official inau-

guration ceremony at the inter-

national airport here while the

nation was mourning the demise of former Prime

Minister Manmohan Singh.

Speaking to reporters here, Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly V D Satheesan

described the Chief Minister's

action as "disrespectful" and

disrespectful and

"inappropriate".

PTI ■ KOCHI

Tribals who received recognition from Manmohan Singh mourn his demise, recall cherished memories

As the nation bid adieu to former prime minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi on Saturday, two tribals in a remote Odisha district, who were honoured by him in 2012 for biodiversity conservation recalled with tears cherished memories with the beloved

Raila Muduli, a resident of Boliguda village and Chandra Pradhani of Nuaguda, said words were not enough to express their grief over the demise of Singh. The former PM passed away on Thursday night at Delhi's All India Institute of Medical Sciences due to age-related medical complications. He was 92. Muduli and Pradhani had Certificates received their Recognition for contribution to biodiversity



conservation from Singh during the 99th Indian Science Congress held at Bhubaneswar 12 years ago. "I was at a loss for words when I heard about his demise on Friday," said Raila, a farmer from the Bhumia tribe. "I remember feeling very nervous that day (in 2012), but receiving the award from the former prime minister was an

unforgettable moment. He was gentle and spoken, and encouraged us to work dedicatedly biodiversity conservation," he said. Pradhani couldn't hold

the award and motivated us to continue our efforts in preserving biodiversity. His words will remain an inspiration for years to come," he said. "I wish I had more opportunities to meet him," Pradhani said. Prasant Parida, director of the M S Research Swaminathan Foundation in Jeypore, said Koraput was recognised as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) by the Food and

back tears while recalling his brief interaction with Singh.

"Sir smiled at me as I received

Organisation Agriculture (FÃO) in 2012. 'Raila and Chandra were instrumental in representing Koraput at the event where the former

prime acknowledged their community's efforts," said

Manipur CM N Biren Singh condemns militant firing, four injured in Imphal east district



Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Saturday strongly condemned the indiscriminate firing by militants in Thamnapokpi and Sanasabi areas of Imphal East district in which four persons were

The CM in a post on X said, condemn the

indiscriminate firing by Kuki militants at Sanasabi and Thamnapokpi in Imphal East, which injured civilians and personnel. This

cowardly and unprovoked

attack on innocent lives is an

peace and

on

harmony Singh said additional security forces have been rushed to the affected areas and called for

calm and unity in the wake of such challenges.

statement on January 7, the

Senior IAS officer Arvind

Kumar and retired bureaucrat

Metropolitan Development

(HMDA)

former

Hyderabad

sources said

Authority

and

"Adequate security personnel have been rushed to the affected areas. The injured are receiving necessary medical and government calls for calm and unity in the face of such challenges. Central forces and state police should have proper coordination and understanding when dealing with such situations" Singh added.

A video journalist was injured in firing by armed men from the hills in Manipur's Imphal East district on Saturday morning, police said.

Kabichandra, a video journalist of a private TV channel, sustained bullet injuries on his left thigh and was rushed to a hospital, they said, adding that he was hit by a bullet fired likely by a

Kabichandra was reporting the attack by armed men at Thamnapokpi village since Friday.

Security forces also retaliated the fire, they said.

On Friday night firing by militants towards Thamnapokpi in Imphal East district from the surrounding hills of Kangpokpi district an elderly woman was injured rushed was

Yaingangpokpi Primary Health Centre for treatment and is out of danger. Earlier on Friday, two persons

inappropriate for someone like the CM to attend and inaugurate an official event at including a security personnel Kochi airport while the funeral of Manmohan Singh, were injured in firing at who served as Prime Minister



Kerala Congress slams CM Pinarayi Vijayan for inaugurating

of India for ten years, is being held in New Delhi, the Lol

said. He added that the Chief Minister of Kerala should not have attended such an event and that a request had been made to the airport management to postpone the function and inform the Chief Minister about it the day before.

Satheesan expressed his "grief and protest" over the

"disrespect" shown by the Earlier in the day, Vijayan inaugurated the Taj Cochin

International Airport, a five-

star hotel developed by Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) and operated by the IHCL Taj Group. In New Delhi, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was cremated with full state

honours on Saturday in the presence of top dignitaries from India and abroad. The last rites were attended by

President Droupadi Murmu, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with top Congress leaders including Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi, and

Four lives lost in separate road accidents in **Madhva Pradesh**



PTI ■ BHOPAL

Four men were killed and two others suffered injuries in separate road accidents in Sehore and Katni districts of Madhya Pradesh on Saturday, police said

Vinand Gyanchand (20) and his cousin Ajay Ghasiram Verma (25) were crushed to death by a truck when they were returning home in Kothari village of Sehore district, Ashta area Sub Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) Akash Amalkar told PTI. The truck driver fled from the spot, located around 25 km from the district headquarters, but was caught within a few minutes, he said. The victims' bodies were sent to a government hospital for post-mortem, Amalkar said. The process to register a case against the driver was on and investigation was underway,

drivers of two trucks were killed after their vehicles collided on Katni-Damoh road, about 33 km off the

Denial of fireworks permission sparks row at Thrissur Temples,

shrine managements cry foul

assault

PTI ■ THRISSUR/KERALA

The district administration's I denial of permission for the fireworks display during 'Vela Ezunnallippu', a traditional ritual, at the famed Paramekkavu Thiruvambady temples here has sparked a row with the shrine managements viewing it as a "test dose" to destroy the iconic Thrissur Pooram.

Magistrate (ADM) here on Friday issued an order denying permission for the display connection with the annual ritual citing the new amendment to the union government's Explosive Rules and based on reports of various state government departments in accordance with that.

The Vela Ezunnallippu ritual and the related fireworks display of the two temples are scheduled in January first

In the order, the district administration stated that there is no physical circumstance to carry out the fireworks display in the area and it may pose a threat to the life and property of the public.

The opinion of concerned investigating officers that the fireworks should not be allowed taking into account the safety of public life has also been considered, said the order.

The order was issued on the request for permission to conduct fireworks display submitted by Thiruvambady Devaswom.

the order Meanwhile, denying permission to the

BISWAJEET BANERJEE

fireworks display citing the central explosive drew sharp guidelines reactions from the temple managements.

K Girish Kumar, Secretary, Thiruvambady Devaswom, vehemently criticised the move and said permission for the fireworks display is being denied citing technical reasons and urged political leaders and ministers from voice against it. 'The Vela Ezunnallippu and

its related fireworks are held on the same Swaraj Round where the Thrissur Pooram is conducted annually. The present move is a test

dose to destroy the iconic Pooram," he told reporters

Rejecting the reasons for denying permission for the fireworks display, he said the school, hospital, petrol pump and other such institutions have been there in the area for years and the rituals were held there without any issues in the past.

The fireworks display is to be conducted in the midnight after taking all necessary precautions and so it won't pose any security issues as claimed in the order, the Devaswom Secretary further

Without naming anyone, he further alleged that there were attempts to block the parading of jumbos and the apex court granted permission for the same recently. Now-a-days, the temple authorities are forced to approach the court for each and everything to protect traditional rituals, he added.

Patna district administration offers to facilitate meeting between BPSC and protesting candidates over exam cancellation demand

PTI PATNA

The Patna district adminis-Tration on Saturday said it has made an offer to the candidates, demanding cancellation of the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) examination held on December 13, to facilitate a meeting with it so that they could put forth their grievances.

The candidates, cancellation of the 70th Combined Integrated (CCE), 2024, under the BPSC over allegations of question paper leak have been protesting for more than a

The protestors would be required to nominate five of



after which the BPSC would take a decision "within a reasonable time", Patna District Magistrate (DM) Chandrasekhar Singh said. "The district administration has offered the protesting

representatives (all of them examinees) so that we can facilitate their meeting with the BPSC authorities over the issue," the DM told PTI on Saturday.

"They can apprise the

commission's officials of their grievances in the The district administration also assures the protesting aspirants that the commission would take appropriate decisions or a stand within a reasonable time," Singh said.

The commission is an independent body and it is free to make decisions on its own, he said.

cancel the preliminary examination Pariksha Parisar centre only due to disruption created by a group of unruly aspirants. The re-examination will be held on January 4 at some other centre in the city. The protestors have been

contend that cancellation should be ordered across the board since re-examination for just one centre would go against the principle of "level playing field". Meanwhile, the Patna Police have issued notices to certain

people, associated

sitting on dharna at Gardani

Bagh for several days. They

coaching institutes, and sought clarification over sought The BPSC had decided to allegedly instigating the protesting aspirants speeches while addressing students at Gardani Bagh, the dedicated site for organising rotests in the city.
"Yes, notices have been

Police in this regard.

Katni district headquarters, Rithi police station inspector served to them by the Patna Rajendra Mishra told PTI. ED raids Chhattisgarh Cong MLA Kawasi Lakhma, son in money

laundering case linked to liquor scam

he added.

Punjab Govt reclaims 12,809 acres of land worth ₹3,080 Crore, generates ₹573.66 Crore in revenue

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

The Punjab government has so far reclaimed 12,809 acres of land and handed them over to panchavats since the start of a campaign in 2022 to remove encroachments, Minister Tarunpreet Singh Sond said on Saturday. The market value of this

reclaimed land exceeds Rs 3,080 crore, he added. About 6,000 acres of the reclaimed land was leased out, generating an annual income of Rs 10.76 crore during the 2024-25 fiscal, the development

panchayat minister said. During the current financial year, the rural development and panchayats department auctioned 1.36 lakh acres of 'shamlat (village common land)' for Rs 469 crore.

Another Rs 93.90 crore was generated by leasing livestock markets through e-auctions, the minister said. Under the Pradhan Mantri

Yojana (Gramin), 18,000 homes, costing about Rs 220 crore, will be completed by the end of this fiscal, he said. In the 2025-26 fiscal, an

additional 25,000 houses will be constructed.

To identify new beneficiaries, a fresh survey has been underway since November 1, with dedicated surveyors deployed in each village, Sond He said the department initiated the Rural Library Scheme from Issru village (in Khanna) this year, realising Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's vision of establishing libraries in villages.

chief minister inaugurated the first library on August 15. At present, 114 rural libraries are functional across Punjab while work on 179 is underway, he said.

department facilitated financial assistance for self-help groups by enabling them to secure loans worth Rs 94.35 crore from banks, according to an official statement.

Under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Rs 983.98 crore was spent

during the 2024-25 fiscal, generating 2.15 crore persondays of employment.

An average of 7.02 lakh rural families were provided employment under the scheme this year, according to the statement.

The department also planted 95.03 lakh saplings in 2024. Besides, 2,461 sports grounds were built and work on 1,623 is underway

Various initiatives are being undertaken to enhance the aesthetics of villages and effectively manage waste, the minister said.

He mentioned that panchayat elections were conducted in 2024, during which 3,044 panchayats

were elected unanimously. Cyber fraudsters target Mahakumbh mela, police crackdown on fake booking websites

PTI ■ RAIPUR

Enforcement Directorate on Saturday conducted raids at the premises of Chhattisgarh Congress MLA and former excise minister Kawasi Lakhma, his son and some others as part of a money laundering investigation linked to an alleged liquor scam in the state, official sources said.

They said a total of seven premises including Lakhma's residence in Raipur and his son Harish Lakhma's premises in Sukma district apart from that of some linked persons - are being searched under the provisions of the Prevention of Money

Laundering Act (PMLA). The Chhattisgarh Congress alleged the raids were part of a conspiracy by the BJP to harass the opposition party's leaders ahead of urban body

and panchayat polls. Lakhma, 71, is a six-time

panchayat president in his district The ED sources said they are

investigating allegations made by some "key accused" that Lakhma was paid about Rs 2 crore per month between 2020-2022 when he held the excise portfolio. According to the agency, the

alleged liquor scam was orchestrated between 2019-22 under the then chief minister Bhupesh Baghel-led Congress government.

The Chhattisgarh liquor scam resulted in massive loss to the state exchequer and filled the pockets of the beneficiaries of the liquor syndicate with more than Rs 2,100 crore illegal proceeds of crime," the claimed earlier.

Chhattisgarh communication president Sushil Anand Shukla told PTI that central agencies are being misused as urban body and panchayat elections are expected to be

BJP to harass Congress

PRAYAGRAJ n a growing trend of cyber In a growing tiene I fraud targeting the Maha Kumbh Mela, several fake websites promising hotel, tent, and cottage bookings have come to light, prompting the police to launch an intensive crackdown On Friday, the cyber police registered cases against four such fraudulent websites and subsequently shut them down. Deputy Inspector of Cyber Cell Vinod Kumar Yadav

pilgrims significant sums of money under the guise of bookings, he said, urging people to remain vigilant. This marks the fifth case

and

registered against websites since November 18, when the cyber police began targeting such fraudulent activities.

A dedicated team is now investigating the domains of these sites to identify their operators.

and acted upon are: https://mahakumbhfestival.c https://mahakumbhcottages

The four websites identified

being managed.

reservation.org/ https://jainmandiranddhara mshala.in/ https://mahakumbhcottages

reservation.org/
The cyber police confirmed that FIRs have been filed, and efforts are underway to track down the fraudsters. "Once

cybercriminals see unsuspecting devotees. The police have advised

platforms thoroughly and rely only on official websites for reservations. Authorities are also urging citizens to report suspicious websites

The Maha Kumbh Mela, a globally renowned religious gathering, attracts millions of pilgrims. With this influx, opportunity to exploit

pilgrims to verify booking

MLA from Konta assembly activities

held in the state. This is a conspiracy by the leaders, he said.

the domain details are immediately, reinforcing the Emails have been sent to seat and served as excise received, we will expedite the stated that cybercriminals fake bathing message that collective vigilance is the key to preventing such frauds. platforms and special hosting services to uncover minister in the previous arrest of those behind this were exploiting the faith and offering premium services, arrangements. "These the registrants and locations Congress government. Harish enthusiasm of devotees by scam," Yadav added. including accommodations websites deceiving from where these sites are Lakhma is stated to be a

Putin apologises to Azerbaijani leader for Israeli airstrikes hit Yemen airport 'tragic incident' involving crashed plane

ınday pioneer

 R^{ussian} President Vladimir Putin on Saturday apologised to his Azerbaijani counterpart for what he called a "tragic incident" following the crash of an Azerbaijani airliner in Kazakhstan that killed 38

people. The Kremlin said in a statement that air defence systems were firing near Grozny, the regional capital of the Russian republic of Chechnya, due to a Ukrainian drone strike as the plane attempted to land on Wednesday. It stopped short of saying the plane was shot down by Russian air defences.

According to a Kremlin readout of the call, Putin apologised to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev "for the fact that the tragic incident occurred in Russian airspace?

The plane was flying from Azerbaijan's capital of Baku to Grozny, when it turned toward Kazakhstan and crashed while making an attempt to land. There were 29 survivors.

On Friday, a US official and an Azerbaijani minister made sep-

crash on an external weapon. Friday's assessments by Rashan Nabivev and White House national security spokesman John Kirby echoed those made by outside aviation experts who blamed the crash on Russian air defence systems responding to a Ukrainian attack. Neither Kirby or the Azerbaijani minister directly addressed the statements blaming air defences.

Kirby told reporters on Friday that the US "have seen some early indications that would certainly point to the possibility that this jet was brought down by Russian air defence systems," but refused to elaborate, citing an ongoing investiga-

Nabiyev, Azerbaijan's minister of digital development and transportation, told Azerbaijani media that "preliminary conclusions by experts point at external impact," as does witness testimony. Passengers and crew who survived the crash told Azerbaijani media that they heard loud noises on the aircraft as it was circling over Grozny. Dmitry Yadrov, head of Russia's civil aviation authority Rosaviatsia, said Friday that as the plane was preparing to land in Grozny in deep fog, Ukrainian drones were target ing the city, prompting authorities to close the area to air traffic. Yadrov said that after the captain made two unsuccessful attempts to land, he was offered other airports but decided to fly to Aktau in Kazakhstan, across the Caspian Sea.

He didn't comment on statements from some aviation experts, who pointed out that holes seen in the plane's tail section suggested that it could have come under fire from Russian air defence systems. Earlier this week, Rosaviatsia cited unspecified early evidence

as showing that the pilots divert-

ed to Aktau after a bird strike led taxiing in after touching down. to an emergency on board. Fortunately, that plane was In the days following the crash, able to land safely and the pas-Azerbaijan Airlines blamed sengers were able to disembark "physical and technical interferbut it could have been far, far ence" and announced the susworse," said Harneis, who was pension of flights to several with WHO Director-General Russian airports. It didn't say Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus where the interference came in the lounge. from or provide any further

He said one airstrike landed approximately 300 metres (330

AP UNITED NATIONS

said Friday.

Tsraeli airstrikes hit Yemen's

⊥main airport as a civilian

Airbus 320 with hundreds of

passengers on board was land-

ing and a UN delegation was

waiting to leave, the UN's top

humanitarian official in Yemen

Julien Harneis told UN

reporters that the most fright-

ening thing about the two

airstrikes on Thursday wasn't

their effect on him and about

15 others in the VIP lounge at

the international airport in

Yemen's capital, Sanaa, includ-

ing the head of the UN World

Rather, it was the destruction

of the airport control tower as

a Yemenia Airways plane was

Health Organisation.

and another about 300 metres to the north around 4:45 pm, while about five members of the UN team were outside the building. "Not only obviously did we have zero indication of any potential airstrikes, but we cannot remember the last time there were airstrikes in Sanaa during daylight hours," Harneis said in a video news conference from Sanaa.

The UN said at least three people were killed and dozens iniured in the strike. Among the injured was a crew member from the UN Humanitarian Air Service, which was about to fly the UN delegation of some 20 people out of Sanaa.

He suffered a serious leg injury from shrapnel and lost a lot of blood, Harneis said.

Immediately after the airstrikes Harneis said, UN security officials moved the delegation out of the VIP building and into five armoured cars where they waited for approximately 40 minutes to ascertain what happened and help the injured crew member.

He was taken to a hospital in UN delegation were at the Harneis said 18 million

Sanaa and underwent four hours of surgery while the rest of the delegation spent the night in a UN compound, Harneis said. The UN plane with Tedros and the UN team, including the injured crew member, was able to depart for Jordan on Friday afternoon without an operating control

Jet with hundreds onboard was landing at that time, says UN official

The United Nations said the injured crew member was taken to a hospital in Jordan, and Tedros was heading back to Geneva, where WHO is based.

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels, who control Sanaa and much of the country's north, have gone after Israel since it started attacking Gaza following the Oct 7, 2023 attacks by Gaza's Hamas militants on southern Israel. The Houthis have attacked ships in the Red Sea, disrupting one of the world's main maritime routes, and recently stepped up missile and drone attacks on Israel. Israel has escalated its response.

The Israeli army said it wasn't aware that the WHO chief or

Sanaa airport on Thursday. Israel said it bombed the airport because it is used by the Houthis and Iran. Harneis responded, stressing

that the airport is civilian, not military, and is used for transporting UN and other humanitarian workers, and for one civilian flight — Yemenia to and from Amman, Jordan. The flight operates as a result of an international agreement, and thousands of Yemenis have used the flight to get advanced medical treatment abroad, he

Yemen is the Arab world's poorest nation and has been engulfed in a 10-year civil war between the Houthi rebels. who control Sanaa and much of the country's north, and the internationally recognised government forces in the south.

Tedros was in the country to discuss its worsening humanitarian crisis and to seek the release of about 50 people detained by the Houthis since June from the UN, nongovernmental organisations and civil society.

Yemenis — about half the country's population — need humanitarian assistance this year, and the UN expects the number to increase to 19 million next year because of the worsening economy.

In addition to airstrikes on the Sanaa airport, Israel has been attacking the country's key port of Hodeida, in western Yemen. Harneis said Yemen relies on imports through Hodeida for 80% of its food and more than 90% of its medical supplies to the north.

A recent Israeli airstrike destroyed two tugboats and is estimated to have reduced the harbor's capacity by 50%, the UN official said, while damage from Thursday's airstrikes hasn't been assessed vet.

As for the detainees, Harneis said he joined the WHO chief at meetings with the Houthi prime minister, foreign minister and a member of the group's Supreme Political Council. He said they received commitments on the detainees' possible release and a pathway to it, and on conditions under which they are being held.

Israel detains director of Gaza hospital

AP DEIR AL-BALAH

Israel's army detained the director of one of northern Gaza's last functioning hospitals as overnight strikes in the territory killed nine people, including children, Palestinian medical officials said Saturday. Gaza's Health Ministry said Dr

Hussam Abu Safiya, director of Kamal Adwan Hospital, was arrested by Israeli forces Friday along with dozens of other staff and taken to an interrogation centre. The ministry said Israeli troops stormed the hospital and forced many staff and patients outside and told them to strip in winter weather, according to the ministry. Israel's army didn't respond to questions about the

FORMATION WORKS IN

KATIHAR DIVISION

Tender Notice No. : KIR/Engg./55 of

invited by the undersigned for the followin

ork; Tender No. 1; Brief Description

of Work: New Jalpaiguri-Siliguri Jn. 8 Siliguri Jn.-Aluabari – Provision of track

machine siding-1 and 2 stations

respectively under the jurisdiction of

Sr. DEN/III/Katihar (P. Way works and

Formation work). Tender Value: ₹2.03.64.263.73/-: Bid Security

₹2,51,800/-; <u>Tender No. 2;</u> Brie

Renovation of ORH Suite No. A, B, E & F

and Room No. 1 & 2 including out sid

painting etc. Tender Value

₹48,81,109.89; Bid Security: ₹97,600/-;

15:00 hrs. and opening at 15:30 hrs. or

the tender document of above e-tender wil

be available upto 15:00 hrs. on 22-01-2025

ww.ireps.gov.in

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

AMC FOR 70 MTR CRICKET

GROUND MAINTENANCE

Tender Notice No : 41 of 2024 Date

26-12-2024. E-Tender are invited by the

70 mtr cricket ground maintenance as pe

BCCI standard for 22.5 months (re

tender). Tender Value: ₹1,43,53,200/-Earnest Money: ₹2,21,800/-; Date 8

hrs. on 17-01-2025 and opening or

17-01-2025 after closing. For complete

information with the tender document o

above e-tender will be available up to it

MORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

PUBLIC NOTICE

Applicant Rakshpal Singh son of Shri Sonela esident-390, Haldani, Kulesara is a resident o sistirctic Gautam Buddha Nagar. The behavior of thi applicant's son Vipin Shakya and daughter-in-law darishma alias Rani has been cruel towards the applicant and his family. The applicant's son Vipin halvay and daughter-in-law Karishma alias Ran law domestic disputes over small matters every lay. Despite the explanation from the applicant and he applicant's family, the applicant's son Vipin Shakya and daughter-in-law Karishma alias Rani ard to ready to explain. Due to their wong conduct and to the product of the conduct and the conduct and the product of the conduct and the product of the conduct and the product and the product of the conduct and the product and the product of the conduct the product and the product t

onaxya and outgright-in-law Marishima alias Harii i tol ready to explain. Due to their wrong conduct a behaviour, the applicant breaks his relationship with min and evids both of them from all the movable a mmovable properties registered in the name of t applicant all over India. The applicant withdraws is property from his son Vioin Shakya a augyther-in-law Kanshma alias Rani, Family a nopestrables are completely evered. In future of the

ncestral ties are completely severed. In future, if the

pplicant's son and daughter-in-law borrow an hing or money from any person or do an ransaction, then the applicant and other famil nembers will not have any responsibility.

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE FOR BIU

2024/MLG, dated: 26-12-2024. Open

E-Tenders are invited by the

Tender No.: DCBL392024MLG; Nam

of works: Annual Maintenance for BIL

1 & 2 at Bogibeel near Dibrugarh fo

06 (Six) years. Approximate Tende

Value: ₹48,67,500/-; Bid Security

₹97,400/-. Date of closing of Tender

17-01-2025 at 15.00 hrs. Date o

Opening of Tenders: 17-01-2025 a

15.05 hrs. at office of the Deputy Chie

Engineer/Bridge-Line/Maligaon

Guwahati- 781011 (Assam). Fo

Details please visit www.ireps.gov.in

Dy. CE/Bridge-Line/Maligao

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No. DCBL/17

Dy. CE/Estate/Maligac

the website http://www.ireps.gov.in

DRM (W), Katiha

22-01-2025. For complete information wit

ite & time of closing of above tenders a

director. On Friday, it denied it MedGlobal, the humanitarian had entered or set fire to the hospital complex but acknowledged it had ordered people outside, and said it was conducting operations against Hamas infrastructure and militants in the area. The military repeated claims that Hamas militants operate inside Kamal Adwan but provided no evidence. Hospital officials

The hospital has been hit multiple times over the past three months by Israeli troops waging an offensive in largely isolated northern Gaza against Hamas fighters it says have regrouped. The health ministry said a strike on the hospital earlier this week killed five medical personnel.

have denied that.

organisation for which Abu Safiya worked, said Friday it was gravely concerned about him. It said the incident follows the October detention of five other staff, calling it an "alarming and egregious pattern of targeting medical personnel and spaces."
Israel's nearly 15-month-old

campaign of bombardment and ground offensives has devastated Gaza's health sector. The World Health Organisation has said the raid on Kamal Adwan has put northern Gaza's last major health facility "out of service" after growing restrictions on access, adding that "this horror must end and healthcare must

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, DELHI

4[™] FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001 Notice under section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Bank and Financial Institutions Act 1993 read with rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rule) 1993) in the matter of Date: 21.10.2024

TA No.196/2022 CENTRAL BANK OF INDIA

MR. VIJAY KISHORE & ORS.

To. DEFENDANT MR. VIJAY KISHORE

House No.E-162, Sushant Lok Phase-II, Sector-56, Gurgaon, Haryana-12201

House No.E-162, Sushant Lok Phase-II, Sector-56, Gurgaon, Haryana-12201 SHUBHKAMNA BUILDTECH PVT. LTD.

R/o 197 E Pkt.-IV. Mayur Vihar Phase-I, Delhi-110091 Also At: Plot No GH/05 Sector-137 Noida - 201301

Whereas the above named applicant(s) has/have instituted a case for recovery of Rs.48.23.705/- (Rupees Forty Eight Lakh Twenty Three Thousand Hundred Five Only) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on 14.02.2025 at 11:00 A.M.

Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before the mentioned the case will be heard and determined in your absence All the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing or Physical and

All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the "Cisco Webex" application

"Meeting ID" and "Password" for the date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Hon'ble Presiding Officer / Registrar shall be displayed in the daily cause list itself at DRT Official Portal i.e. "drt.gov.in".

undersigned for the following work (iii) In any exigency qua that, the Advocate / Litigants can contact the concerne Tender No.: DCESTMLG-34-2024 official at Ph. No.23748478. Name of Work: At NFRSA - AMC for

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal this the 21st Day of October 2024 BY ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL, SECTION OFFICER, DRT-II, DELHI

SPECIAL TRAINS

In order to clear extra rush of passengers, Railways have decided to run the following Special Trains as per details given below:-03255/03256 Patna Jn. - Anand Vihar (T) - Patna Jn. 08

1	Express Special Train (Bi-Weekly)						
	Train No.: 03255		L STATIONS ♠	Train No.: 03256			
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STOPPAGES: Danapur, Ara Jn., Buxar, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Jn. Prayagraj Jn. & Govindpuri Jn. stations.

ACCOMMODATION: AC-2 Tier, AC-3 Tier, AC-3 Tier Economy, Sleeper & General

0	0/0/5/0/0/6 Hyderabad Jn Gorakhpur Jn Hyderabad Jn. Express Special Train								
Train N	Train No.: 07075		STATIONS	A	Train No.: 07076				
ARR.	DEP.	+	STATIONS		ARR.	DEP.			
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advice and 07076 from Gorakhpur Jn. on 05.01.2025 till further advice STOPPAGES: Secunderabad, Kazipet Jn., Peddapalli, Mancheral Balharshah, Chandrapur, Nagpur, Betul, Jujharpur, Itarsi Jn., Bhopal Bina Jn., Virangana Lakshmibai Jhansi, Orai, Pokhrayan, Kanpur Centra Aishbagh, Lucknow City, Gomti Nagar, Barabanki Jn. & Gonda Jn. stations ACCOMMODATION: AC-2 Tier, AC-3 Tier, Sleeper & General. For detailed information regarding stoppages and timings

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NORTHERN RAILWAY Your Convenience - Our Concern

Trump asks Supreme Court to delay TikTok ban January 19, 2025, while it conincluding a meeting last week with TikTok CEO Shou Chew.

PTI WASHINGTON

S President-elect Donald Trump asked the Supreme Court on Friday to pause the potential TikTok ban from going into effect until his administration can pursue a "political resolution" to the

The request came as TikTok and the Biden administration filed opposing briefs to the court, in which the company argued the court should strike down a law that could ban the platform by Jan 19 while the government emphasised its position that the statute is needed to eliminate a national security risk.

President Trump takes no position on the underlying merits of this dispute. Instead, he respectfully requests that the Court consider staying the Act's deadline for divestment of

siders the merits of this case," said Trump's amicus brief, which supported neither party in the case and was written by D John Sauer, Trump's choice for solicitor general.

The argument submitted to the court is the latest example of Trump inserting himself in national issues before he takes The Republican president-elect

has already begun negotiating with other countries over his plans to impose tariffs, and he intervened earlier this month in a plan to fund the federal government, calling for a bipartisan plan to be rejected and sending Republicans back to the negotiating table.

He has been holding meetings with foreign leaders and business officials at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida while he assembles his administration.

Trump has reversed his position on the popular app, having tried to ban it during his first term in office over national security concerns. He joined the TikTok during his 2024 presidential campaign and his team used it to connect with younger voters, especially male voters, by pushing content that was often macho and aimed at going viral.

He said earlier this year that he still believed there were national security risks with TikTok, but that he opposed banning it.

The filings Friday come ahead of oral arguments scheduled for Jan 10 on whether the law, which requires TikTok to divest from its China-based parent company or face a ban, unlawfully restricts speech in violation of the First Amendment.

President Joe Biden in April after it passed Congress with broad bipartisan support. TikTok and ByteDance filed a legal challenge afterwards. Earlier this month, a panel of three federal judges on the US

Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit unanimously upheld the statute, leading TikTok to appeal the case to the Supreme The brief from Trump said he

opposes banning TikTok at this junction and "seeks the ability to resolve the issues at hand through political means once he takes office".

In their brief to the Supreme Court on Friday, attorneys for TikTok and its parent company ByteDance argued the federal appeals court erred in its ruling and based its decision on "alleged risks' that China could

exercise control" over TikTok's US platform by pressuring its foreign affiliates

The Biden administration has argued in court that TikTok poses a national security risk due to its connections to China. Officials say Chinese authorities can compel ByteDance to hand over information on TikTok's US patrons or use the platform to spread or suppress information.

But the government "concedes that it has no evidence China has ever attempted to do so, TikTok's legal filing said, adding that the US fears are predicated on future risks. In its filing Friday, the Biden

administration said because TikTok "is integrated with ByteDance and relies on its propriety engine developed and maintained in China," its corporate structure carries with

Italy's parliament approves budget

taly's parliament on Saturday approved the government's 2025 budget, worth about 30 billion euros (USD 31 billion) in tax cuts and for low-income citizens.

The measures, pushed by the far-right cabinet headed by Premier Giorgia Meloni, won final approval in the Upper

House by 108 votes to 63. The country's centre-left opposition had harshly criticised the economic package, saying it didn't meet the premier's pledges to slash taxes for most Italians and boost

employment.

(LASSIFIED)

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Soni Mishra, W/o- No. 8377938K WO Ashutosh Mishra, R/o- H.NO.- 04, Azad Road, Chandausi, Dist-Sambhal, U.P.- 244412, have changed my name from Soni Mishra to Soni Tiwari for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 28/12/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

I, ANJALI W/o SANJAY KUMAR, HOUSE NO-00 SHAHPUR GOVARDHANPUR, SEC-128 Noida Gautam Budh Nagar UP-201304. Declare that in my passport documents. My mentioned name is Anjali Chauhan that is my correct name is Anjali and Anjali

same person.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PD(1166)C

chauhan is one and both are Ch. 830, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi - 11000 PD(1167)C

General Public is hereby informed that I, Inder Kumar Arora have filed / filing application in L&DO for substitution of Property bearing No. L-88, Lajpat Nagar-II, New Delhi-110024 in my name on the ground of will and Relinquishment Deed. If there is/ are any objection(s)/claim(s) from the general public on the application, the same shall be communicated to L&DO with supporting documents through registered post or by visiting L&DO. Nirman Bhawar New Delhi, or through an email at Ido@nic.in, within 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice.

Inder Kumar Arora, L-88, Lajpat Nagar -II, New Delhi-110024 Date: 28.12.2024 Mobile: 9871289220

Afghan forces target Pakistan in retaliation for deadly airstrikes

∆ fghanistan's its forces hit several points inside Pakistan in retaliation for deadly airstrikes last week.

Pakistan last Tuesday launched an operation to destroy a training facility and kill insurgents in Afghanistan's eastern Paktika province. The strikes killed dozens of people, mostly women and children. Comments from the Taliban Defence Ministry on outlet, Hurriyet Daily News,

Saturday, posted on X, said its cited ministry sources as saying forces targeted Pakistani points that the strikes killed 19 Pakistani Defence that "served as centres and hidetheir supporters who organised and coordinated attacks in Afghanistan." Ministry spokesperson Enayatullah Khwarzami gave no further information about the strikes, including how they were carried out and if there were any casualties on either side.

However, a pro-Taliban media

troops and three Afghan civilians. No one from Pakistan's Foreign Ministry was immediately available for comment. People celebrated Afghanistan's retaliation in the country's southeastern Khost province, according to the organ-

iser, Rasheedullah Hamdard. Thousands turned out to show their happiness and assure the Afghan military of their support against Pakistan. Khost neighbours Paktika, which was targeted last week. "All of them were chanting angry slogans against this action by Pakistan, such as said. "All Afghans are brothers, so it is necessary that the nation and government show their pride in their blood." Pakistani officials have accused the Taliban of not doing enough to combat crossborder militant activity, a charge the Taliban government denies, saying it does not allow anyone to carry out attacks against any country from its soil.

BNP criticises Yunus' suggestion to lower voting age to 17

PTI DHAKA

¬he Bangladesh Nationalist The Bangiauesii Thatagar Party (BNP) on Saturday said that Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus' suggestion to set the minimum voting age at 17 would put pressure on the Election Commission and could delay the election process.

Yunus, 84, who was sworn-in to lead the interim government after the ouster of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina in August, on Friday suggested that

PUBLIC NOTICE ublic is hereby informed that Mrs. Neelam v Rawat is intending to sell One Portion bearin n Third Floor, Front side, (without roof rights by bearing MCD No. 173/3-F. in Ward No. 3, s09, on Inird Floor, Front side, (without roof rights), 800 roperty bearing MCD No. 1735-7. In Ward No. 3, out ra No. 1151/3 min., situated at Ashirwac Apartment, 1840 ltd 18 pro at Village Mehrault, New Delhi-11603, i) 48 Husna and (2) Mr. Syvge both Dick of Monamas ark (Mu Mubarik) to be financios 6 mortgaged by mit 1, e., Mrs. Save Housing Finance Limited. The Origin Deed dated 68 06 1998 as Doc. No. 12056, pertaining to loved attended at 0.6 8 2006 as Doc. No. 12056, pertaining to thoresaid properly have been lost and compain beam for the control of t

the minimum voter age should be lowered to 17 years, The Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported.

In a video message played in an election dialogue, Yunus said, "To give their (youth) opinion on their own future, I think the voting age for them should be fixed at 17 years." BNP secretary general Mirza

Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, during a discussion at the Jativa Press Club here, said the chief adviser's suggestion to lower the voting age to 17 means a new voter list would have to be prepared.

"Now, people will fear that even more time will be wasted and further delays will occur," he was Alamgir said there is an impression among the people that the interim government is deliberate-

The BNP leader said the chief adviser should not have raised the issue without first consulting the stakeholders.

ly trying to delay the election

process. "But that is not my per-

ception," he added.

"You are the chief executive, and you said that 17 years is better. When you say this, it becomes binding on the Election Commission," he said.

Alamgir said the government should have left the matter to the Election Commission, allowing it to make a decision.

He said that the current minimum age of 18 for becoming a voter is acceptable to all. "If you want to reduce it by one

Commission propose it and engage in discussions with the political parties," the BNP leader During his Victory Day speech

year, then let the new Election

on December 16, Yunus indicated that elections might be held by early 2026.

"Broadly speaking, the election can be scheduled between the end of 2025 and the first half of 2026," he said.

Yunus said that the elections would be held after updating the

voters' list.

9th telecom firm hit by massive Chinese espionage campaign, White House says

AP WASHINGTON

A ninth US telecom firm has been confirmed to have been hacked as part of a sprawling Chinese espionage campaign that gave officials in Beijing access to private texts and phone conversations of an unknown number of Americans, a top White House official has said.

Salt Typhoon. But deputy national security adviser Anne Neuberger told reporters Friday that a ninth victim had been identified after the administration released guidance to companies about how to hunt for Chinese culprits in their networks.

panies, as well as dozens of

nations, had been affected by the

Chinese hacking blitz known as

tor and laid bare China's hacking sophistication. The hackers compromised the networks of telecommunications companies to obtain customer call records and gain access to the private communications of what officials have said is a a limited number of individuals.

massive hacking operation that

has alarmed national security

officials, exposed cybersecurity

vulnerabilities in the private sec-

Biden administration offi-

cials said this month that at least eight telecommunications com-

The update from Neuberger

is the latest development in a

Gutsy Reddy's maiden ton keeps India afloat

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Nitish Reddy, an unknown entity in red ball cricket before the start of Border-Gavaskar series, virtually bailed India out with his dogged maiden Test century here on Saturday, severely denting Australia's hopes of winning the Boxing Day

Reddy's unbeaten 105 took India to 358 for nine, still 116 runs short of Australia's first innings score of 474 as rain brought an early end to the

third day's play. With the flat MCG deck not offering much to the bowlers, saving the Test match shouldn't be a big deal for India. Reddy, easily India's 'find of the series', played a pivotal role in visitors' fightback.

Reddy's combative spirit and the invaluable 127-run stand he shared with Washington Sundar (50 off 162 balls) proved to be the turning point for the hosts.

Reddy's innings was termed as one of greatest Test knocks by the legendary Sunil Gavaskar given the situation as India were in a precarious

position after Rishab Pant's dismissal courtesy a rash shot had left India tottering at 191

The young Andhra batter could have been stranded on 99 when Jasprit Bumrah got dismissed, leaving Reddy with last-man in Mohammed Siraj, who walked in to another round of boos and faced three deliveries from home skipper Pat Cummins. Both Reddy and his father Muthyala's expressions changed with each ball but Siraj survived to allow Reddy savour the moment he must

A picture-perfect straight drive off Scott Boland was the moment of the series for India as Reddy balanced his helmet with the bat and took a knee, expressing his gratitude towards the Indian dug-out which gave him a

have dreamt a thousand

standing ovation. The 21-year-had struck the 'Pushpa' pose after completing his fifty and aced the 'Salaar' pose to celebrate

the century. A decade back, when his father Muthyala left a secured job to open a micro-



finance (lending) business and incurred losses, the Reddy family was advised not to give wings to young Reddy's cricketing dreams but they were unrelenting. Sitting in the stands near the boundary, Reddy's father broke down when his son achieved the milestone.

achieved the milestone.

As Indian fans clicked selfies with him it must have reminded of the day when his son received the best U-16 cricketer award from the BCCI in 2017, and an impressionable Reddy was seen clicking selfie with his idol Virat Kohli and his wife Anushka Sharma while

Anushka Sharma while leaving the hotel premises.

Reddy's batting was based on stable core, playing the ball late and only going for the drive when the ball was pitched up. He wasn't defending unnecessarily and 10 fours and a six was a 10 fours and a six was a testimony to that.

If the morning was more about Rishabh Pant's about inexplicable shot selection, afternoon session belonged to Reddy, whose attacking game put the pressure right back on There were plenty of boundaries and a six off Nathan Lyon but none more gorgeous than the off-drive off Cummins. Reddy has been by far India's most consistent batter in the series and the maiden Test century couldn't have come at a more opportune time and that too at an iconic venue.

Washington, at the other end, grew in confidence and trusted his defence apart from punishing the loose deliveries. It did help that the drop-in surface at the MCG has got better for batting as the match progressed.

The second new ball did very little for Australian bowlers and the Indian duo ran very well between the wickets. With Mitchell Starc's back acting up a little, the two batters looked to reduce the deficit further.

In the morning it was all about Pant's shot selection

that hurt India.
The third day's MCG track is perhaps the best to bat on with green grass making way for a brownish tinge and an old Kookaburra hardly doing

anything.
Had Pant stuck around,

there was no way he wouldn't have scored big. Pant did start well and got a few boundaries but then the urge to play the falling lap pull over long-leg brought about

his dismissal.

When he tried it for the first time off Scott Boland, who came round the wicket, Pant

was hit in the naval area and seemed to be in pain. He got up but didn't realise that Cummins had placed one fielder at deep fine-leg and one at deep third man for both the conventional and reverse lap shot.

Without learning his lessons or caring about success percentage, Pant tried a similar shot but the extra bounce meant that the top edge flew to third man for a

regulation catch.
"If there was a word called 'worstest', then this was one such shot," former India skipper Sunil Gavaskar said

But Reddy showed steely resolve as he started with a punchy off-drive off Lyon and also jumped down the track to loft him over for a straight six during a splendid

Nitish Reddy: Story of sacrifices made by middle class family

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Nitish Reddy loves his tattoos like most 21year-olds do, and one on his ankle is a picture of 'Achilles' Heel'. He considers it a reminder of difficulties that his family has endured in the last 10 years to power his cricketing

For Reddy, becoming a cricketer was both a choice and a compulsion. He wanted to do something for his parents, who gave their tears and sweat to fuel his India dream.

The middle-class family gambled with its finances to allow Reddy soar high. The risks taken and losses suffered will not bother them now.

"Getting into the Indian team is a proud feeling but it is only 50 percent of the dream. It will be fulfilled if I can wear that jersey and win matches for my country," an emotional Reddy had told PTI in June this year.

"I want to see respect for my father in the eyes of those who once tore him to shreds for believing in my talent."

celebration in 'Salaar' style was a tribute to his father Mutvala, who watched his son rescue India from the stand behind team's dug-

The journey was not just Reddy's but also of his father's sacrifices and belief that his son was special.

As a 12 year-old, Reddy overheard his relatives cursing his father for losing in his microfinancing business after taking a voluntary retirement from service (VRS) from Hindustan Zinc.

He took the decision to avoid getting transferred to Udaipur since he knew the city did not have the facilities and coaching to help his son excel as a cricketer.

He invested the payout of Rs 20 lakh to start his business. However, his friends, who took loan from him never returned the resulting in massive losses.

"I could hear those discussions and even as a 12-year old. I understood work hard," he said. everything. It was a promise A few years back, Reddy I made to myself that only was adjudged the best U-16



dad's prestige — an India call-up," Reddy had told back then.

It was the time when he could just afford one bat a year (one good seasoned English willow cost around 15,000 back then. It is close to 50k now for international players).

"I can't tell you how happy I um," Mutyala said, struggling to express his emotions, standing outside the MCG after his son's recuse act.

"Virat sir has told him to

Function Awards Bengaluru. The entire Indian team was in attendance and the 14year-old was desperate for a selfie with Kohli and his wife Anushka, who were waiting near the elevator of

he attended the Annual

the hotel. Kohli was in a hurry but obliged and it became a memorable moment for young Reddy. Now getting applauded for his effort by his idol is an unforgettable memory for him.

Reddy's family also can't thank enough former Andhra Cricket Prasad for enrolling him in ball at 145 clicks and its state-of-the-art academy initially I found it hard. And its state-of-the-art academy

in Visakhapatnam.
"Initially, he was placed in "Initially, he was placed in our U-14 academy, located far from his hometown. However, his parents encouraged him to pursue his dreams, and he steadily progressed through our academies. Nitish eventually earned a spot in India's U-19 team showcasing his skill. 19 team, showcasing his skill and determination," Prasad

recently told PTI. In 2023, Reddy secured spot in India's Emerging Asia Cup team but was dropped after playing a few games. The squad had players like Yash Dhull, Nishant Sindhu, who are far away from national reckoning.

There are certain events that change the course of one's career and that Emerging Asia Cup made him realise that to make a mark at the international level, he needed to think out of the box. "I started spending more time at the nets and also hired a few side arm specialists (throwdown) available in Vizag and practised for a month.

then by the end of the month got adjusted. That month got adjusted. I nat practice went a long way when I played IPL this season where I could hit sixes," he had said. His SRH skipper Pat Cummins might be smiling quietly and thinking aloud as to why he told Reddy that he has the potential to play

he has the potential to play for India and develop into a good all-rounder. India head coach Gautam

Gambhir also deserves credit for putting his foot down for having Reddy Down Under after watching his exploits in a T20 series against Bangladesh.

It was a leap of faith and Reddy is now the 'find of the series' for India.On the Christmas Day, when everyone was fretting about India's combination, Sanjay Manjrekar had questioned,
"Will Leaving Reddy out give India a better balance?" On Saturday, one of Reddy's sponsors, a popular sports equipment and apparel brand quote tweeted Manjrekar with the cricketer's pic urged the cricket pundit to

Nick Kyrgios heavily criticizes Sinner, Swiatek for doping-related issues

AP ■ BRISBANE

Tust days away from his return to tennis at the Brisbane International, Nick Kyrgios hasn't minced his words in referring to doping-related charges against Jannik Sinner and Iga Swiatek, labelling breaches of the sport's antidoping program as "disgusting for our sport."

The International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) levelled charges against world No.1 Sinner and former world No.1 Iga Swiatek. Sinner tested positive twice for an anabolic steroid in March, but avoided a ban because the ITIA determined he was not to blame.

Swiatek also accepted a onemonth suspension in November after testing positive for the banned substance trimetazidine.

"Two world No.1s both getting done for doping is disgusting for our sport. It's a horrible look," Kyrgios said

last in their group after failing to win a single match.

Manolo Marquez, a familiar

face in Indian football having led Hyderabad FC to an ISL

conference Saturday. "Tennis integrity right now, and everyone knows it but no one wants to speak about it, it's awful."

Kyrgios, 29, has not played tournament tennis since June 2023 due to wrist and knee injuries. He was asked about his motivations for speaking out on the Sinner and Swiatek situations.

"Someone like me ... l would never even in my entire life ever try and dope in this sport," he said. "Especially going through an injury like I went through, obviously there are things out there that could speed up healing, help me get back to prime level, help my

Carlsen disqualified from top chess meet for violating dress code

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Five-time world champion Magnus Carlsen was first fined and then disqualified from the World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship here for his refusal to comply with the FIDE's dress code after turning up in jeans here. Defending champion Carlsen was fined USD 200 for wearing jeans, which are "explicitly prohibited" under tournament regulations and when he refused the request to change his attire right after the eighth round by chief arbiter Alex Holowczak, he was disqualified.

He was not paired for Round 9 of the Rapid championship, taking place at Wall Street.

One of the game's greatest players, the Norwegian ace had agreed to follow the dress from the next day but was not ready to do it immediately, resulting disqualification.

"I would rather be at someplace with better weather," was how Carlsen summed disqualification from the championship in which he has won in the last two editions.

In a statement, the game's global governing body FIDE emphasised that the dress code rules are wellcommunicated participants and designed to

ensure professionalism. "The dress code regulations are drafted by members of the FIDE Athletes Commission, which is composed of professional players and experts. These rules have been in place for years and are well-known to all participants and are communicated to



them ahead of each event," FIDE said in the statement, posted on 'X' "FIDE has also ensured that

the players' accommodation is within a short walking distance from the playing venue, making adherence to the rules more convenient." It added, "Today, Mr. Magnus Carlsen breached the dress code by wearing jeans, which

are explicitly prohibited long-standing regulations for this event. The Chief Arbiter informed Mr. Carlsen of the breach, issued a USD 200 fine, and requested that he change his attire.

"Unfortunately, Mr. Carlsen declined, and as a result, he was not paired for round nine. This decision was made impartially and applies equally to all players.' Earlier, Russian Grandmaster

Ian Nepomniachtchi was also penalised for a similar violation but he complied by changing his attire, allowing him to continue in the event. Meanwhile, "upset" with the turn of events, Carlsen said he won't participate in the Blitz section of the championship as he is "pretty tired" of FIDE's

dress code policies. "I am pretty tired of FIDE, so I want no more of this. I don't

want anything to do with them. I am sorry to everyone at home, maybe it's a stupid principle, but I don't think it's any fun," Carlsen told broadcasting Norwegian channel NRK.

"I said I don't want to bother changing now, but I can change until tomorrow, that's fine. But they didn't want to compromise. I've reached a point where I am pretty upset with FIDE, so I didn't want to either. Then that's how it goes," he added.

The Carlsen dress code fiasco is being seen as a signal to the chess world about his keenness to develop the faster version of the game that he considers as a "real skill" as well as his personal interest about developing the "freestyle chess" for which he about recently raised USD 12 million

Freestyle chess, as he prefers to call it, is the version of the game wherein chess pieces can be shuffled in any order. This was an idea propagated by the great Bobby Fischer.

This is a war with FIDE (the game's apex body)," said Norwegian sports broadcaster Kaja Snare before adding that this is the end of an era for



senior men's team failing to register a single win in a year when the long-serving Sunil Chhetri finally decided to hang up his boots internationally after 19 years of yeoman service.

The familiar sight of the diminutive No. 11 running into the box, deftly chipping the ball into the back of the net, bringing out his trademark 'namaste' celebration, and looking skywards with his fingers pointing to the heavens will forever be etched in the hearts

of Indian football fans. With his record appearances and 94 goals for India, Chhetri became synonymous with the sport in country, inspiring millions while leading the team with distinction.

The talisman's retirement, at 39, marked a poignant end in a year of more lows than highs with the men's national team facing transitional challenges and failing to notch a single win across 12 months for the first time in a decade.

"You don't wish to stop playing for the country. But one day you have to, and you will be fine. Finally, I reached this decision. And I think I made the right decision," an emotional Chhetri had said after his decision to retire.

India's FIFA World Cup qualifier against Kuwait was his last appearance for the country. On June 6, in his final match at Salt Lake Stadium, 58,921



Chhetri farewell signals end of an

ended in a goalless draw, much to the disappointment of his supporters.

It was a night heavy with emotion, as Indian football lost its torchbearer, the unifying figure who had carried the sport on his shoulders for nearly two decades. The national team has never been the same since his retirement.

World Cup Qualifiers debacle

The disappointing exit from the second round of FIFA World Cup Qualifiers was followed by the acrimonious sacking of head coach Igor Stimac, a year before his contract expired.

Stimac initially demanded USD 920,000 (Rs 7.72 crore) compensation and approached the game's governing body FIFA after rejecting the All India Football Federation's (AIFF) offer of first three, then five, and finally 10 months' salary as settlement.

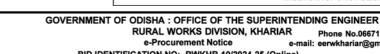
The matter escalated before fans gathered to bid farewell

title in 2022, was appointed as the new head coach in July while keeping his job at FC Goa till the end of the ongoing season.

LOST DEED

We, Smt Nirupama Nayak, aged about 42 years, wife of Rabindra Kumar Nayak, Address: At-Umapada, P.O/P.S-Jajpur Road, Dist-Jajpur-755019 & Smt. P Subhadarshini Deo, aged about 51 years, wife of Bharat Bhusan Deo, Permanent resident of At/P.O- Baragadia, P.S-Kalinganagar, Dist-Jajpur-755026 declare that, Original link title deeds such as RSD No. 2709 dtd-16.09.2005, Mutation ROR/Patta recorded in the name of Kamal Kapur & Madhu Sachideva in respect of Khata No. 552 under Mouza - Unit No.4 Bhatia has been misplaced at Vyasanagar Tahasil as We are unable to find (trace out) the same despite of our best efforts. Neither We nor the respective land owners have not created any equitable mortgage / charge with any Bank or Financial Institutions by deposited the said Title Deeds if any Individual, Bank, Financial Institution is holding the said documents in original as security for any loan granted, We are requested to inform to Mob.-7377098999 or Mr. Fagu Samal, Mob No. 9439670857. Advocate of (SSFBL) within 15 days from the date of the Publication of Notice Advertisement relating to the above property

Bharat Bhusana Deo Mobile No. 9437025568



RURAL WORKS DIVISION, KHARIAR e-Procurement Notice BID IDENTIFICATION NO:- RWKHR-10/2024-25 (Online)

O-1004: Bid documents cons sting of Work, Estimated Cost, EMD, Cost of tender Paper, Class of Contractor, Time of Completion nd the set of terms and cor

Name of the Work . Total No of Works

Estimated Cost

Period of Completion

Other details

national federation back by

Stimac was earlier given an

extension until 2026 on the

condition of reaching the

quarterfinals of the AFC

Asian Cup but India finished

USD 400,000.

:- 17 nos :- 1.26 to 37.82 lakhs

:- Roads & Building Works

:- 1 (One) Calendar Months

Date & time of on line for bidding From

HR-10/2024-25 30.12.2024 At 10.00 A.M. 08.01.2025 07.01.2025 09.01.2025 11.00 A.M. Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in

Sd/- Executive Engineer Rural Works Division, Khariar

OIPR: 25152/11/0005/2425

powerful statement about embracing personal style while honoring their roots.



Get in touch at vivacity@dailypioneer.com

TOP 10 FILMS

Amar Singh Chamkila: The film takes you through the lives of pop star duo Amar Singh Chamkila and Amarjot Kaur, shedding light on their rise to fame in the 1980s through chart-topping songs. RATING: 4/5

Do Patti: Do Patti is a story of twin sisters, whose troubled relationship is tested by love, betrayal, and redemption. The film explores the themes of domestic violence with standout performances by Kriti Sanon.

L<mark>aapataa Ladies:</mark> Laapataa

Ladies is a humorous and

neartwarming tale of

self-discovery, marking

Kiran Rao's triumphant

Sector 36: Sector 36 is a

showcasing Vikrant Massey

as a psychotic serial killer.

The 124-minute drama is a

chilling crime thriller

must-watch for crime

delivering an unsettling

genre enthusiasts,

RATING: 3.5/5

RATING: 4.5/5

Maharaja: After his home is broken into, a barber seeks revenge by cryptically telling police that his "lakshmi" has been abducted. The story of his journey to retrieve "lakshmi" begins. RATING: 4/5

Bhaiyya Ji: A retired crime boss is pulled back into a world of bloodshed and violence as he seeks vengeance against those who killed his younger brother, featuring Manoj Bajpayee as Bhaiyya

RATING: 4/5

Lucky Bhaskar: Lucky Bhaskar a Telugu-language period crime drama about a lower-middle-class man who turns to financial scams to overcome debt and humiliation, featuring Dulquer Salmaan in a compelling titular role. RATING: 4/5

CTRL: CTRL is a thriller directed by Vikramaditya Motwane, plotting the dark side of the digital age and the dangers of oversharing online. **RATING: 3.5/5**

Article 370: The story follows Yami Gautam as a special agent, assigned a high-stakes mission to quell violence in Kashmir and render Article 370 ineffective.



inema has long been a reflection of society, a medium of mass communication, and an instrument for change. From its inception, films have served as more than just a source of entertainment. They have been a mirror to society, amplifying voices, shedding light on pressing issues, and sparking conversations that transcend borders. Over the decades, the cinematic landscape has evolved, offering a fascinating mix of artistry, storytelling, and technical brilliance. This year was no

Looking back at the journey of Indian cinema, it is astonishing to witness its evolution—from the poignant realism of Satyajit Ray's "Pather Panchali" and the thought-provoking narratives of Shyam Benegal to the visual spectacles crafted bv modern filmmakers like S.S Rajamouli and Sanjay Leela Bhansali. Over 69 years, the industry has grown into a cultural phenomenon, shaping not just entertainment but also the values and ideals of its audience.

The early years of Indian cinema were driven by socially conscious storytelling, as seen in classics like Shatranj Ke Khilari, Sadgati, and Aparajito. These films addressed societal issues with sensitivity and depth, using the medium to educate and inspire change. Directors like Ray and Benegal paved the way for a golden era where art met purpose, creating a legacy of films that resonated deeply with audiences.

In recent years, however, talking about

films like Pushpa 2, Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya Kalki 2898 AD, Kill, and more there has been a discernible shift in the motives behind filmmaking. While the essence of cinema as an art form endures, the industry has leaned heavily towards commercialisation. With a focus on box office

numbers and global appeal, the cinematic experience has transformed into a spectacle, often prioritising grandeur and entertainment over substance. Yet, amidst the crowd of mass-market releases, there remain exceptions about the films that challenge norms, provoke thought, and carry forward the tradition of meaningful storytelling.

As we look back at the year that was, it becomes evident that cinema continues to straddle the line between its artistic roots and its commercial aspirations.

The past year has been a testament to the diversity of the medium, offering a mix of groundbreaking narratives, record-breaking successes, and a glimpse into the future of filmmaking wills also some flops which didn't do well. This retrospective explores how the industry has evolved over time and examines the key highlights of the cinematic journey this year, from the unforgettable performances to the innovative storytelling that defined 2024.

Bade Miyan Chote Miyan: Bade Miyan Chote Miyan is a Hindi sci-fi action film directed by Ali Abbas Zafar, starring Akshay Kumar, Tiger Shroff, and Prithviraj Sukumaran. The story follows two ex-soldiers racing to thwart a vengeful scientist's plan to attack India.

WRONG CHOICES (FLOPS)

Sarfira: Sarfira is a Hindi drama directed by Sudha Kongara, starring Akshay Kumar, Paresh Rawal, and Radhika Madan. A remake of Soorarai Pottru, it follows a man's fight to create affordable airlines for low-income people, battling numerous obstacles along the way.

Maidaan: Maidaan is a biographical sports drama directed by Amit Ravindernath Sharma, starring Ajay Devgn as Syed Abdul Rahim, a pioneering football coach in India.

The Buckingham Murders: The Buckingham Murders is an Indian crime thriller directed by Hansal Mehta, starring Kareena Kapoor Khan as a grieving British-Indian detective investigating a child's murder in Buckinghamshire.



Aaj Ki Raat: Madhubanti Bagchi, Divya Kumar, Sachin -Jigar

Yodha: Yodha an action

is found on a hijacked

plane years later. Blamed for the hijacking, Arun

seeks revenge against the

Sahiba: Jasleen Royal Suniyan Suniyan: Juss and MixSingh Ve Haaniyaan: Danny Ft Avvy Sra

Kaavaalaa: by Shilpa Rao, Anirudh Ravichander



Actor of the year

Kriti Sanon stole 2024 in

her name by her stellar,

glamorous performances

and delivering back to

back hit films even with

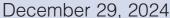
ar: Jamnapaar is a series on Amazon Mini TV about Shanky Bansal, a young man from East Delhi grappling with identity and aspirations. Struggling with feelings of inferiority, Shanky disowns his roots but eventually learns to embrace and take pride in them.

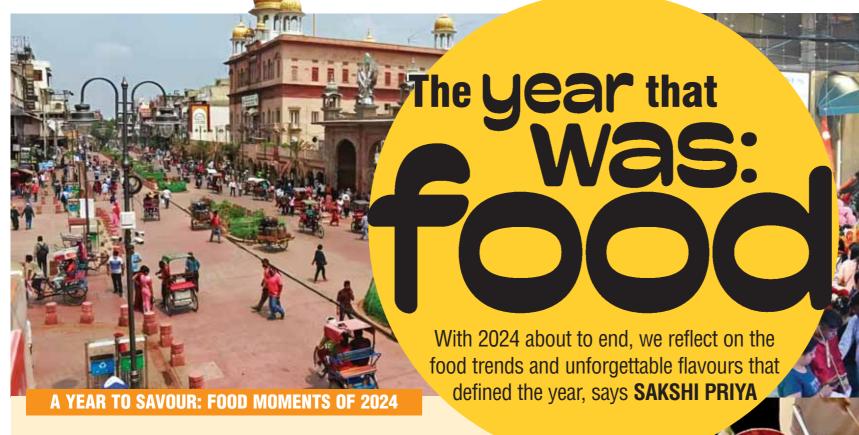
Gyaarah Gyaarah: Gyaarah Gyaarah, streaming on Zee5, is an Indian adaptation of the South Korean series Signal. It blends time travel, suspense, and crime drama across three timelines.

Heeramandi: Airing on Netflix, Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar is a 2024 Hindi period drama by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, exploring the lives of tawaifs in Lahore's Heera Mandi during India's independence struggle. The star-studded cast includes Manisha Koirala, Sonakshi Sinha, and Aditi Rao Hydari.

Mirzapur Season 3: The third season of Mirzapur gets into an intense power struggle between Guddu, Sharad Shukla, and Kaleen Bhaiya, as alliances shift and rivalries deepen in the lawless city.

ti: The web series Ranneeti: Balakot and Beyond is a 2024 action series streaming on Zee5, following an R&AW agent and his team as they combat hybrid warfare post-Pulwama attacks. They race to rescue a captured pilot, expose Pakistan's propaganda.





s 2024 draws to a close, it's time to reflect on the tastes and trends that defined our culinary year. From viral dishes that united food lovers to beloved celebrity recipes that took over our kitchens, the year reminded us how food connects us. Whether it was the streets of Delhi buzzing with chatter over piping-hot kachoris or Instagram feeds flooding with quirky food combos, 2024 proved that our love for good food knows no bounds. So, let's dive into the highlights that made this year a feast for both our plates and our hearts.

agazine the pioneer agazine

VIRAL CELEBRITY RECIPES

Jackie Shroff's Anda Curry Patta and Baingan Bharta Jackie Shroff's Anda Curry Patta

became a go-to comfort dish for many, while his smoky *Baingan Bharta* gave eggplant a superstar moment. Everyone seemed to try their hand at his recipes, inspired by the way he explained each step in his cooking videos, peppered with his trademark "bhidu" charm. Fans couldn't get enough, rating his dishes a solid 10 out of 10 for their earthy, soulful, and undeniably delicious flavours. Jackie truly became the culinary hero of 2024!

Aditi Rao Hydari's Khagina

Aditi Rao Hydari's Khagina became a sensation as everyone tried recreating her rich, buttery take on the classic egg dish. Her charming explanation, "cut the onions into moon-shaped slices, cook until pinkish, crack the eggs and top with masala", made it a viral hit. Fans across the internet hailed it as the perfect brunch staple, calling it a true "taste of warmth"

THESE DISHES NOT ONLY DEFINED THE CULINARY LANDSCAPE OF 2024 BUT ALSO REMINDED US OF THE DEEP CONNECTIONS BETWEEN HERE'S TO MORE DELECTABLE ADVENTURES IN THE YEAR AHEAD!

FOOD, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY.

Deepika Padukone's Ema Datshi

chilli dish Ema Datshi had people

flocking to Tibetan restaurants to

experience its fiery, creamy magic.

Shraddha Kapoor's Varan Bhaat

This Maharashtrian classic became

a viral sensation as Shraddha

shared her family recipe. Fans

across India tried recreating

this simple yet

comforting

dish.

Deepika's love for the Bhutanese cheesy



INSTAGRAM VIRALS

Vada Pav in Delhi: A tiny stall in the heart of Delhi sent Mumbaikars into a frenzy! Foodies queued up for hours to get a taste of this Mumbai classic, proving that Delhi truly embraces all flavours. Popcorn Momos in GK: Momo mania reached new heights with this crunchy, buttery twist. Found at

a GK corner, this snack became the ultimate winter indulgence, drawing

Viral Cucumber Jar Salad: Healthy

with this layered cucumber salad in a jar. With its vibrant colours and

zesty dressing, it became a favourite

for fitness enthusiasts and food

food bloggers and crowds alike.

eating met Instagram aesthetics

Farah Khan's Yakhni Pulao Farah Khan's Yakhni Pulao was the culinary sensation of the year. A soulful mix of tender meat and fragrant rice. the dish captivated fans who couldn't stop praising its simplicity and rich flavour. On her YouTube channel, she showed every step, making it easy to recreate. Viewers loved her detailed tips and rated it a perfect 10, proudly sharing their own versions online and creating videos titled "Trying Farah Khan's Favourite Yakhni Pulao".

FLAVOURS THAT TRAVELLED

As we say goodbye to 2024, we revisted the places that captured our hearts and taste buds (Travel page III), where every bite told a story. Here's to the flavours that made this year's travels truly special.

Banaras #malaiyo #tamarchaat

Banaras delivered on all fronts this year, especially with its food. The winter-special Malaiyo, a frothy dessert that melts in your mouth, became a seasonal must-try. Meanwhile, the tangy and spicy Tamatar Chaat delighted foodies with its zesty flavours, making it the city's street-food superstar.

Kashmir #kahwa #roganjosh

The "Paradise on Earth" showcased its culinary treasures alongside its natural beauty in 2024. Kahwa, the traditional spiced tea and the aromatic Rogan Josh were must-haves for travellers seeking warmth and flavour amidst the snow-draped landscapes

Lakshadweep #muskaavab

The smoky and succulent Mus Kaavab paired perfectly with the aromatic, coconut-infused Tuna Curry, making every bite a celebration of coastal flavours. Each meal offered a taste of island life, blending the sea's bounty with vibtant flavours.

Ladakh #thukpa #buttertea Ladakh's dishes weren't just delicious, they were soul-soothing. The hearty Thukpa, a noodle soup packed with vegetables and meat, became a favourite, while the creamy, salty Butter Tea was a comforting

companion in the chilly weather. Goa #porkvindaloo #crabxecxec

Goa's cuisine stole the spotlight in 2024 with its bold and flavourful offerings. The spicy and tangy Pork Vindaloo, Crab Xec Xec and fiery Prawns Balchao cemented their place as iconic dishes, bringing joy to every

Janhvi Kapoor's Idli and

Chicken Curry This unlikely combo went viral after Janhvi shared her love for it. Foodies everywhere couldn't resist trying it, and it quickly became a trending dish, with fans recreating it at home and

experimenting with the combo in their own kitchens.

ALL-TIME FAVOURITE FOOD STREETS OF DELHI

Let's remember Delhi's iconic street food, a delight for food lovers. Delhi's street food scene never fails to impress. k: This winter, Chandni Chowk dazzled with iconic dahi bhallas, daulat ki chaat and hot jalebis paired

Kamla Nagar: A shopper's paradise, the area also shone for its unbeatable *chole*

bhature and Sharma Ji's kachoris. **Lodhi Colony:** Anna Durga South Indian offered perfect dosas and idlis, earning its spot as a social media favourite. t Place & Janpath: From Jain Chawal Wale's iconic rajma rice to mini samosas and Wenger's timeless baked treats, CP and Janpath were





WANDERLUST OF INDIAN DESTINATIONS

KASHMIR



#winterwonderland #switzerlandofindia Kashmir, often called "Paradise on Earth," boasts breathtaking natural beauty with vibrant autumn foliage, crystal-clear lakes reflecting the snow-capped peaks, and verdant valleys nestled amidst majestic mountains. This pretty landscape, with its serene charm, makes Kashmir a truly unforgettable travel destination.

BANARAS



#gangaaarti #kashivishwanath
Banaras or Varanasi or Kashi, a sacred city in Uttar
Pradesh and it holds immense significance in
Hinduism. It is a renowned pilgrimage site, deeply
intertwined with traditions of death and mourning.
The city was known for the most visited and
trending places in India in 2024.

travel, realising the importance of travel, be it solo or in groups. Travel in every way is a gateway to self-discovery and deeper connections with the world around us, writes ABHI SINGHAL

LAKSHADWEEP



#tropicalparadise #islandescape

Lakshadweep, a pure archipelago in the Arabian Sea, is a true beauty on Earth. Pristine white sand beaches lapped by clear turquoise waters, coral reefs teaming with marine life, and lush coconut palms swaying gently in the breeze. Lakshadweep offers a unique blend of natural beauty, and cultural richness.

LADAKH



#pangonglake #kargil
Ladakh also known as Little Tibet, is a breathtaking
region in India soared with snow-capped
mountains, frozen lakes, ancient Buddhist
monasteries perched on dramatic cliffs, and vibrant
festivals filled with music and dance. Ladakh is one
of the most loved places in 2024.

GOA



#goadiaries #beachlover
Goa, a coastal paradise in India, is a vibrant blend
of Portuguese heritage and Indian culture. There are
pristine beaches lined with swaying palm trees,
azure waters perfect for swimming and watersports,
delicious seafood, and a lively nightlife scene.

THE YEAR THAT WAS: TRAVEL

ravel isn't just a physical journey, it's a soulful expedition, and some people always loved it while others have started loving it through social media. It opens doors to diverse cultures, helping us understand people and their unique stories. Exploring new destinations promotes a sense of spirituality, connecting us with something bigger than ourselves. Whether it's the tranquillity of a mountain sunrise or the vastness of an ocean, nature

something bigger than ourselves. Whether it's the tranquillity of a mountain sunrise or the vastness of an ocean, nature teaches us to embrace its beauty and simplicity. Meeting new people on these adventures broadens perspectives, bridging gaps and giving a sense of empathy. Travel is a reminder of how small yet interconnected the world and fills your heart with gratitude for the experiences that shape your journey through life.

BANARAS

UDAIPUR



Udaipur, the "City of Lakes," is a perfect for celebrating new year amidst stunning palaces, serene lakes, and breathtaking views with Rajasthani cuisine.

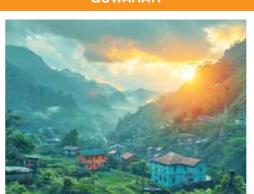
FOR TROPICAL CLIMATE LOVERS

#NEWYEARGETAWAYS



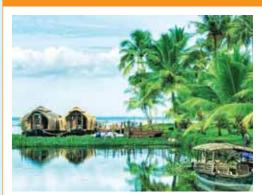
FOR WINTER LOVERS

GUWAHATI



From *Guwahati* you can expect a cool and pleasant weather in the north east on the New Year and can plan a getaway around visiting Kamakhya Temple.

KERALA



Kerala, "God's Own Country," can work as a perfect New Year's getaway helping in rejuvenating yourself amidst serene backwater cruises, and lush greenery.

MANALI



Manali has started receiving the snowfall and has become a white paradise. It is the perfect getaway, offering snow-covered peaks and cosy cafes.

AULI



Auli as a destination is beautiful and scenic and has snowfall predictions on 27th December and after, making it a perfect destination for your new year.

MUKTESHWAR



Mukteshwar is an untouched beauty to help you find yourself and peace this new year. The charming trails and dense forests make it ideallic.

























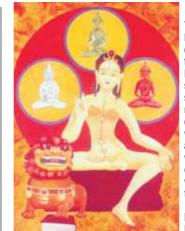




ARIES March 21-April 19

This week holds significant potential for financial and business success. You are poised to make impactful decisions that could lead to considerable gains, especially from real estate investments. Those involved in trading, finance, or property management may find their efforts yielding substantial rewards due to their dedication and hard work. Expect unexpected opportunities to arise, presenting offers that may surprise you with their favorable terms. Your ability to maintain connections primarily through digital means will be crucial, as your schedule may not allow for face-to-face interactions. Toward the week's end, you might find yourself drawn more towards spiritual activities. Engaging in worship, charitable acts, and assisting those in need could provide a profound sense of fulfillment. Exercise caution with financial transactions during this time to ensure everything proceeds smoothly.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Amber Lucky day Sunday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week starts on a high note for you, as recent efforts begin to show promising progress. You're deeply engaged and pushing forward with vigor, bolstered by the support and encouragement from your close ones. Partnerships, in particular, are flourishing, bringing satisfying outcomes your way. As the week progresses, stay vigilant; some opposition may arise, prompting a need to rethink plans made with family. Unexpected commitments will emerge, demanding prioritization, which may shift your scheduled activities. Pay particular attention to your health and financial management. It's wise to consult a healthcare professional to stay on top of any potential issues and to handle financial matters with care to avoid overspending, safeguarding against future economic challenges.

Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour White **Lucky day** Friday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

You are known for your generosity and your willingness to invest in spiritual growth, as well as your interest in supporting charitable causes. Managing finances may become important soon, particularly regarding the educational needs of your children. Family matters may also demand more of your attention. This period calls for an understanding of how crucial balance is in managing life's various demands. Establishing a structured, disciplined approach will be essential to meet your obligations effectively. Any ongoing legal matters are likely to resolve favorably for you. Expect some joyful moments towards the end of the week, including long-awaited positive news. There might be opportunities for relocation or changes in your work environment that align with your preferences. Your reputation as a diligent individual will be reinforced in your community.

Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour Yellow Lucky day Saturday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week, you may find that your efforts at work are progressing more slowly than expected. Despite initiating projects and investing time, the outcomes may not be immediately apparent. Patience will be crucial during this period. Approach your tasks with the diligence of a farmer tending to crops, from planting to harvest. As the week progresses anticipate some unexpected shifts that could positively impact your financial situation, with additional income sources emerging. For some, work-related travel or a favorable relocation might be on the horizon. Any funds previously extended to others are likely to be repaid. By week's end, you may find yourself indulging in fantastical thoughts and seeking material comforts, which might distract from your actual objectives. However, input from family will help steer you back towards practical paths.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Black Lucky day Friday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week is pivotal for those who excel in critical thinking and analysis. You are approaching a decisive moment in an essential aspect of your life, which could significantly influence your future direction. This could pertain to either personal or professional realms. For some, an enticing professional opportunity with a promising offer might arise. Midweek, you may find yourself needing some form of healing or medical assistance. Recovery will bring you a sense of renewal and improved quality of life. However, towards the week's end, you may experience a dip in your energy levels. Emotional sensitivity could lead to conflicts, especially if family tensions are present. Your inclination to dissect situations logically could exacerbate these issues This period calls for stepping back from conflicts and focusing on rest and personal rejuvenation.

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Jade Lucky day Sunday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

The week begins on a high note, marked by joyful gatherings and significant life events that bring friends and family together in celebration. As the week progresses, you'll find yourself driven by a surge of determination and resilience, pushing you to dedicate yourself diligently to your pursuits. Despite encountering hurdles along the way, your inherent wisdom enables you to navigate through them effectively. A spiritual journey later in the week offers a profound sense of solace, clarifying any lingering doubts and fostering inner peace. Towards the weekend, financial mindfulness becomes crucial; recent oversights in spending may lead to a tight financial situation. This period calls for a reassessment of your budgeting strategies, possibly considering borrowing options or seeking assistance from close ones to stabilize your financial footing.

Lucky number 17 | Lucky colour Parrot Green Lucky day Thursday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week is set to be a dynamic one, marked by a series of shifts and transitions. It begins on a joyful note, with family and personal well-being bringing you considerable joy. Expect a surge in creativity and a flurry of new opportunities that could enhance your professional and financial landscape. Promising developments from distant places might bring uplifting news, and you might find yourself hosting or celebrating a significant event at home. As the week progresses, you'll find yourself contemplating necessary changes in your routine, diet, or overall lifestyle. This period of transformation is crucial for paving the way to a more fulfilling future. Towards the week's end, focus on financial and health matters becomes essential. Review any outstanding debts or financial obligations, and consider a health check-up to ensure everything is in order

Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Lilac



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

Be mindful of negative influences that may be surrounding you. Emphasize honesty and fairness in your dealings to mitigate potential disruptions. There could be challenges arising from hidden agendas or unethical temptations that may put you in a difficult situation. It's essential to clear away these adverse energies to maintain your well-being. As the week progresses, expect a significant shift in your perspectives and convictions. This change will usher in surprising developments, helping you become more structured and responsible. You will find yourself being more attentive and caring towards others, particularly close relatives and friends. Toward the week's end, a profound personal experience might inspire you, boosting your resolve and strength to overcome any obstacles. This period could be pivotal in fostering a deeper connection with your spiritual self

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Opal Lucky day Tuesday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

As the week begins, you may encounter challenges that disrupt your progress on an important project or assignment. These obstacles could lead to moments of doubt and frustration, tempting you to abandon your efforts. However, a resilient spirit within you will rise. empowering you to confront these challenges with renewed vigor. This determination will guide you to triumph and a sense of fulfillment. Midweek brings a wave of positivity that touches various aspects of your life, from financial gains and familial joy to impressive achievements by your children, perhaps even securing rewarding career opportunities. Your creativity will surge, filling you with enthusiasm and inspiring you to undertake new ventures. The week concludes on a reflective note, drawing you towards community and spiritual engagement.

Lucky number 22 | Lucky colour Fuchsia Lucky day Tuesday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week starts with a sense of fulfillment and gratitude. Early on, you'll experience deep connections and a harmonious relationship with your partner, enhancing both your emotional bonds. Spiritual growth is also a highlight, allowing you to dedicate time to achieving your spiritual aspirations. As the week progresses, you might find yourself wrestling with intrusive thoughts or unexpected impulses that could challenge your peace of mind. However, guiding insights will help maintain your equilibrium. Towards the week's end, your creative energies will surge, paving the way for significant achievements. Expect an acceleration in professional endeavors and an increase in financial rewards. This period also brings personal joy, possibly from family or close relationships, with the potential for welcoming a new family member or celebrating a significant personal milestone.

Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour Beige Lucky day Tuesday

har Maas, a revered period in

the Vedic calendar, begins on

December 15, 2024, when the



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week, some individuals may find themselves deeply focused on personal goals, seemingly blind to new prospects that may arise. Often, they prefer solitude, finding comfort in their own company. Despite this, they maintain connections through digital isolation and social interaction. As the week progresses, a burst of creativity leads to a meaningful encounter with someone influential, poised to offer significant financial guidance. This period also hints at potential prosperity, prompting desires to embrace a fuller experience of life. Toward the week's close, ransactions involving real estate are favorable. Strengthening relationships with family, particularly extended relatives, is advised. Children's needs come into focus, and for those residing afar, a brief return to one's roots may occur, coupled with constructive family discussions that promise beneficial outcomes

ucky number 15 | Lucky colour Green



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

Navigating through the early days of the week may feel challenging as concerns about investments could cause unease and disturb your peace of mind. This is a time to address your fears and manage stress carefully. However, as he week progresses, expect a shift in fortune. You'll find yourself in a position to reap the rewards of your earlier efforts, possibly through significant financial gains. This period also nighlights generosity and charity, enhancing your sense of fulfillment. The week is particularly favorable for working individuals who balance multiple responsibilities with grace. Their resilience and nurturing qualities come to the forefront, possibly influenced by a positive female presence in their lives. Acknowledging and cherishing relationships with key figures like a mother, spouse, or elder sister could be crucial for

ucky number 5 | Lucky colour Gray

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331

HELIFEGUID Seerat Kaur Marwaha

Chanting the Aditya Hridaya Stotram, a hymn dedicated to Suryadev, is another common practice that fosters vitality and mental focus

Sun enters Sagittarius and oncludes on January 14, 2025, with its transition into Capricorn, marking the celebration of Makar Sankranti. This month holds a unique spiritual essence, encouraging individuals to focus on inner growth, devotion, and alignment with divine energies. The origin of Khar Maas is rooted in an ancient story. It is said that the Sun God, Suryadev, drives his chariot, pulled by seven celestial horses, to maintain the cosmic cycle of day and night. One day, the horses, thirsty and weary, sought a break to drink water. To allow this, Suryadev temporarily replaced them with donkeys. The slower pace of the donkeys extended the journey to thirty days, giving

rise to what we now call Khar Maas, as

This period is observed as a sacred time

for reflection and devotion. However,

"Khar" means donkey in Sanskrit.

material pursuits.

traditions discourage undertaking new ventures or life events with long-term implications during this month. Weddings, engagements, housewarming ceremonies, groundbreaking rituals, and the establishment of new businesses are avoided. Instead, individuals are encouraged to turn their focus inward, prioritising spiritual practices over

The Significance of Khar Maas



Khar Maas is an ideal time for selfpurification and strengthening one's connection to higher energies. Devotees often engage in tapasya (austerities), perform fire rituals (hawans), embark on pilgrimages, and undertake charitable acts. These activities are believed to cleanse the soul, resolve karmic imbalances, and invite divine blessings

common spiritual practice observed by many. Fasting is believed to purify the body and mind, allowing individuals to detach from material desires and focus on spiritual upliftment. Consuming sattvic food-pure, vegetarian meals devoid of onion and garlic-is encouraged during this time to maintain a calm and

During Khar Maas, fasting is another

balanced state of mind. Additionally, devotees are advised to recite sacred mantras like the Gayatri Mantra and meditate daily to enhance their connection with the divine. Acts of kindness, such as feeding the poor or supporting those in need, are also emphasised, as they not only cleanse negative karma but also reinforce the

spirit of compassion and service. To maximise the benefits of this spiritually charged month, several practices are traditionally followed. Offering water to the Sun every morning is a powerful ritual that signifies gratitude and invokes clarity and strength. Chanting the Aditya Hridaya Stotram, a hymn dedicated to Suryadev, is another common practice that fosters vitality and mental focus. In the evenings, lighting a ghee diya near Goddess Tulsi is believed to attract positivity, prosperity, and divine protection. Khar Maas serves as a reminder of the cyclical nature of life, urging us to embrace moments of pause and reflection. While the material world may temporarily slow down, the soul is given an opportunity to grow. This sacred period helps prepare individuals for new beginnings and auspicious endeavours that can commence after Makar Sankranti. As the Sun resumes its celestial journey with renewed vigor, the energy for material and spiritual success flows harmoniously once again. This month is a gift to recalibrate, focus on devotion, and nurture inner peace. By honouring the practices and teachings of Khar Maas, one can achieve a sense of spiritual fulfilment and create a strong foundation for future endeavours.

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