



DIA THANKS 2021
Dia Mirza thanks 2021 for making her a mother and says it was a year filled with joy and a near death experience

LEISURE P10



GWADAR VOW
Pakistan, China agree to use the full potential of the strategic Gwadar Port in Balochistan province

INTERNATIONAL P8



RECORD 8TH TITLE
India colts win the under-19 Asia Cup title defeating Sri Lanka by 9 wickets in Dubai

SPORTS P11

Wishing our readers
A HAPPY NEW YEAR 2022
-EDITOR

ATM usage beyond free limit gets costlier
Mumbai: Using ATMs beyond the permissible free transactions for cash as well as non-cash purposes will cost more from Saturday. As per the Reserve Bank of India directive issued in June, the banking customers would be required to pay ₹21 per transaction with effect from January 1, 2022 for transactions beyond the free permissible limit. Presently, banks are allowed to charge ₹20 for such transactions through ATMs. Customers would, however, continue to be eligible for five free transactions (inclusive of financial and non-financial transactions) every month from their own bank ATMs. They would also be eligible for three free transactions from other bank ATMs in metros and five in non-metros.



Maolist arms dump unearthed
Malkangiri: Security forces uncovered an arms dump of the banned CPI (Maoist) outfit along the Odisha-Andhra Pradesh border Friday, police said. Acting on a tip-off, Odisha Police and Border Security Force (BSF) personnel launched an intensive combing operation in Swabhiman Anchal in Jodambo police station area. They seized the arms and ammunition in a forested area between Taber and Arlingpada villages in Jantri gram panchayat along the interstate boundary. Eight IEDs, two 7.62 mm cartridges, an INSAS magazine, codex wire and Maoist uniform and literature were among the items that were seized.

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Tourists pose for photographs as they stand near a message 'Happy New Year 2022' painted on snow near a ski resort in Gulmarg, Friday. PTI PHOTO

State extends Jaga Mission to 5 municipal corporations

■ Cabinet headed by CM Naveen Patnaik approves nine proposals including grant-in-aid under 7th Pay Commission to eligible teaching and non-teaching staff of schools



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 31: On the eve of New Year, the state Cabinet headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik decided to provide land rights to slum dwellers of five municipal corporations. The Cabinet, which approved nine proposals Friday, has decided to extend the Jaga Mission for slum dwellers in five municipal corporations—Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Bepampur, Rourkela and Sambalpur. Under the Jaga Mission, the state government will provide land to slum dwellers residing in the five municipal corporations. "As many as 8,58,000 people of 1.90 lakh families in 938 slums across the five municipal corporation areas will benefit from this decision," Housing and Urban Development Minister Pratap Jena said. The land distribution process will be completed within six

months, the minister said. Under the Odisha Land Rights to Slum Dwellers Act, 2017 and Jaga Mission, land rights have been provided to people residing in 109 municipality and NACs across the state, Jena said, adding, around 1.75 lakh families have benefited from the programme till date. The Cabinet also approved the proposal to provide grant-in-aid under 7th Pay Commission to eligible teaching and non-teaching staff of new aided non-government high schools, upper primary schools, and madrasas, said Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra. Around 26,164 employees of non-government aided schools and madrasas will receive the benefits of grant-in-aid with effect from January 1, 2022. The Cabinet also approved the proposal of the higher education department for the amendment of the recruitment and conditions of service of labo-

ratory assistant-cum-storekeepers, librarians, and physical education teachers of government colleges. As per the amendment, the laboratory assistant-cum-storekeepers, librarians, and physical education teachers of government colleges will no longer be recruited through the Staff Selection Commission (SSC). Instead, they will be selected through the selection board of the higher education department. The Cabinet also approved the proposal for restructuring in the Rural Works (RW) organisation. Keeping in view the increasing workload, expanding budget and the challenges owing to implementation of flagship programmes, the state government has decided to create a new RW Circle in Rayagada and three new RW Divisions in Udala, Bansapal and Bonai. Similarly, eight more Quality Control Divisions are being created to strengthen the monitoring and supervision. It is proposed to create 314 RW sub-divisions coterminous with 314 blocks and to create 10 project sub-divisions in DMF/OMBADC blocks, Mahapatra said. A total number of 142 extra posts have been created at different levels of engineering cadre starting from AEE to EIC of the RW organisation, he added.

ODM GLOBAL SCHOOL
ODISHA GOVT HIKES DA BY 3%
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 31: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced Friday increasing the Dearness Allowance (DA) of government employees and pensioners by 3 per cent. The decision would benefit 7.5 lakh Odisha government employees and pensioners, as per the Chief Minister's Office. The government also decided to pay 30 per cent of the arrears of employees on the Seventh Pay Commission. Earlier, they received 50 per cent of the arrears of their increased pay from January 2016 to August 2017. It will benefit 6 lakh government employees in the state. Following the hike, the government employees will now get 31 per cent DA. The hike will be effective from July 1, 2021.



Wish you all a very Happy New Year. Be safe & stay home. Step out only to attend my rallies...

'No science behind night curfews'

NEW DELHI: There is no science behind night curfews when it comes to tackling the spread of Covid variants, WHO Chief Scientist Soumya Swaminathan has stressed. In a TV media interview, she said that countries like India must formulate science-based policies for curbing the spread of the virus. "Things like night curfew, there is no science behind it. One has to take evidence-based measures. There is a whole list of public health measures," she told CNBC-TV18. "Entertainment venues are places where these viruses spread the most. It's natural to bring in some restrictions there," Swaminathan added. She said that Indians need to be prepared, but not panic.

Omicron replacing Delta in India

■ A total of 1,270 Omicron cases have been detected across 23 states and UTs so far, a third of which were mildly symptomatic, and the rest were asymptomatic



People flout Covid-appropriate behaviour at Unit-II market in Bhubaneswar, Friday. OP PHOTO

AGENCIES
New Delhi, Dec 31: Omicron has started replacing Delta variant in the country in terms of the number of COVID-19 cases and 80 per cent of international travellers, who tested positive, have this new variant, official sources said Friday. However, a third of all the detected cases were mildly symptomatic, and the rest were asymptomatic, they said. A total of 1,270 Omicron cases have been detected across 23 states and UTs so far, according to the Union health ministry data updated Friday. Noting a considerable decline in Covid testing, the Centre had Thursday urged 19 states/UTs to ramp up testing 'in a big way' to identify the positive cases promptly and restrict the spread of transmission in view of the in-

creased transmissibility of Omicron variant, and the larger preponderance of asymptomatic cases. The ministry has advised states and UTs to enhance testing, strengthen hospital preparedness, increase the pace and coverage of vaccination drive and ensure strict enforcement of restrictions to counter the spread of infection wherever necessary. It also advised setting up containment zones and buffer zones as per extant SOPs, strengthening hospital-level preparedness and ensuring optimal utilisation of financial resources under ECRP-2. Ninety per cent of India's eligible adult population has been administered the first dose of the coronavirus vaccine and 64.40 per cent people are now fully vaccinated. Highlighting the vaccination coverage in other countries with highest cases and deaths, sources said the data shows vaccination reduces hospitalisation and death.

State gets ₹830cr under Jal Jeevan Mission

NEW DELHI: The Centre Friday released ₹830.85 crore to Odisha to expedite the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in the state. According to the Union Jal Shakti Ministry, Odisha plans to become 'Har Ghar Jal' state in 2024. "Out of 85.67 lakh rural households in Odisha, 35.37 lakh (41.28 per cent) households have tap water supply. The work is going on at full pace to ensure water supply in villages. Efforts are being made to ensure 100 per cent tap water connectivity in rural areas," the ministry said. The Centre has laid emphasis on tap water connection to every household in the rural areas across the country under the Jal Jeevan Mission. MORE P3

Wishing you a very Happy New Year
May this upcoming year unfold many more joys and good times for you
Shri Mahendra Gupta
CMD, Gupta Power Infrastructure Ltd

China says Arunachal part of it 'since ancient times'

BEIJING, Dec 31: China Friday defended the renaming of 15 more places in India's northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh, claiming that the southern part of Tibet is an 'inherent part' of its territory. India Thursday strongly rejected China renaming 15 places in Arunachal and asserted that the state has 'always been' and will 'always be' an integral part of India and that assigning 'invented' names does not alter this fact. India's reaction came in response to China's Ministry of Civil Affairs announcing Chinese names for 15 more places in Arunachal Pradesh which Beijing claims as South Tibet. "We have seen such. This is not the



first time China has attempted such a renaming of places in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. China had also sought to assign such names in April 2017," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said in New Delhi.

"Arunachal Pradesh has always been, and will always be an integral part of India. Assigning invented names to places in Arunachal Pradesh does not alter this fact," Bagchi said. Asked for his reaction to India's assertion, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here that "the southern part of Tibet belongs to the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China and it has been China's inherent territories." "It has been China's territory since the ancient times," he said in updated comments posted on the Chinese Foreign Ministry website. "People of different ethnic groups have been living in that area for many years and have given many names for that areas," he said.

"For standardised management of the area, the competent authorities in China in accordance with relevant regulations have published the names for the relevant area. These are matters that are within China's sovereignty," Zhao said. This is the second batch of standardised Chinese names of places in Arunachal Pradesh released by China. The first batch of the standardised names of six places was released in 2017. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as South Tibet which is firmly rejected by the External Affairs Ministry which has asserted that the state is an 'inseparable part of India.' Beijing routinely protests visits of top Indian leaders and officials to Arunachal Pradesh to reaffirm its claim.

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A big relief to the textile and clothing industry - we enter 2022 with fresh bout of optimism as the big fear recedes - a great and timely gift by the GST Council
SANJAY K JAIN | ICC NATIONAL TEXTILES COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND MD

TESLA RECALLS ALMOST HALF A MILLION ELECTRIC CARS

Tesla Inc is recalling more than 475,000 of its Model 3 and Model S electric cars to address rearview camera and trunk issues that increase the risk of crashing, the US road safety regulator said Thursday



of the day quote

The resumption of Goa mining will be a big relief for hundreds of people. Mining must go on and any decision can be implemented without stopping the operations

ANIL AGARWAL | VEDANTA RESOURCES CHAIRMAN

Industries that rely on captive power plants (CPP) in Odisha are facing alarmingly depleted coal stocks of only two-three days as compared to the prescribed level of 15 days

BRAHMA MISHRA | UCCI PRESIDENT

The Central government should pay special attention to development of textile industry as 4 crore people of the country get employment from it

MANISH SIDODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

GST HIKE ON TEXTILES PUT ON HOLD: FM

'WE WILL RETAIN THE STATUS QUO', SAYS FINANCE MINISTER NIRMALA SITHARAMAN AFTER EMERGENCY MEETING IN DELHI, FRIDAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 31: The Goods and Service Tax Council, in its 46th meeting in Delhi, has decided to defer the hike in GST rate for textiles to 12 percent from 5 percent. The matter was referred to an existing Group of Ministers on GST rate rationalisation, said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Friday.

"It was a brief meeting, triggered by a letter sent to me by Finance Minister of Gujarat. We will retain the status quo and not go to 12 percent from 5 percent, in the case of textile," Sitharaman said at a media briefing after the Council meeting.

At the 45th its meeting in

Lucknow September 17, the Council had decided to rectify inverted duty structure for footwear and textiles. Subsequently the rate for footwear and textiles for any value was raised to 12 per cent, effective from January 1, 2022. Earlier the GST rate was five per cent for sale value up to ₹1,000 per piece in the case of apparels and per pair in the case of footwear.

While experts hailed the move, a section of the clothing industry decried it saying that only a small group of the sector had inverted duty structure. Many trader organisations have also been demanding a rollback of the rate hikes.

At a pre-budget meeting between Centre and states Thursday, Tamil



Nadu Finance Minister P Thiagarajan and Rajasthan Technical Education Minister Subhash Garg, had asked that the rate hike be delayed.

Former West Bengal Finance Minister Amit Mitra and Telangana Industries Minister KT Rama Rao had earlier urged the centre to roll

back the proposed GST rate hikes in textiles. "Modi Govt will commit another blunder January 1st. By raising GST on textiles (from) 5 per cent to 12 per cent, 15 million jobs will be lost and 1 lakh units will close," Mitra had tweeted.

The problem of inverted duty structure arises when the finished

product is at a lower tax bracket compared to the input raw materials. However, this usually leads to the rise in rates of the finished products. There has not been as much opposition to the rate hike in footwear and that hike will come into effect from January 1.

At the Lucknow meeting, the Council had set up two GoMs. One group was tasked with suggestions on rationalizing rates and correction of inverted duty structure and is led by Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai. The tenure of this group has been extended and it will submit its report on rate hike on textiles by February 2022, Sitharaman said.

The other group has been tasked with recommending ways to review IT systems, potential sources of evasion, and data analyses in order to expand the tax base and maximise returns. This GoM is headed by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar.

No extension of ITR filing deadline

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 31: The government Friday ruled out extending the deadline for filing of ITRs, saying there were no problems faced by taxpayers in filing returns as the total number of returns filed so far is 14 per cent higher than last year's.

As the ITR filing deadline draws to a close, over 5.62 crore returns have been filed till 3 pm, 14 per cent higher than total 4.93 crore filed till December 31 last year.

Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj said ITR filing is going on "very smoothly" and till 3 pm, 5.62 crore returns have already been filed in total.

"Today people have filed more than 20 lakh return which is the highest and in the last one hour, 3.44 lakh returns have been filed. So if returns are being filed in such numbers, I see no reason for anybody to claim (deadline extension)," Bajaj told reporters.

He said as on December 30 last year, 4.83 crore tax returns were filed, compared to 5.43 crore filed till December 30, 2021.

The government has already extended the deadline for filing income tax returns for 2020-21 fiscal year (ended March 2021) by five months till December 31.

"I expect another at least 20-25 lakh returns to come by 12 in the night... The figures that we were anticipating would have come... There is absolutely no proposal to extend the dates," Bajaj said.

To a query on the glitches on the I-T portal impacting filing, he said, "I'm okay (with extension) if the returns were less by 1 crore. But the returns filed are more than last year's... I'm watching the figures every hour... ITR filings are going up to 3 lakh (per hour)".

Centre's Apr-Nov fiscal deficit down at 46.2% of FY22 target

The gap was at 135.1% of the Budget target in the first eight months of FY21, the previous fiscal year

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 31: The Union government's fiscal deficit was down 35.3% year-on-year at ₹6.96 lakh crore in April-November 2021, accounting for 46.2% of the Budget estimate for the current financial year, as tax collections remained robust and spending muted.

The Budget for FY22 had pegged the fiscal deficit for the full year at ₹15.07 lakh crore, or 6.8 percent of GDP. The fiscal deficit was at 135.1 per cent of the Budget target in the first eight months of FY21.

Data released on December 31 by the Controller General of Accounts continued to show the Centre's finances in



While the Centre has looked to keep spending to boost the economy, the resumption of economic activity following the relaxation of the pandemic-enforced restrictions has spurred tax revenues and helped fill its coffers. Gross tax revenue in April-November 2021 was up 50.3 per cent from the corresponding period last year, with November 2021 seeing an 18.2 percent rise to ₹1.78 lakh crore.

good light, with total receipts up 66.0 per cent in April-November, on the back of robust tax collections. Total expenditure, meanwhile, was up only 8.8% over the same period. However, November 2021 saw some deterioration in the central government's finances, with total receipts down 19.0 percent year-on-year even as spending edged up by 1.2 per cent.

Consequently, the fiscal deficit for the month was 21.4 percent higher at ₹1.49 lakh crore, compared to November 2020.

The cut in excise duty on petrol and diesel, announced in early November 2021, did not seem to have any impact as the Centre's excise duty collections for the month rose ₹37,867 crore from ₹32,379 crore in October 2021.

It's not BJP money: FM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 31: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Friday said the nearly ₹200 crore cash recovered in tax searches on perfume maker Peeyush Jain in UP's Kannauj district is not BJP money, and that the raid was at the correct address and not by an outcome of knocking at wrong doors.

Staunchly defending the action, she said the raids, which were based on actionable intelligence, seemed to have "shaken" former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav as



the person caught red-handed could be his partner or friend.

She rejected the Opposition charge that the wrong Jain was raided and the BJP's own money seized, saying, "how do they know whose money is kept? Are they partners (with him)?"

Only partners would know whose money has been stocked.

"If he is so sure to say that it is BJP's money, how does he know? Only if you are running a business in partnership with someone would know whose money is parked. He (Jain) must be their partner that's why they are saying with so much surety that it is BJP's money," she said. "I am saying it is not BJP money."

The intelligence unit of the Directorate General of Goods and Services Tax recovered ₹197.49 crore cash, 23 kg gold, and some "offending goods" of high value in searches carried out at Odochem Industries, a manufacturer of perfumery compounds.

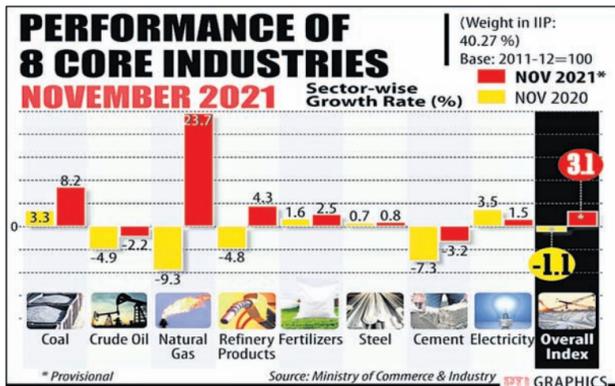
SHORT TAKES

Reliance acquires UK battery firm

New Delhi: Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd on Friday announced the buyout of British battery maker Faradion Ltd for an enterprise value of GBP 100 million, as the oil-to-retail conglomerate continued with the acquisition of end-to-end technology for its clean energy portfolio. Reliance New Energy Solar Ltd, a unit of the nation's most valuable company, signed definitive agreements to acquire 100 per cent shareholding in Faradion for an enterprise value of GBP 100 million and will invest an additional GBP 25 million as growth capital to accelerate the commercial roll-out, the company said in a statement.

Tech Mahindra buys Allyis India

Mumbai: IT services major Tech Mahindra announced the acquisition of 100 per cent stake in Allyis India and Green Investments for \$125 million in an all cash deal. The target entity is Allyis India Pvt Ltd and Green Investments LLC, holding company for Allyis Group (together called as Target). Target is headquartered in Seattle, US, and has more than 660 employees. For the financial year ending December 31, 2020, Target reported revenue of \$39.6 million.



Global M&A volumes breach \$5 trn for first time in 2021

THE OVERALL VALUE OF M&A STOOD AT \$5.8 TRILLION IN 2021, UP 64% FROM A YEAR EARLIER, ACCORDING TO REFINITIV



REUTERS

London, Dec 31: Global deal-making is set to maintain its scorching pace next year, after a historic year for merger and acquisition (M&A) activity that was fueled largely by easy availability of cheap financing and booming stock markets.

Global M&A volumes topped \$5 trillion for the first time ever, comfortably eclipsing the previous record of

\$4.55 trillion set in 2007, Dealogic data showed. The overall value of M&A stood at \$5.8 trillion in 2021, up 64% from a year earlier, according to Refinitiv.

Flush with cash and encouraged by soaring stock market valuations, large buyout funds, corporates and financiers struck 62,193 deals in 2021, up 24% from the year-earlier period, as all-time records tumbled during each

month of the year.

Investment bankers said they are expecting the deal-making frenzy to continue well into next year, despite looming interest rate hikes.

Higher interest rates increase borrowing costs, which may slow down M&A activity. However, deal advisers still expect a flurry of large mergers in 2022. Accommodative monetary policies from the US Federal Reserve fueled a stock market rally and gave company executives access to cheap financing, which in turn emboldened them to go after large targets.

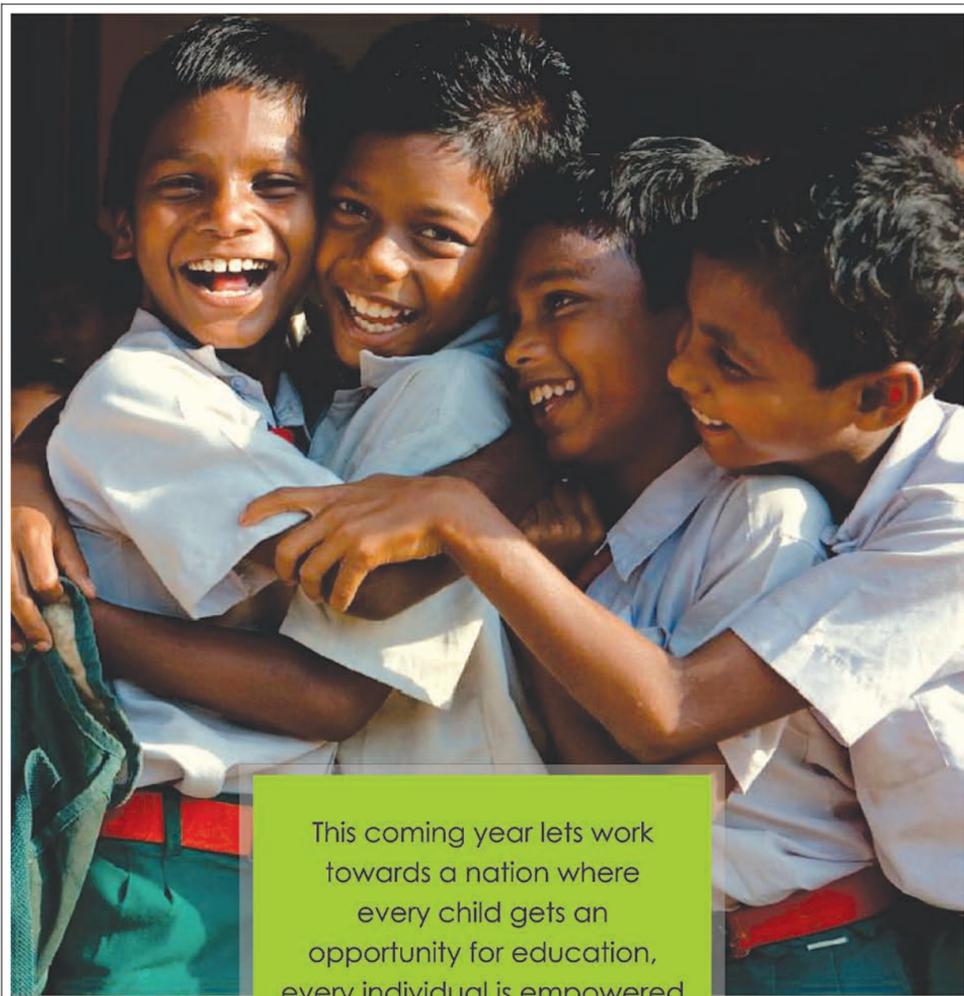
The United States led the way for M&A, accounting for nearly half of global volumes - the value of M&A nearly doubled to \$2.5 trillion in 2021, despite a tougher antitrust environment under the Biden administration.

The largest deals of the year included AT&T Inc's \$43 billion deal to merge its media businesses with Discovery Inc; the \$34 billion leveraged buyout of Medline Industries

Inc; Canadian Pacific Railway's \$31 billion takeover of Kansas City Southern; and the breakups of American corporate behemoths General Electric Co and Johnson & Johnson. According to a survey of dealmakers and advisers by Grant Thornton LLP, over two-thirds of participants believe deal volumes will grow despite challenges posed by regulations and the pandemic.

Deals in sector such as technology, financials, industrials, and energy and power accounted for the bulk of M&A volumes. Buyouts backed by private-equity firms more than doubled this year to cross the \$1 trillion mark for the first time ever, according to Refinitiv data.

Despite a slowdown in activity in the second half, deal-making involving special purpose acquisition companies further boosted M&A volumes in 2021. SPAC deals accounted for about 10% of the global M&A volumes and added several billions of dollars to the overall tally.



This coming year lets work towards a nation where every child gets an opportunity for education, every individual is empowered and every dream finds a way to be fulfilled.

We, the Vedanta family wish you a very

Happy and Prosperous New Year 2022



Centre releases ₹830cr under Jal Jeevan Mission



The Centre has put emphasis on tap water connection to every household in the rural areas across the country under Jal Jeevan Mission. Odisha has constituted 3,695 village water and sanitation committees and developed 2,345 village action plans for implementation of the scheme.

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 31: The Centre Friday released Rs 830.85 crore to Odisha to expedite the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in the state.

According to the Union Jal Shakti Ministry, Odisha plans to become 'Har Ghar Jal' state in 2024.

"Out of 85.67 lakh rural households in Odisha, 35.37 lakh (41.28 per cent) households have tap water supply. The work is going on at full pace to ensure water supply in villages. Efforts are being made to ensure 100 per cent tap water connectivity in rural areas," the ministry said.

The Centre has put emphasis on tap water connection to every household in the rural areas across the country under the Jal Jeevan Mission.

"There is a significant rise in budgetary allocation for Odisha from Rs 812.15 crore in the previous fiscal to Rs 3,323.42 crore in 2021-22 fi-

nanacial year," the ministry said.

In order to implement the Jal Jeevan Mission, the coastal state has constituted 3,695 village water and sanitation committees and developed 2,345 village action plans, said the ministry.

"Six implementing support agencies (ISAs) have been engaged in Odisha to create awareness on the mission, sensitise the village community on the importance of safe water and extend support to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) for implementation of the scheme.

"As many as 17,756 women have been trained to conduct water quality testing using field test kits in Odisha while the state has 77 water testing laboratories," said the ministry.

Till date, 36,372 schools (67 per cent) and 29,097 Aanganwadi Centres (54 per cent) in Odisha have been provided with tap water supply, the ministry stated further.

Bansal takes charge as new Odisha DGP



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, Dec 31: Senior IPS officer Sunil Kumar Bansal Friday assumed charge as the Director General of Police (DGP) of Odisha Police.

Bansal, a 1987-batch IPS officer of Odisha cadre, took charge from Abhay, who retired from service.

Before returning to Odisha after 27 years, Bansal was working with the Intelligence Bureau as its special director. He was on central deputation since 1994 and has held several key positions with the IB.

Bansal was given a ceremonial guard of honour be-

fore assuming charge at the state police headquarters here.

"Seva and service will be my priority apart from taking ahead the good work started by my predecessors on all fronts," Bansal told reporters.

Noting that Odisha Police has achieved milestones in containing the Maoist menace, Bansal said cybercrime has emerged as a major challenge for law enforcers across the globe, as in the state.

Before leaving Odisha on a central deputation, Bansal had worked as the superintendent of police of Mayurbhanj and Sambalpur districts. In his farewell message, former DGP Abhay thanked the people of Odisha for their cooperation in maintaining law and order.

Abhay was scheduled to retire in June this year, but his tenure was extended by the state government till December 31.

Meanwhile, Abhay was Friday appointed the chairman of the State Task Force for narcotic drugs and related issues in the state. Abhay will work in the rank and status of Chief Secretary.

State sees slight rise in Covid-19 caseload

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 31: The state Friday reported the highest single-day spike of 228 new Covid-19 cases in the last three weeks, taking the tally to 10,54,834, a Health department bulletin said.

The state had December 10 registered 286 infections.

The death toll rose to 8,460 as two more persons succumbed to the disease in Khurda district, it said. Fifty-three other Covid-19 patients have died due to comorbidities so far, the Health bulletin added.

Khurda, of which state Capital Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the highest number of fresh cases at 105,

and thirty-two children are among the new patients, it said. The coastal state had Thursday registered 225 fresh infections.

Odisha now has 1,727 active cases, while 151 people were cured of the disease in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of recoveries to 10,44,594, the Health department bulletin said.

The state conducted 61,277 sample tests for Covid-19 Thursday, and the state's daily test positivity rate was at 0.37 per cent.

Around 2.92 crore people have received the first dose of Covid vaccines and more than 2.06 crore beneficiaries have been administered the second jab, it added.

Lit fest put off

Bhubaneswar: The Tata Steel Bhubaneswar Literary Meet has been postponed in view of rise in Covid-19 cases. The festival was scheduled to take place January 8 and 9, 2022. Now, the literary event will be held towards the middle of the year, when the situation improves. Chanakya Chaudhary, vice president, Corporate Services, Tata Steel, said, "In view of the pandemic, and to ensure safety and well-being of literature enthusiasts and the cultural fraternity at large, we have taken a considered view of postponing the festival this year. We look forward to better days ahead for everyone and hope to come back with renewed zeal and yet another memorable edition."

To Commemorate 75th Independence year (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav), Canara Bank has Introduced a New Retail Term Deposit Scheme "Canara Amrit-75"

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2022: MEDLEY OF NEW ASPIRATIONS

The pandemic has made us realise that technology is no longer optional. New Year 2022 should see even faster and accelerated adoption of technology in everything we do. Huge strides in areas like use of artificial intelligence, robotics, data analytics and data mining will be there. Education, health, entertainment and even employment will see paradigm shifts. We also plan to implement a new and innovative Platform Social Protection Delivery Platform (SPDP) to efficiently and effectively provide benefits to eligible citizens.

MANOJ MISHRA | ELECTRONICS AND IT SECRETARY

Economic recovery has been sharp following the second wave, and I expect the trend to continue in 2022 although with a brief stutter especially in the services sector if mobility restrictions are needed. Buoyant tax collections and disinvestment proceeds leave headroom for public infrastructure spending which has been the basis of the revival. Government should adopt measures which support demand creation and encourage private sector capex thereby leading to a virtuous cycle. MSMEs have been under pressure and handholding measures initiated earlier need to be extended in order to protect employment. Finally, a continuing focus on 'Ease of Doing Business' measures along with initiatives like the PLI scheme for various sectors will help India become a manufacturing powerhouse.

SUBHRAKANT PANDA | MD, IMFA & SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, FICCI

I will work passionately for the upliftment of the rural populace. The New Year will see opening of about 3/4 fisheries projects in the state.

In light of the rollercoaster ride all of us experienced in 2021, starting from the invention of Covid-19 vaccines to new variants of the virus breaching the immunity earned through the jabs and from climate crisis to socio-political instability, many have pinned hopes that technology will be a game-changer in 2022. Orissa POST speaks to a cross section of society as the horizon of fresh beginnings awaits the dawn of a New Year full of hope...

Foundation stone for passenger train service to Nilagiri will be laid this year. Projects will also be launched in tribal villages to provide employment to the needy.

PRATAP CHANDRA SARANGI | BJP MP, FORMER UNION MINISTER

I will work for the people of Koraput. I will work for the completion of the pending railway projects in the region. Making Koraput an attractive tourist destination is also there in my New Year resolution.

SAPTAGIRI ULAKA | CONGRESS MP, KORAPUT

I will try to complete the pending recruitment processes as the state government has been emphasising on filling up of the vacant posts expeditiously. Various departments of Odisha Police have large number of vacancies. This will be the biggest

priority for me in 2022.

SUDHANSHU SARANGI | CHAIRMAN, ODISHA POLICE RECRUITMENT BOARD

The Commissionerate Police resolves to make the twin city police more people friendly in 2022. We will try our best to ensure a safe and secure Cuttack and Bhubaneswar for the citizens, especially for the women, children and senior citizens.

SAUMENDRA PRIYADARSHI | TWIN CITY POLICE COMMISSIONER

We hope the effect of Covid-19 will subside in 2022 and court will start functioning normally as common people are facing a lot of problems due to the suspension of physical hearings. I hope judiciary will deliver justice impartially

DHARAMIDHAR NAYAK | SENIOR ADVOCATE, HIGH COURT

Our primary New Year resolution would be to achieve overall development of university education. We are also working towards achieving NAAC A++ grade and securing higher rank

at National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF). In 2021, we launched the e-Office of the University which is a very effective tool of transparency, efficiency & accountability.

SABITA ACHARYA | VC, UTKAL UNIVERSITY

Our culture teaches us to begin the New Year with blessings of Lord Jagannath. So, we pray to the Lord to make 2022 a peaceful and happy year for everybody. I also want people to follow Covid guidelines. Our plan for the New Year will be to expand the activities of Odisha Tourism Development Corporation Ltd more to food and beverages, create more branches of Nimantran restaurant in the state. The next branch will be coming up in Sambalpur. OTDC eateries will also come up on the beaches of the state like the ones at Blue Flag beach and another at Chandrabhaga. Other beaches will have similar outlets. Silver City Boat club is being upgraded to world class standard

SHREEMAYEE MISHRA | OTDC CHAIRPERSON

The year 2022 is full of opportunities, challenges and ignitions that would take you ahead in both professional and personal life. Let education take the lead and bring wisdom and knowledge to every child, making a better India with education. I wish all a bountiful of good wishes, health and happiness for 2022.

SILPI SAHOO | CHAIRPERSON SAI INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION GROUP

2022 will be a technology-driven year for the smart city. We will be aiming to provide contactless services and make the online modules more comprehensive. We are planning to provide a common service centre where citizens can avail facilities of BMC, BDA and others under one roof. Moreover, most of the citizens' projects will be completed this year and will be in full use.

KAMALJIT DAS | GENERAL MANAGER, BSCIL

The rising cases of Omicron have dampened the spirit of New Year celebrations but we still have to fight back and stay safe. As an actor, I have some projects in the New Year but these are waiting for the normalcy to be restored.

SABYASACHI MISHRA | ACTOR

The year 2022 starts with new challenges and new hopes. I will try to be a better version of myself, to work hard and enjoy the life. Also, I will try to give my best to the projects in 2022

BHOOMIKA DASH | ACTOR

Bank services soon in Swabhiman Anchal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, Dec 31: Residents of the Swabhiman Anchal will soon be able to get bank services in their area like their counterparts living in other parts of the district, a report said.

The matter came to the fore at a meeting of the district development coordination committee held Friday.

District Collector Vishal Singh presided in the meeting at the conference hall of the district rural development agency (DRDA).

Swabhiman Anchal is the earlier cut of area of Malkangiri district which was connected with the rest of the state in 2018 after the establishment of Gurupriya Bridge. The area is surrounded by water on three sides and inhospitable terrain on the fourth side.

Singh asked the bank managers to take immediate action towards providing bank services to the residents in Swabhiman Anchal.

He asked the managers to ensure that no one is deprived of a bank loan. In this meeting, discussions were held on the functioning of various banks, loans sanctioned to various self-help groups and on repayment.

The Collector advised the banks to encourage the SHGs to adopt various livelihood initiatives and sanction more loans for their establishment and income generation.

He also advised the banks to sanction loans to youths who had undergone vocational and skill development training to start their business and earn a livelihood.

The Collector also sought to know how much loan have been sanctioned to the beneficiaries under MGNREGA.

Senior officials of all line departments, managers of all banks operating in the district and leading bank managers among others attended the meeting.

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Subhash Chand Shorewala	Equity 10/-	50	IPS0011369	00110545	11646751-11646800

Man hacked to death by brother-in-law

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 31: In a shocking incident, a person was hacked to death by his brother-in-law over some disputes at Dhirkuti slum under Mancheswar police limits here Thursday night.

The deceased has been identified as Sushant Ghadei of Itabhati area in Nayagarh district. The Commissionerate Police managed to arrest accused Bapuni Naik while his associates are still at large.

Ghadei was working as a sweeper at Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) while Naik was working at a jewellery shop in the city here.

Naik was reportedly angry with Ghadei for opposing his relationship with a girl. They had been engaged in a heated argument a few months back, sources said.

Naik along with his aides attacked Ghadei with a sword while the latter was asleep at his house Thursday night. Ghadei's wife also sustained injuries while trying to protect the victim from her brother, sources added. Ghadei was rushed to Capital Hospital, where doctors declared him dead-on-arrival.

The police have registered a case in this regard and launched a manhunt to arrest Naik's aides.

Minor boy stabs father to death

Jeypore: In a ghastly incident, a man succumbed to his wounds Friday after his minor son stabbed him to death in Jeypore town of Koraput district December 27. The police have detained the juvenile, it was learnt. The deceased was identified as Amir Nag (35), a resident of Nuasahi. Nag and his minor son used to have bitterness over some issue. On the fateful evening, the juvenile had attacked Nag with a knife, leaving him critically injured. He was initially admitted to the district headquarters hospital. Friday, he was shifted to Sahid Laxman Nayak Medical College and Hospital where he was declared brought dead. Police took the juvenile into custody after the victim's mother filed an FIR at the police station.

Cop role in gangrape of Dalit minor under lens

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Dec 31: The role of Buguda police of Ganjam district in the gangrape of a minor came under scanner after the family members of the survivor met the DIG (Southern range) here Friday and submitted a memorandum demanding a high-level probe into the matter.

The family members under the aegis of Ganjam Zilla Dalit

AP leveraging Odisha's 'negligence'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, Dec 31: Students in Rayagada district residing on the fringes of Andhra Pradesh have shifted to schools in the neighbouring state of Andhra Pradesh after the state government closed down several schools citing lack of student strength.

Moreover, primary schools in Odisha remaining closed for the last two years due to the pandemic has led to an exodus of students to Andhra schools.

The students have been enrolled in Amma Bodi scheme launched by the Andhra Pradesh government and are studying for free in these schools. They have also been entitled to the provisions for free food, free uniforms and an annual stipend of Rs 30,000 for the students.

Observers said this to have happened due to the closure of schools in Odisha for a prolonged period.

BANE OF SCHOOL CLOSURE



They claimed that although Odisha government has announced to reopen the schools from January 3, chances of the kids' homecoming are slim.

Schools in Odisha have been locked up due to alleged lack of students while the Andhra administration is trying to lure them with various incentives. The authorities in Andhra are admitting the students in their

Lakshmi, headmistress of Kereda UP School said that many students have shifted to the Andhra schools and have taken admission there without any transfer certificates.

She also said that a guardian had applied for a TC Thursday for which she had sought the permission of ABEO. The student will get his TC after ABEO's approval.

Sources revealed that the state government closed down around 391 schools in Rayagada district citing lack of student strength. As many as 314 schools were closed in 2019-20 and 77 more schools in 2020-21 financial years.

Similarly, 1,162 primary schools, 238 secondary schools and 577 UP schools have remained closed since the advent of Covid.

Contacted, district education officer (DEO) Purna Chandra Bariha said that the matter will be taken seriously and a probe will be ordered to ascertain the claim.

Pension distributed sans official nod

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, Dec 31: Locals and various outfits of Ranpur block in Nayagarh district have alleged scam running in the social security scheme for the elderly, widows and differently abled people of their area.

It was alleged that some people of Champagad panchayat have been included in the pension scheme without official approval for their applications. Over 50 people are being provided with pension since September keeping in view the panchayat elections, it was learnt.

Locals have taken up the issue with the Ranpur BDO and filed a complaint in this regard at the Ranpur police station.

In the complaint, it was alleged that Panchayat Executive Officer (PEO) has been distributing pension to these people, urging them

Locals oppose stone mining in 2 Jajpur hills

POST NEWS NETWORK

have been receiving is not paid by the government. The PEO has been doing illegalities. I have received pension for four months. When I enquired about the pension status in official records at the block office, my name was not there," Subudhi wondred.

Same is the case with Purnachandra Parida, a local resident. "Upon enquiring at the block office, only four people of our village turned out to be the beneficiaries of the pension scheme. I suspect after panchayat elections are over, we will not get the pension as our cases have not got official sanction," Parida said.

Locals have demanded an investigation into such illegalities and action against the PEO. Contacted, sub-collector Lagnajit Rout said that the alleged illegalities will be probed and action will be taken if the PEO is found involved in such irregularities.

Locals have demanded an investigation into such illegalities and action against the PEO. Contacted, sub-collector Lagnajit Rout said that the alleged illegalities will be probed and action will be taken if the PEO is found involved in such irregularities.

ABADHA PROJECT

Locals oppose stone mining in 2 Jajpur hills

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chandikhole, Dec 31: Dissatisfaction has been prevailing among the locals of Kesharaipur, Sukhuapada and Lalitgiri over the mining of Keshariapur and Parabhadi hills near the world famous Buddhist shrine Lalitgiri in Jajpur district.

The state government has decided to develop the Holy City of Puri as a world heritage town under the Augmentation Basic Amenities & Architecture (Abadha) Scheme. The Holy City will be beautified by using the stone of the two hills.

People from Kesharaipur, Sukhuapada and Lalitgiri held a meeting at Kesharaipur under Barchana block recently and strongly opposed the stone mining from the two hills in the proximity of the Lalitgiri.

"We will not allow the government to destroy the hills preserving Buddhist culture and heritage only to beauty Puri. The state government should go for mining other hills, which can cater to the need of the Puri beautification project," they observed.

Notably, locals had organised a protest meeting December 26 on the premises of Langudi mutt. They will soon submit a memorandum to the Jajpur district Collector in this regard. They said, if no step is taken to stop stone mining, they will move the High Court.

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, RAMBHA
Rambha N.A.C., Ganjam, Odisha - 761028
Tel.: 06810-278336, E-mail: rambhanac123@gmail.com
Letter No. 3003/NAC Date: 30.12.2021

WASTE TO GARDEN

ରମ୍ଭା ନେଇ ବନ୍ଧୁ ନିକଟସ୍ଥ କଲ୍ୟାଣ ମଞ୍ଚପରେ ଏକ ଶୁଖିଲା ଆବଳନାକୁ ନେଇ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରାଯାଇଛି । ଏହି ଉଦ୍ୟାନରେ ପୃଷ୍ଠିକ ବୋଉଲରେ ବୃକ୍ଷରୋପଣ, C & D ଆବଳନାକୁ Waste Garden ଖପରାକୁ ନେଇ ବୃକ୍ଷରୋପଣ, ଗାଈର ଚକକୁ ନେଇ ଚା' କପ ଓ ଏହା ବ୍ୟବହାର କରି ବୃକ୍ଷରୋପଣ ମଧ୍ୟ କରାଯାଇଛି । ଏତଦ୍ୱ୍ୟତୀତ ଗାଈର ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ଚାପୁକୁ ନେଇ ବେଦାକ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି କରାଯାଇଛି । ଏହି ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ବନ୍ଧୁତ କମ ବିନ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଖୋଲାଯିବ । ଏହି ଉଦ୍ୟାନ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଆଖପାଖ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ନଥିବାରୁ ବନ୍ଧୁତ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଭିଡ଼ କରିବାର ଆଶା କରାଯାଇଛି ବୋଲି ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ପାଢ଼ୀ ଜଣାଇଛନ୍ତି । ସ୍ୱଳ୍ପ ମୂଲ୍ୟ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚରେ ହୋଇଥିବା ଉଦ୍ୟାନ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଆମର ପୃଷ୍ଠିକ ଓ C & D ଆବଳନାର ପରିଚାଳନା ହେବା ସହ ଏହାକୁ ଦେଖିବା ପାଇଁ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଉତ୍ସାହ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳୁଛି ।

ସା./- କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନିର୍ବାହୀ ଅଧିକାରୀ
ବିଜ୍ଞାପିତ ଅଞ୍ଚଳ ପରିଷଦ, ରମ୍ଭା

Office of the Superintending Engineer BHUBANESWAR (R&B) DIVISION NO II
Surya Nagar, Unit-VII, Bhubaneswar
E-mail ID- eerb2_bbsr@yahoo.com Tel-(0674)-2397694
Bid Identification No- C.C. (R&B) - 02
e_procurement Tender Notice No. 35 of 2021-22
No. B-936:-

- The Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No.-II, Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites bids in SINGLE cover system for Supply, installation, testing and commissioning procurement of following materials.
- Nature of Work Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of 1 no D.G. Set.
- No. of Tender 1 No.
- Estimated cost Rs. 21,22,000.00
- Cost of Bid documents Rs.6,000/-
- Class of Contractor Original Equipment Manufacturer / Authorized Dealer Having Valid Electrical License or should have a tie up with Electrical Contractor.
- Date & Time of sale & receipt of bids From 13.00 hours of 07.01.2022 to 17.00 hours of 16.01.2022
- Date of opening of bid 11.00 Hours on dt 17.01.2022
- The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details and other terms & conditions can be seen from the e-procurement Website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in

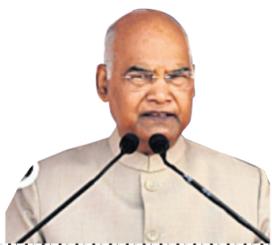
N.B. Subsequent corrigendum / addendum if required shall only be available in Website as indicated above.
Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No.II
OIPR-34088/11/0012/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, SAMBALPUR (R&B) DIVISION-1, SAMBALPUR
E-procurement notice
No. B-926
BID IDENTIFICATION No. SE / R&B / SBP / 33/2021-22
E-mail - exeengsbp@rediffmail.com, Phone/Fax -0663-2548013
No.8465/ Dated 24.12.2021

1. The Superintending Engineer, Sambalpur (R&B) Division No.I, Sambalpur on behalf of Government of Odisha, invites Percentage Rate bids in Double & Single Cover System in ONLINE MODE for construction of Civil Work as detailed in the DTCN from the eligible Class of Contractors.

- No. of works :- 02 (Two)
- Tender Cost :- Rs.6,000/- (On Line)
- Class of Contractor :- "C" & "B", "D" & "C" Class Contractor
- Date and time Available in :- 16.00 Hrs. 03.01.2022 to 17.00 Hrs. Website & receipt of Bids :- 07.01.2022
- Date of Opening of Tender :- 08.01.2022 at 11.30 Hrs.
- The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website
- Any Corrigendum / Addendum will be displayed in the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in only.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Sambalpur (R&B) Division No.I
OIPR-34042/11/0064/2122



“ May the new dawn of the New Year reinvigorate the spirit of peace, prosperity and fraternity in our lives. Let us resolve to bring in the new year with endeavour to usher in progress in our society and country
RAM NATH KOVIND | PRESIDENT OF INDIA

RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN, MUSEUM TO BE CLOSED FROM JAN 1

As a precautionary measure against the spread of Covid-19, the tour of Rashtrapati Bhavan and Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum for the general public will remain closed from Saturday till further notice. A communique from the Rashtrapati Bhavan Friday also said that the Change of Guard ceremony will also not take place till further notice



of the day quote

The Central government had promised 100 per cent vaccination by the end of 2021, today is the last day of the year, the country is still far from the vaccination target. One more 'Jumla' got shattered

RAHUL GANDHI | FORMER CONGRESS PRESIDENT

I wish the people of Karnataka are freed from all the grievances and may the New Year bring happiness in their lives

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI | KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER

Akhilesh Babu, if your second generation also comes, neither Article 370 is going to come back nor the triple talaq

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

RAIDS ON 'FOREIGN-CONTROLLED' MOBILE COS I-T dept detects evasion worth crores

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 31: The Income Tax Department has detected alleged unaccounted income worth over Rs 6,500 crore after it recently raided some "foreign-controlled" mobile communication and handset manufacturing companies and persons linked to them, the CBDT said Friday.

The searches were carried out December 21 and premises in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Assam, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bihar, Rajasthan and Delhi-NCR were covered.

"The search action has revealed that two major companies have made remittance in the nature of royalty, to and on behalf of its group companies located abroad, which aggregates to more than Rs 5,500 crore. The claim of such expenses does not seem to be appropriate in light of the facts and evidence gathered during the search action," the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), the policy-making body for the I-T Department, claimed in an official statement



issued here. It did not identify the entities searched. The raids "brought out the modus operandi of purchase of the components for manufacturing of mobile handsets. It is gathered that both these companies had not complied with the regulatory mandate prescribed under the Income Tax Act for disclosure of transactions with associated enterprises," the statement said.

Such a lapse, it said, makes them liable for penal action under the I-T Act and the quantum could be more than Rs 1,000 crore.

A modus operandi was detected "whereby foreign funds have been introduced in the books of the Indian company but it transpires that the source from which such funds have been received are of doubtful nature, purportedly with

no creditworthiness of the lender. "The quantum of such borrowings is about Rs 5,000 crore, on which interest expenses have also been claimed," it said.

The CBDT said "evidence with regard to the inflation of expenses, payments on behalf of the associated enterprises, etc. Have also been noticed which led to the reduction of taxable profits of the Indian mobile handset manufacturing company."

"Such amount could be in excess of Rs 1,400 crore," it said.

The statement claimed one of the companies raided had utilised the services of another entity located in India but did not comply with the provisions of tax deduction at source introduced from April 2020.

"The quantum of liability of TDS on this account could be around Rs 300 crore," it said.

In the case of another company covered in the search action, the statement said, it was detected that the control of the affairs of the company was "substantively" managed from a neighbouring country.

U'khand: Sacked Dalit cook reappointed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pithoragarh, Dec 31: A Dalit woman cook was reappointed at a Champawat school in Uttarakhand, days after she was sacked as some students belonging to upper castes refused to eat midday meal cooked by her.

Police have lodged a case against 31 people, six of which have been named in the FIR, for issuing threats and making casteist comments against her. The issue had snowballed into a controversy and the state government had earlier ordered a probe into it. Demanding justice for her, the Uttarakhand SC/ST Commission had also threatened to approach the court. She was reappointed by the school's management committee, which met Friday, Champawat's Chief Education Officer R C Purohit said.

"The decision to reappoint her was taken on the basis of a government order which says that if a consensus is not reached in such cases, candidates from SC/ST or OBC communities should be given priority," he added. Twenty-one of 26 members of the school management committee were present at the meeting but all of them were not of the same view.

'Test those with fever, sore throat for Covid'

All those with symptoms should "immediately isolate themselves and follow home isolation guidelines," the central government has said



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 31: Anyone with fever, headache, sore throat, breathlessness, body ache, loss of taste or smell, fatigue, and diarrhoea should be considered as a suspect case of Covid, and must be tested, the centre told states Friday amid a scare over a third wave and an uptick in cases, believed to be driven by the Omicron variant.

The new variant, which has brought back worldwide curbs, is said to be "highly infectious" - a majority of cases, however, have been reported to be mild.

All those with symptoms should "immediately isolate themselves and follow home isolation guidelines," the central government has said.

A jump in daily infections in the country - especially in big cities - has sparked fresh worry, months after the healthcare system buckled under the pressure of the second Covid wave.

India has logged over 1,200 Omicron cases so far - a large number of these have been reported from Maharashtra and Delhi. The country today recorded 16,764 cases - the highest daily surge in several weeks. RT-PCR tests are considered as the gold standard for Covid-19 detection, but rapid antigen tests produce results quicker.

Raj man dies after Omicron infection

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Dec 31: A 73-year-old man, who was found infected with the Omicron variant of coronavirus in genome sequencing and later tested negative twice, died in a Udaipur hospital Friday, an official said.

"The death is due to post-covid pneumonia with comorbidities-diabetes mellitus, hypertension and hypothyroidism," Udaipur Chief Medical

Health Officer (CMHO) Dr Dinesh Kharadi said.

Earlier Thursday in Maharashtra, a 52-year-old man with a travel history to Nigeria, who had died from a heart attack December 28, was found infected with the Omicron variant.

But his death had nothing to do with the infection, a health bulletin had said, stressing that he had diabetes for 13 years.

The man who died in Udaipur tested

negative twice December 21 and 25. Dr Kharadi said the man was found covid

positive December 15 and had symptoms like fever, cough and rhinitis, therefore he was admitted to the hospital.

"A sample was sent for genome sequencing and the result was received December 25, in which he was found suffering from the Omicron variant. Before it, he tested negative December 21. Another test was conducted December 25, which was also negative," the CMHO said.

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VK Tripathi new Chairman and CEO of Rly Board

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 31: Vinay Kumar Tripathi has been appointed as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Railway Board, according to a statement.

His appointment has been approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) and he is currently General Manager, North Eastern Railway, the statement issued by the railway ministry said.

Tripathi did his B.Tech (Electrical Engineering) from Roorkee and joined the railways through the Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers (IRSEE) batch of 1983.

His first posting was as an assistant electrical engineer for the Northern Railway. Tripathi has successfully discharged the duties of the electrical department for the Northern, Central and Western railways as well as held key posts of divisional railway manager, North Central Railway, Allahabad; chief electrical locomotive engineer; additional general manager, Western Railway; and additional member/traction in Railway Board, the statement said.

He has attended higher management training programmes in Switzerland and the US. Tripathi also played a key role in commissioning of state of the art three-phase locomotives and their indigenisation, which are now the work horses of the Indian Railways, the statement said. He will replace Suneet Sharma, a 1982 batch IRSEE officer.

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THE MOTHER



Nobel Peace Prize for farmers' morcha?

The agitating farmers' unions have called off their year-long protest against the Centre's farm laws and ended their stir. The laws have been repealed and the farmers are now heading home feeling victorious. While they may have won over the hearts of the public with their non-violent resistance, they have not made friends with the government and the bureaucratic establishment.

However, a forum of former IAS officers has come out in support of the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha, the apex body of the farmers, and even suggested that the morcha should be recommended for the Nobel Peace Prize! Though this year's peace award has been announced already, the babus are hoping to push the nomination for next year. Interestingly some whispers have been heard that another forum of babus is planning to nominate Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a copycat frenzy!

The patrons of this hitherto little-known "forum", former IAS officers, SS Boparai and Rameshinder Singh have said that the morcha deserves the award "for its unique role in protecting the future of the country's 50% working peasant population".

Boparai, it turns out, retired from the IAS back in 2002 and is a former Vice-Chancellor of Punjabi University, Patiala. He has the rare babu to be honoured with the prestigious Kirti Chakra. During his career besides holding important posts in Punjab, he was Coal Secretary at the Centre and even did a stint at the erstwhile Planning Commission.

He along with Rameshinder Singh had supported the farmers throughout the agitation and kept up a regular supply of quilts, blankets, pillows and tarpaulins to the camping farmers.

Panel to suggest new IAS recruitment policy

For several years the government has lived with a shortage of IAS officers, much of this due to the restriction on the intake at 180 officers every year. Sources say that there is a shortage of at least 1,500 IAS officers across the country. Against the authorised strength of 6,699 officers, only 5,205 officers are available to the government.



BABUDOM BYTES
Dilip Cherian

Now on the urging of the Parliamentary Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has decided to take steps to redress the situation. DoPT Secretary Pradip Kumar Tripathi has decided to set up a committee to assess the deficit of IAS officers and suggest a recruitment plan to be implemented from next year. While details of the committee are still awaited, it is believed that the panel will study the number of officers that would be required over the next decade to take up various positions. Also, it may recommend removing the restriction on the annual intake of IAS officers.

In its report presented to Parliament in the just-concluded Winter Session, the parliamentary committee had noted with some concern the increasing gap between the sanctioned strength and the availability of IAS officers.

RBI cadre officer sent to NHAI

In a sudden burst of urgency, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has finally got its Member Finance - after two years, to be precise. The government has appointed senior RBI cadre officer NRVVMK Rajendra Kumar to the post for a three-year term. It is also significant that an officer from a little-mentioned cadre of babus has been put in a big post. We can expect some conversations in IAS circles on this.

Sources have told DKB that Rajendra Kumar, who is chief general manager at the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was among the five officers short-listed for the post from a list of nine candidates. He has replaced 1996-batch IAS officer Asheesh Sharma, who is now Joint Secretary, Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

With Kumar's appointment, babu watchers are now hoping that a similar sense of urgency will see the Centre make a move on appointing a new chairman for NHAI. The organisation is a key component of the government's political calculus, where it needs to showcase its accomplishments in the rapid construction of highways. Also, it is pointed out that another post of Member (PPP) has also been vacant for two years. The NHAI chairman's post was vacated when SS Sandhu, a 1988-batch IAS officer was abruptly repatriated to his parent cadre state of Uttarakhnad as Chief Secretary. And hopefully, the next NHAI chairman will enjoy a full tenure.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

WISDOM CORNER

- The teacher who is indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind.** - KHALIL GIBRAN
- It is always our own self that we find at the end of the journey. The sooner we face that self, the better.** - ELLA MAILLART
- The more you like yourself, the less you are like anyone else, which makes you unique.** - WALT DISNEY

WORDSWORTH

Cedar revolution

This is the most recent example of a type of labelling invention that is becoming common. The earliest of this set was velvet revolution, referring to a non-violent political revolution, especially the events leading to the end of Communist rule in Czechoslovakia in 1989. We have had, among others, the rose revolution in Georgia in 2003, the orange revolution and chestnut revolution, both in Ukraine in 2004, and, briefly, the purple revolution, which referred to Iraqis who raised their purple-stained fingers to show that they had voted in their country's recent election. Cedar revolution refers to opposition to the Syrian presence in Lebanon; it appeared in early March 2005 in the US State Department's publication Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2004.

LOL

LOOK HE'S MOVING

Three highly decorated police officers die in a wild shoot out with narcotics dealers and go to heaven. God greets them and asks, "When you are laid out in your casket, and your fellow officers and family are mourning you, what would you like to hear them say about you? The first cop says, "I



would like to hear them say, that I was the bravest cop on the force." The second police officer says, "I would like to hear that I was a terrific cop who died in the line of duty." The last cop replies, "I would like to hear them say ... Look, He's Moving!"

FOCUS BIG TECH

ZUCKERBERG'S RING OF POWER

Once upon a time, in the ancient kingdom of Lydia, a shepherd called Gyges found a magic ring, which, when rotated on his finger, made him invisible. So, Gyges walked unseen into the royal palace, seduced the queen, murdered the king, and installed himself as ruler. If you were to discover such a ring or another device that granted you exorbitant power, Socrates asked, would it be wise to use it to do or get whatever you want?



Yanis Varoufakis

EXCESSIVE POWER IS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE, EVEN SELF-DEFEATING, BECAUSE WE CRAVE INTERACTION WITH OTHER MINDS THAT WE CANNOT CONTROL, EVEN WHILE CRAVING TO CONTROL THEM

Mark Zuckerberg's recent announcement of some fabulous digital metaverse awaiting humanity gives new pertinence to Socrates' answer: People should renounce excessive power and, in particular, any device capable of granting too many of our wishes. Socrates' own disciples were not convinced. Plato reports that they expected almost everyone to succumb to the temptation, pretty much as Gyges had. But could this be because Gyges' ring was not powerful, and thus not scary, enough? Might a device far more powerful than a ring that merely makes us invisible cause us to shudder at the thought of using it, as Socrates recommended? If so, what would such a device do?

The ring allowed Gyges to overcome rivals physically, thus removing several constraints impeding his desires. But, while invisibility allowed Gyges to murder the King's guards, it went nowhere near removing all of Gyges' constraints. What if there were a gadget, let's call it the Freedom Device, which removed every constraint stopping us from doing whatever we want? What would a constraint-free existence be like once this Freedom Device was activated?

We would be able to fly like birds, travel to other galaxies in an instant, and perform feats experienced within the universes designed by talented video game developers. But that would not be enough. One of the harshest constraints is time: It forces us to forego reading a book while swimming in the sea or watching a play. So, to remove all constraints, our theoretical Freedom



Learning to appreciate that control is an illusion is hard, especially when we are prepared to sacrifice almost everything, to pay any price, to control others. But if we are to stop others - Mark Zuckerberg, for example - from controlling us, it is a lesson we must learn

Device should also allow for infinite, concurrent experience. Still, one final constraint, perhaps the most perplexing, would remain: other people.

When Jill wants to go mountaineering with Jack, but Jack craves a romantic stroll along the beach, Jack is Jill's constraint and vice versa. To liberate them from constraints, the Freedom Device should allow Jill to go mountaineering with a willing Jack while he is strolling with a version of her contented self along the beach. It would let us all inhabit the same virtual world but experience our mutual interactions differently. It would fashion not merely a universe of bliss but, in fact, a multiverse of infinite, simultaneous, overlapping pleasures. It would grant us, in other words, freedom not only from scarcity but also from what other people do to us, expect of us, or want from us. With all constraints gone, all dilemmas dissolved, all trade-offs eradicated, boundless satisfaction would be at our fingertips.

It is not hard to imagine Zuckerberg salivating at the thought of such a device. It would be the ultimate version of the "metaverse" into which he has said he wants to immerse Facebook's two billion-plus users. I can imagine him letting us sample a cornucopia of pleasures for

an instant, free of charge, just enough to crave more, at which point he would charge users accordingly. Every nanosecond of immersion in this multiverse would produce enormous multiple pleasures - for which he would charge us again and again. Before long, the capitalisation of Meta, the company that now owns Facebook, would dwarf that of all other corporations put together.

The fact that our technologists are far from inventing the Freedom Device is irrelevant, as was the fact that Gyges' ring was mythical. Socrates' question, resting on these two science-fiction devices, one ancient and one modern, remains central: Is it wise to deploy exorbitant power over others, and over nature, in pursuit of our desires?

Socrates' answer remains as apt today as it was 2,500 years ago: The price you pay for deploying excessive power is a disordered soul - that is, radical unhappiness. Whether you are a client seeking absolute control of your senses within a multiverse created by some device, or Zuckerberg striving to own the digital realm into which billions will soon be immersed, your misery is guaranteed. A successful life requires the capacity to overcome our hunger for power. It presupposes an understanding that power, in the hands of contradictory beings

like us, is a dangerous double-edged sword.

Excessive power is counter-productive, even self-defeating, because we crave interaction with other minds that we cannot control, even while craving to control them. When others do what we do not want them to do, we feel disappointed, angry, or sad. But the moment we controlled them fully, their consent would give us no pleasure, and their approval would not boost our self-esteem.

Learning to appreciate that control is an illusion is hard, especially when we are prepared to sacrifice almost everything, to pay any price, to control others. But if we are to stop others - Zuckerberg, for example - from controlling us, it is a lesson we must learn.

Socrates was keen to warn us against yielding to the temptation of the magical ring, pointing to Gyges' unhappiness. Today, with techno-feudalism and various immersive metaverses in the pipeline, his warning is more relevant than ever. As in ancient Athens, our tricky task is to empower the demos without succumbing to the lure of power.

The writer, a former Finance Minister of Greece, is leader of the MeRA25 party and Professor of Economics at the University of Athens.

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SPECTRUM FORMALISATION OF LABOUR

The challenge of 2022: Inequity

The GST collections are buoyant, share market is rising, rupee is stable and India has been recognised to be the fastest growing economy among the major economies of the world. However, the Prime Minister has said that unemployment is the one of the greatest challenges facing the country. The roots of this problem lie in the thinking of the Niti Aayog. In 2018 the Aayog had come up with a document on the vision of India at 75 years of Independence which placed two objectives in front of the country. The first objective was to promote labour-intensive production. The second objective was to encourage formalisation of labour.



Bharat Jhunjhunwala

PRIME MINISTER HAS SAID THAT UNEMPLOYMENT IS THE ONE OF THE GREATEST CHALLENGES FACING THE COUNTRY AND THE ROOTS OF THIS PROBLEM LIE IN THE THINKING OF THE NITI AAYOG

Formalisation means that instead of working on standalone individual basis like a street corner momo seller, the workers may be made part of a formal system such as fast food centers located in a shop. The difficulty is that formalisation leads to an increase in the cost of labour. For example, if we bring all the street corner momo sellers under a formal umbrella and require them to register with the government then they would have to comply with weights

and measures inspectors, health inspectors, adhere to timings, use better packaging material, pay provident fund for their helpers and follow minimum wage requirement. This will lead to increase in cost of the momos produced. The advantage that the non-formal street corner Momo vendor enjoys today vis-à-vis the momos of the same quality manufactured by large companies with automatic machines will be eroded. Today, the cost of momo produced by a street corner vendor may be ₹5 while that produced in a formal shop may be ₹7. The customer may want to buy momo from the street corner seller because it is of same quality but cheaper. The cost of the momo produced by the street corner momo shopkeeper may now become more than the cost of momo produced by a formal shop. Thus, the formalisation of labour leads to an increase in the cost of labour and makes the formal shop competitive. These shops employ lesser number of workers for the same amount of production because of the use of machines like dish washers and automatic ovens. In the end, formalisation leads to erosion of the

competitive advantage of labour and forces the economy to move to capital intensive production. This leads to increase in unemployment as has been highlighted by the Prime Minister.

The second challenge is that of environment. I am told that the price of tomato in the recent times has increased because global warming has led to damage to the crops. Such has been seen across the world. Indeed the government cannot directly prevent global warming within our country since it is a global phenomenon but, at the same time, there is much that it can do within. For example the government has recently diluted the norms for pollutant emissions by thermal power plants. Thinking is that allowing thermal plant to pollute the air will reduce the cost of pollution control equipment and will enable these plants to produce cheap electricity and will help obtain economic growth. This much is true. However, the same higher level of pollution imposes three types of cost in the economy. First, it leads to more global warming and economic disasters and the govern-

ment has to spend larger amounts to provide compensation to the affected persons. A minister from Maharashtra said that the payment of such compensation had become a major burden on the budget of the state in 2021. Second, the production of certain products like tomatoes decreases. This directly leads to lower growth because agriculture adds less to the GDP. Additionally, this leads to increase in the price of tomatoes and inflation. Third, pollution imposes a huge health cost on the people. Peoples living near Singrauli in Uttar Pradesh are suffering from multiple diseases such as bronchitis and cancer because of the high level of air pollution from large number of thermal power plants in that area. This loss of health reduces their capacity to produce increases in the cost of treatment. The challenge before the government is to assess the costs and benefits of pollution comprehensively.

The writer is a former Professor of Economics at IIM Bangalore. Views expressed are personal.

On course

Sir, That the first cricket Test in Centurion would be won by pace bowlers was a foregone conclusion. But the way India won is heartwarming. A handsome margin of 113 runs says it all. India had never won a Test match at the SuperSport Park in Centurion, and the jinx has been broken. The Indians also became the third overseas team to register a win in Centurion. Winning the toss was crucial for the team, and despite the "opinion" of some experts that the team had erred in electing to bat first, Virat Kohli's men were on top of the Proteas from day one. The Centurion result put all doubting Thomases to rest. The troika of Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj pulverised the South African batsmen to set up a superlative win for India. One of the most low-profile fast bowlers, Mohammed Shani stole the show with a brilliant eight wicket haul in the Test. This team has the wherewithal to emerge as the first Indian team ever to win a series in South Africa. Ranked number one in the world, the team started as favourites and are now on course to lift the Freedom Trophy. But the team cannot drop its guard in the remaining two Tests as the South Africans are always a force to reckon with on home pitches.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Metro melody

Sir, Kochi's MG Road metro rail station is now the favourite haunt for passengers, especially music lovers as the station became one of the first in the state and the nation to install musical or 'piano stairs' as it is lovingly called. The specialty of this staircase is that music is created when people use these stairs! People can hope and climb and jump to produce music, in fact anybody can create music! A real music buff and those who who know music can even compose tunes with the help of these stairs. The staircase and it's steps are painted in such a manner that all the notes and keys can be seen. The beauty of the musical staircase is that in addition to music it can joyfully be used as a physical activity too. Climbing the steps up and down to create music helps one to enjoy melody and also keep fit. A group of young engineers supported by Kochi metro are the brains behind such an initiative.

M Pradyu, KANNUR

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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international

of the day quote

Russia will host a 'Troika Plus' meeting on Afghanistan next month which will see the participation of the US, China and Pakistan

ZAMIR KABULOV | MOSCOW'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE TO KABUL

By the grace of God and untiring efforts of teams of the federal and provincial government, we have achieved the target of fully vaccinating 7 crore people by the end of 2021

ASAD UMAR | PAKISTAN'S PLANNING MINISTER

"Happy New Year. 2022 is almost upon us. And whatever the challenges that fate continues to throw in our way and whatever the anxieties we may have about the weeks and months ahead, particularly about Omicron and the growing numbers in hospitals... we can say one thing with certainty - our position this December the 31st is incomparably better than last year

BORIS JOHNSON | BRITISH PM

SHORT TAKES

Israel okays 4th booster shot

Tel Aviv: The Israeli Ministry of Health announced that it has approved the administration of the fourth booster shot against Covid-19 for adults at high risk. Late Thursday night, Nachman Ash, the Ministry's Director General, approved the fourth shot for those with suppressed immune systems, following recommendation from a panel of experts last week, reports Xinhua news agency.

Airstrike kills 12

Sanaa (Yemen): An airstrike by the Saudi-led coalition has mistakenly hit a camp of allied Yemeni pro-government forces, killing at least 12 troops, Yemeni military officials said Friday. The strike, which took place Thursday in the province of Shabwa, also wounded at least eight Yemeni troops, the officials said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to brief the media.

4 soldiers killed

Peshawar: Pakistani security forces raided two militant hideouts in a former Taliban stronghold near Afghanistan, triggering shootings that killed four soldiers and two insurgents, the military said Friday. The first raid was carried out in the Tank district in the northwest, killing two militants, the statement said. The other strike was carried out in the North Waziristan district, capturing a militant before four soldiers died in the fighting. The military said troops seized a cache of weapons during both raids. The military provided no further details about the slain soldiers and detained militants.

Six injured

Philadelphia: Two gunmen fired more than 65 rounds on a Philadelphia block, sending nighttime pedestrians on a busy block teeming with markets and restaurants scrambling for cover and injuring six people, at least one of them critically, police said Friday. Police responded around 11:30 pm Thursday in the Germantown neighbourhood and found a 21-year-old woman shot multiple times in the abdomen and chest and lying near dozens of spent casings. Officers rushed her to the hospital, where she was in critical condition Friday. Five men aged 19 to 29 were taken with gunshot wounds by private vehicles to two hospitals, police said. All were expected to survive.

Putin to Biden: Sanctions would be big mistake

THE TWO LEADERS SPOKE FRANKLY FOR NEARLY AN HOUR THURSDAY AMID GROWING ALARM OVER RUSSIA'S TROOP BUILDUP NEAR UKRAINE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wilmington (US), Dec 31: President Joe Biden has warned Russia's Vladimir Putin that the US could impose new sanctions against Russia if it takes further military action against Ukraine, while Putin responded that such a US move could lead to a complete rupture of ties between the nations.

The two leaders spoke frankly for nearly an hour Thursday amid growing alarm over Russia's troop buildup near Ukraine, a crisis that has deepened as the Kremlin has stiffened its insistence on border security guarantees and test-fired hypersonic missiles to underscore its demands.

Further US sanctions "would be a colossal mistake that would entail grave consequences," said Putin's foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov, who briefed reporters in



Moscow after the Biden-Putin phone conversation. He added that Putin told Biden that Russia would act as the US. Would if offensive weapons were deployed near American borders. White House officials offered a far more muted post-call readout, suggesting the leaders agreed there are areas where the two sides can make meaningful progress but also differences that might be impossible to resolve.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Biden "urged Russia to de-escalate tensions with Ukraine" and "made clear that the United States and its allies and partners will respond decisively if Russia further invades Ukraine."

Putin requested the call, the second between the leaders this month, ahead of scheduled talks between

senior US and Russian officials January 9 and 10 in Geneva. The Geneva talks will be followed by a meeting of the Russia-NATO Council on Jan. 12 and negotiations at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in Vienna on January 13.

White House officials said Thursday's call lasted 50 minutes, ending after midnight in Moscow.

Biden told Putin the two powers now face "two paths": diplomacy or American deterrence through sanctions, according to a senior administration official. Biden said the route taken, according to the official who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity, will "depend on Russia's actions in the period ahead." Russia has made clear it wants a written commitment

that Ukraine will never be allowed to join NATO and that the alliance's military equipment will not be positioned in former Soviet states, demands that the Biden administration has rejected.

Biden told Putin a diplomatic path remains open even as the Russians have moved an estimated 100,000 troops toward Ukraine and Kremlin officials have turned up the volume on their demands for new guarantees from the U.S. and NATO. White House officials said Biden made clear that the U.S. Stands ready to exact substantial economic pain through sanctions should Putin decide to take military action in Ukraine.

Putin reacted strongly. He "noted that it would be a mistake that our ancestors would see as a grave error. A lot of mistakes have been made over the past 30 years, and we would better avoid more such mistakes in this situation," Ushakov said.

Russia's demands are to be discussed during the talks in Geneva, but it remains unclear what, if anything, Biden would be willing to offer Putin in exchange for defusing the crisis. Draft security documents Moscow submitted demand that NATO deny membership to Ukraine and other former Soviet countries and roll back military deployments in Central and Eastern Europe.

Colorado wildfires: Thousands evacuated

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Denver (US), Dec 31: An estimated 580 homes, a hotel and a shopping centre have burned and tens of thousands of people were evacuated in wind-fuelled wildfires outside Denver, officials said Thursday evening.

Boulder County Sheriff Joe Pelle said only one injury has been reported, but didn't rule out finding out later about more severe injuries or death due to the intensity of fires that quickly swept across the region as winds gusted up to 105 mph (169 kph).

The wildfires, spanning 2.5 square miles (6.5 square kilometers), engulfed parts of the area in smoky, orangish skies as residents scrambled to get to safety.

The city of Louisville, which has a population of about 21,000, was ordered to evacuate after residents in Superior, which has 13,000 residents, were told to leave. The neighbouring towns are roughly 20 miles (32 kilometers) northwest of Denver. Several blazes started in the area Thursday, at least some sparked by downed power lines.

Six people who were injured in the fires were being treated at UHealth Broomfield Hospital,



spokesperson Kelli Christensen said. A nearby portion of US Highway 36 also was shut down.

Colorado's Front Range, where most of the state's population lives, had an extremely dry and mild fall, and winter so far has continued to be mostly dry. Snow was expected Friday in the region though.

One video captured by a bystander outside a Superior Costco store showed an apocalyptic scene with winds whipping through barren trees in the parking lot surrounded by gray skies, a hazy sun and small fires scattered across the ground.

Leah Angstman and her husband saw similar dark skies while returning to their Louisville home from Denver International Airport after being away for the holidays.

UN food agency halts work in North Darfur

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cairo, Dec 31: The World Food Programme has suspended its operations across Sudan's province of North Darfur following recent attacks on its warehouses, a decision expected to affect about 2 million local people.

A statement released by the UN food agency Thursday said all three of its warehouses in the area were attacked and looted. More than 5,000 metric tons of food apparently was stolen, the group said. Earlier in the week, the WFP said an unidentified armed group had attacked one of its warehouses in North Darfur's provincial capital of el-Fasher. In response, local authorities imposed a curfew across the province.

However, the attacks continued until early Thursday, said the statement. Hundreds of looters have also dismantled warehouse structures, WFP added. "This theft has robbed nearly two million people of the food and nutrition support they so desperately need," said WFP Executive Director David Beasley. "Not only is this a tremendous setback to our operations across the country, but it endangers our staff and jeopardises our ability to meet the needs of the most vulnerable families."

The agency said it cannot divert assistance from other parts of the East African country to the looted warehouses without compromising the needs of vulnerable Sudanese living outside the province.

Sudan is one of the poorest countries in the world, with nearly 11 million people in need of food security and livelihood assistance in 2022, said the WFP.

The agency urged Sudanese authorities to recover the looted stocks and guarantee the security and safety of the WFP operations in North Darfur.



A woman bundled up for the cold weather walks up a snow-covered street in Vancouver

AP/PTI PHOTO

Pak, China vow to tap potential of Gwadar port

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Dec 31: All-weather allies Pakistan and China have agreed to use the full potential of the strategic Gwadar Port in Balochistan province, a major project under the CPEC that provides the Communist-giant an opening to the Arabian Sea.

The CPEC is the flagship project of China's ambitious USD 60 billion Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and it links China's Xinjiang province with Pakistan's Gwadar port in Balochistan province. The decision was taken during a

meeting between Pakistani and Chinese officials on Thursday via video link, according to a statement by China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority.

"The two sides resolved to redouble the efforts to tap the full potential of Gwadar port and free zone as well as to make sure that the local population of Gwadar and surrounding areas fully benefit from these projects by utilising the massive opportunities being created in various sectors," according to the statement.

The sixth session of the Joint



Working Group on Gwadar reviewed the implementation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects in Gwadar and also deliberated upon the future course of action with regard to development of Gwadar city, port and the free zone, it said.

The two sides reviewed the progress made on various projects, including full operationalisation of the Gwadar port and its inclusion in the Afghan Transit Trade route and vowed to redouble efforts to tap the full potential of the Gwadar Port.

The meeting also noted the completion of the project Gwadar Free Zone Phase-I, and start of work on the bigger Phase-II, covering an area of 2,221 acres. The meeting emphasised on the need for finalisation of the marketing and investment plan for Free Zone along with its implementation strategy

Parents selling children shows desperation of Afghanistan

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Shedai Camp (Afghanistan), Dec 31: In a sprawling settlement of mud brick huts in western Afghanistan housing people displaced by drought and war, a woman is fighting to save her daughter.

Aziz Gul's husband sold their 10-year-old into marriage without telling his wife, taking a down-payment so he could feed his family of five children. Otherwise, he told her, they would all starve. He had to sacrifice one to save the rest.

Many of Afghanistan's growing number of destitute people are making such desperate decisions as their nation spirals into a vortex of poverty. Afghanistan's aid-dependent economy was already teetering when the Taliban seized power in mid-August amid a chaotic withdrawal of US and NATO troops. The international community froze

Afghanistan's assets abroad and halted funding, unwilling to work with a Taliban government given its reputation for brutality during its previous rule 20 years ago.

The consequences have been devastating for a country battered by war, drought and the coronavirus pandemic. State employees haven't been paid in months. Malnutrition stalks the most vulnerable, and aid groups say more than half the population faces acute food shortages.

"Day by day, the situation is deteriorating in this country, and especially children are suffering," said Asuntha Charles, national director of the World Vision aid organization in Afghanistan, which runs a health clinic for displaced people near the western city of Herat. "Today I have been heartbroken to see that the families are willing to sell their children to feed



other family members."

Arranging marriages for very young girls is common in the region. The groom's family pays money to seal the deal, and the child usually stays with her parents until she is at least around 15. Yet with many unable to afford even basic food, some say they'd allow prospective

grooms to take very young girls or are even trying to sell their sons.

Gul, unusually in this deeply patriarchal, male-dominated society, is resisting. Married off herself at 15, she says she would kill herself if her daughter, Qandi Gul, is taken away. When her husband told her he had sold Qandi, "my

heart stopped beating. I wished I could have died at that time, but maybe God didn't want me to die," Gul said, with Qandi by her side peering shyly from beneath her sky-blue headscarf. "Each time I remember that night...I die and come back to life."

Her husband told her he sold one to save the others, saying they all would have died otherwise. "Dying was much better than what you have done," she said she told him.

Gul rallied her brother and village elders and with their help secured a "divorce" for Qandi, on condition she repays the 100,000 afghanis (about \$1,000) her husband received. It's money she doesn't have. Her husband fled, possibly fearing Gul might denounce him to authorities. The Taliban government recently banned forced marriages.

Gul says she isn't sure how long she can fend off the family of the prospective groom, a man of around 21. "I am just so desperate. If I can't provide money to pay these people and can't keep my daughter by my side, I have said that I will kill myself," she said. "But then I think about the other children. What will happen to them? Who will feed them?" Her eldest is 12, her youngest - her sixth - just two months.

In another part of the camp, father-of-four Hamid Abdullah was also selling his young daughters into arranged marriages, desperate for money to treat his chronically ill wife, pregnant with their fifth child. He can't repay money he borrowed to fund his wife's treatments, he said. So three years ago, he received a down-payment for his eldest daughter Hoshnan, now 7, in an arranged marriage to a now 18-year-old.

WHAT 2022

HAS IN STORE FOR YOU



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Aries

21st March to 20th April



The year 2022 may start slowly for the Aries born according to the yearly zodiac predictions in the first quarter. On the flip side, the financial year is beneficial and rewarding regardless of a shaky start at the beginning. More access to earnings may improve your year financially. Previous investments and its interest may also reward you with an extra source of income this year. Your precision for the source of gains which may allow you to make extra money this year. Natives who are married or looking to marry their special someone may have a smooth year. Aries students are likely to face challenges in their academic year in 2022. There may be some conflict between your studies and hobbies and you may have to maintain balance between them in the beginning. Thought aries natives in research may have a fruitful year with gaining better results. Aries natives may have to pay special attention to their health this year. Thus it is advised for you to be careful throughout the year regarding your health and take proper precautions.

Taurus

21st April to 21st May



You may be able to coordinate your actions and achievements very well at the beginning of the year, which may lead to success and celebration. Flows of money may be slightly on the higher side and you may make income through different sources. Those of you who have invested in real estate or in commodities are likely to make some extra money through trading activities. You are very particular about the person you want to be with, and your high standards may help you make the right match. Academically too this year is looking great and positive for those who are working hard and are looking to make a huge difference in their performance. Slowly you are also likely to develop a new passion toward a profession which has been unique and important to you. As the earnings for the year may be good, even the asset making exercise may improve this year.

Gemini

22nd May to 21st June



Therefore, the year may have many supporting factors to you and shall enable you to balance your finances wisely. A desire to develop a relationship with someone close to you may be high this year. As each month passes, the urge to find someone important in your life may also be high. Thus, the desire of finding a life partner may be fulfilled in the second half of the year. Though the year is good for those who have been working hard in pursuing their Masters or even Bachelors. As long as you keep your ailments under control, you may be able to build up your assets and buy a property as the earnings for the year are positive. There may be a mix of results in the marriage department this year. Also, for those who have been married, the year may bring some happy moments from the middle of the year.

Cancer

22nd June to 22nd July



Considering recent past years, the year 2022 is expected to be a favorable year for cancerians. It may be a year when those who had to use their investments in the past may be able to use them again. There is only one piece of advice, and that is to maintain patience, as convincing them is sometimes difficult. Those who have experienced this phase would benefit from this one looking at settling down in their relationship. Native couples dating each other are also likely to get married. Those who are committed to working hard and plan to beat each goal may be rewarded this year. Additionally, students can expect some surprises during the course of the year. A progressive year is in store for students this year. Your achievements may be made high this year due to hard work. But hard work may come only after investing considerable time in your preparation and application of knowledge from time to time.

Leo

23rd July to 22nd August



This year may be rewarding for all those who work hard and plan to surpass each milestone. Starting from monetary gains, this may be the year where you would take a new resolution of not to lend money to anyone. This may be a year for those who had to use their investments in the past to replenish their investment once again. The year also has some surprises for Students. Though for students pursuing research or who are pursuing an MBA, the year would test your time management and knowledge. Therefore, work hard to make sure you complete the task of finishing the exam on time. Your achievements may be made high this year due to hard work. But hard work may come only after investing considerable time in your preparation and application of knowledge from time to time. So, plan your year wisely.

Virgo

23rd August to 22nd September



Virgos may experience many ups and downs during the year. Your popularity may increase this year among the people you mingle with. The results of your hard work may be apparent for you this year if you have been working hard on your fortunes. Whether it be financial pressure or a lowered self-esteem issue, you face heavy pressure this year. Hence, you should do your best to keep your finances in order this year, especially between January and September. In addition, the year 2022 may be a very good year for students who have planned ahead and worked hard. Take advantage of the academic preparation you receive this year. Taking management courses in a foreign country is a good choice for students this year. In fact, your vigour this year may be high enough to give you a rise in your career.

Libra

23rd September to 22nd October



There may be many progressive and supportive aspects to the year 2022. This would now be more progressive and supportive. Getting a better grip on people may enable you to cope better in the coming year. Changing your working style might be a pleasant change from the monotony you might experience. You would plan to improve your business gains systematically. Those of you who have been planning to marry your beloved partner are likely to find someone interesting and encouraging. Love may slowly blossom and you both may lead a very happy married life. This would be your year in all the facets of your life. With a better life, you would also lead a happy living to make sure you accumulate wealth and build property. All this achievement may be made successful in our life and you shall be quite happy with your achievements towards the end of the year.

Scorpio

23rd October to 22nd November



There is no doubt that time is great, but this would only be accompanied by the right actions you would take. In fact, your efforts are the prime reason for the success that you have been following for a long time. You may find yourself appreciated and cared for by others this year, which may be due to a kind heart towards others. Those of you who have been planning to initiate some important project for a long time, it would be better to postpone the changes you intend to do in your current project, as time is not favourable for you to undertake it now. This would be a year where you would be quite content and observing your list of achievements to go from place to place. Unexpected problems in the family may keep you away from the trip you planned and dreamed about for a long time. Thus, the year may have mixed results but at the same time, you would be happy with your achievements.

Capricorn

22nd December to 20th January



Throughout the year, you may experience joy and cheerfulness. By focusing introspectively and by exercising your mind on things other than mundane things, you may rise above the pressures and challenges of routine existence this year. An intimate friendship that always adds profound meaning to your life may prove to be what you need for your entire life. Further, the year is good for those who are looking for a life partner. The timing of your investment is more important after September 2022. You can use the initial few months of the year to plan and analyse what to do and what shouldn't be done. Some of you would also get the opportunity to work with new partners or business associates. Choose them wisely to avoid any mistake on your partner in fixing the working relationship with them. As the year winds down, you may be delighted with the direction life is taking you.

Aquarius

21st January to 18th February



This year, harmony and peace may be the keywords for you. Thanks to the principles of harmony, you would be able to enhance your career this year. Women may have a positive time this year. This is also the year for higher academic learning. Those students pursuing their desired higher studies, may have to settle down with the preparation of your academic learning. But the good part is that you would have options to choose from. Thanks to the dedication and hard work that you have been investing for long and this may bring you closer to your dream to be fulfilled. Again, those of you who are singles, may find the year to be tricky. You may be emotionally connected with someone, but may have some doubts about the newly linked up person. There is a possibility that you may not be happy with the way life would take up a turn and this would make you reconsider your decision to tie the nuptial knot with the person.

Pisces

19th February to 20th March



In the coming year, you may become easily agitated and inactive, lacking motivation to take action and present yourself the way you used to. You have been avoiding expansion plans for a very long time, which has never led to anything serious. Further, those of you planning to earn through various sources of income may do well this year. Efforts and hard work may bring wonderful results in the days to come. Be meticulous in your actions this year as your efforts will play a very crucial role in building your career and also to build your financial base. Your financial position is likely to be good throughout the year. For those planning to conceive a child, the year might be good in all walks of your life. The gains that you would have planned are likely to make you progress and give you gains in all walks of your life. So, work hard and the year is here to stay for you throughout the rest of the year.



Sagittarius

23rd November to 21st December



It is likely that your anxiety level may increase when the year 2022 is discussed, as you would feel a relative ease flowing into your daily routine. During the coming year, you may have a positive experience at work and at home. You may find yourself more appreciated and cared for by others this year, which may be due to good deeds and a kind heart towards others. Those of you who have been planning to initiate some important project for a long time, it would be better to postpone the changes you intend to do in your current project. This would enable you to find someone in your life, but the timeline may be till the end of the year. Observing your list of achievements as you travel from place to place would be a lovely way to end the year. You may be unable to take the trip you had planned and dreamed of for a long time in the face of unexpected family problems. Despite your depressive feelings, chances may find you very soon.

leisure



CASSANDRA WANTS DOLLY PARTON FOR HER BIOPIC

Actress Cassandra Peterson, who is best known for playing *Elvira: Mistress of the Dark* in the 1988 comedy horror by the same name, has claimed that a movie on her life is currently in the works, adding that she would love to see Dolly Parton play the lead role.

SHAWN MENDES HAVING A HARD TIME WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Award-winning singer Shawn Mendes is having a 'hard time' with social media, just days after his former girlfriend Camila Cabello announced she was taking a break from social media.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will be indecisive today, which is not usually the case with you. Ganesh says this could lead you to indulge in speculation, which is not so bad unless you risk all your money in it. Besides, when it comes to matters of the heart, you must exercise a great deal of caution.

TAURUS
All is not likely to go well during this day says Ganesh. Though you will sail smoothly most of the day, problems are very likely to come up. At the professional level you are not likely to face obstacles or difficulties. Your relations with your parents turn awkward and unpleasant.

GEMINI
Today, you are likely to focus on self-improvement, predicts Ganesh. Self-employed people may expect huge profits in their businesses. You may end up spending more time at work and less time with family. You need to strike a balance between work and family.

CANCER
What good is life if it doesn't involve great fun and merrymaking. Keeping this in mind, you will set about planning your day. There may be no stopping you as you go about your day having a blast at every possible moment. There will be no limit to your gregarious behaviour, says Ganesh.

LEO
Call it the momentary re-ignition of the spark of brilliance and energy, this day finds you at the peak of your dynamism. Ganesh predicts a fantastic day for all, especially those in the freelancing business, as your imagination and inspiration reach new heights and motivate others to excel.

VIRGO
Today is the day when you'll be like the Iron Man: heart of gold, nerves of steel - minus the shiny body armour, though. Tolerance, optimism and exceedingly artistic talents will rule the roost. Pursue academics in the arts, advises Ganesh. Your understanding of life will help you serve society better.

LIBRA
You may not have been crowned 'Employee Of The Month', but do not let that distract you from the fact that today, you are the brightest star in office. Be prepared to get some special treatment at work, as your bosses shower praise on you. Apart from that, a lot of tangible and intangible benefits await you.

SCORPIO
Ganesh warns you of a long, dreary day today. Though not completely at a loss, you may feel lost and desire to spend some time alone with yourself. The empty nest syndrome is likely to invade and hold your mental peace at ransom, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
A balanced day is in store today. Find yourself as much at home as at your desk. You may engage in a time of fun and games with your buddies. But when it comes to family, something more practical, like rearranging your house, is on the cards.

CAPRICORN
If you are a sports person, you will enjoy both good health and fame, while engineers will mull investing money in new business ventures, foresees Ganesh. But make sure you know what you are doing, a minor slip can cost you a fortune, and you would have realised by now that repenting won't undo anything. Your social standing may get stronger; people may develop a high opinion about, and your reputation may get a boost too.

AQUARIUS
Money matters are very important, and your family will demand your presence in all financial dealings. At work, things will be more comfortable. You may also get new projects. Ganesh predicts a trip in the offing.

PISCES
Your inherent dynamism and energy will sparkle forth today. Freelancers will be struck with inspiration, and will conjure masterpieces. Pleasant surprises await you in the evening, says Ganesh.

Celebrities gear up to welcome the New Year

Mumbai: As Friday was the last day of 2021, social media got flooded with posts bidding adieu to the year full of a rollercoaster ride. Well, Bollywood celebs were no different! The stars took to their respective Instagram accounts to share a recap of 2021, express gratitude and more.

Sara Ali Khan posted a glimpse from her travel diaries of 2021. She captioned the post, "Moments of 2021 that made me feel most alive."

Parineeti Chopra shared pictures from her Europe trip and wrote, "Europe x NYE Thankyou 2021. You blessed me."

Ankita Lokhande shared pictures with her hubby Vicky Jain and wrote, "I am thankful for nights that turned into mornings, my best friend that turned into my family, and dreams that turned into reality. #2021bride #2021lastday #2021lastpost #anvikikahani."

Sharing a compilation video of the moments of 2021, **Sanya Malhotra** wrote, "sayonara 2021."

Susanne Khan penned a short note for her video that read, "2021..... you were soooo Animated.. Thank you so very much for giving me copious amounts of Incredible Love, Grace, Strength, blessings, prosperity and last but not most immense humility and Gratitude. 2022 I am ready for you...#StrongIsTheNewSkinny2022 Here we come.....relentlessly"

Shahid Kapoor's wife Mira Rajput Kapoor shared suggested a few New Years resolutions for everyone and wrote, "The year that was! Family, Fitness and Finally travelling!"

Kunal Kemmu began the last day of 2021 by hitting the gym. Kunal posted a picture of him flaunting his chiselled muscles. Alongside the image, he wished everyone a blessed new year. He wrote, "Worked out and worked out our way through 2021.. lot to be grateful for and lot to be thankful for. But I got my eyes on 2022 now. Here is wishing everyone a blessed year to come."



Dia thanks 2021 for making her a mother

Mumbai: Actress Dia Mirza has thanked the year for making her mother and said that it was a year filled with incredible joy and a near death experience.

Dia posted a video collage featuring moments from all the months. Alongside the clip, she wrote: "Thank you #2021 for making me a Mother."

"It was (a) year filled with incredible joy, a near death experience, the early birth of our son and some very testing times. But the lessons are well learnt and the gratitude runs deep. The biggest learning — the toughest times don't last. Breathe. Witness. Surrender. And be grateful. Every single day."

Dia's little one was born prematurely May 15 via an emergency C-Section and was tended to by nurses and doctors in a neonatal ICU.

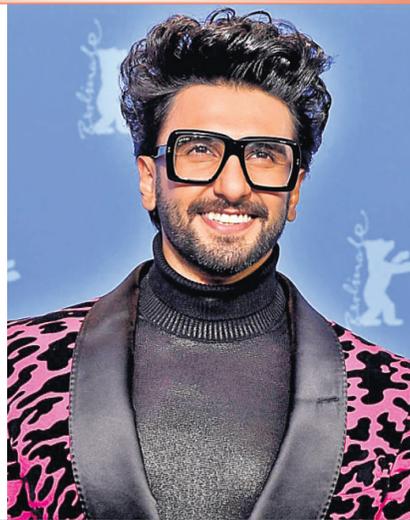
The 40-year-old actress and Vaibhav had tied the knot in February 2021 in an intimate wedding ceremony. The actress announced her pregnancy in April.

Ranveer completes 10 yrs in showbiz

Mumbai: It has been a decade-long-journey for Ranveer Singh in the world of Hindi cinema. The Bollywood's livewire star says it has been a fulfilling one for him and that he was a different person 10 years ago. Ranveer made his acting debut with *Band Baaja Baraat* (BBB) in 2010, after which he starred in a slew of blockbusters such as *Bajirao Mastani*, *Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela*, *Padmaavat*, *Dil Dhadakne Do*, *Simmba*, *Gully Boy* and *83*.

He says, "I have completed a decade and this journey has been beyond my wildest imagination. I am so grateful that I even got a chance to become an actor and filled with gratitude every day. It's surreal for me to think that I am living my dream, I am so grateful for the opportunities, I value them tremendously. And what a journey it has been these 10 years — from BBB to 83 and I am so happy that I got the opportunity to work with the best filmmakers, to show my repertoire as an actor; to explore my own craft in the diverse genres, to showcase my versatility."

The actor calls his journey a fulfilling one. "This journey has been fulfilling but I was a different person I was 10 years ago. When I started with BBB it was an overnight hit and I used to feel I can do anything. But as the years went on and I started gaining more experience and I realised I don't know anything."



Tiger kickstarts final schedule of Heropanti 2

Mumbai: Action star Tiger Shroff recently updated his fans through his social media that he has started the last leg of *Heropanti 2* schedule.

Tiger took to his Instagram story to share the poster of the film as he wrote on the picture, "Time to suit up again for one last sched #heropanti2 #eid2022."

The poster features Tiger in a John Wick — esque avatar as he aims guns from atop a sports car. *Heropanti 2* is the sequel of Tiger's debut film where he was seen opposite another debutante back then, Kriti Sanon.

Both the actors have since grown strength to strength and have even reunited for their upcoming film, *Ganapath*. As for *Heropanti 2* the film written by Rajat Arora and produced by Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment is being helmed by choreographer - actor Ahmed Khan and it also stars Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Tara Sutaria.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

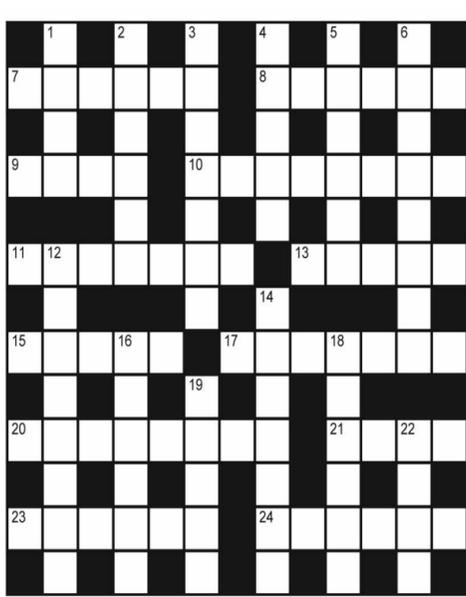


BREVITY



FUN post

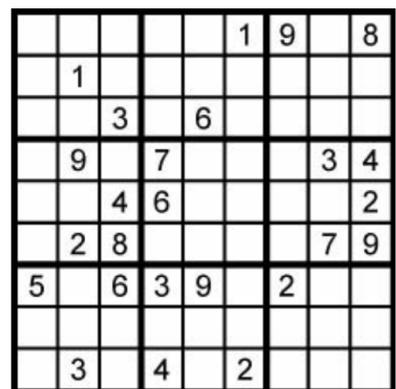
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Go-getter
 - 8 Empower
 - 9 Dismissed
 - 10 Pistols (4,4)
 - 11 Offense
 - 13 Terminal
 - 15 Accord
 - 17 Stronghold
 - 20 Arrivederci
 - 21 Sticky stuff
 - 23 Vitality
 - 24 Certain print
- Down**
- 1 Wildcat
 - 2 Male goose
 - 3 Floral arrangement
 - 4 Ships
 - 5 Monkey's treat
 - 6 Seashore cookout
 - 12 Kind of orange
 - 14 Life science
 - 16 Aftershock
 - 18 Film genre
 - 19 Eccentric
 - 22 Word on a door

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

UNSUNG HERO

SAKYASEN MITTRA

India's year-long dominance in Test cricket away from home has been attributed to the ability to pick up 20 wickets in any condition.

And the credit has largely been bestowed on the 'freakish' Jasprit Bumrah, whom many consider the ultimate match-winner for the Men in Blue. However, this astounding success story wouldn't have been possible had not the other bowlers had a telling effect on the opposition. They have been the unsung heroes and among them Mohammed Shami's contribution has been huge to say the least.

Fast bowlers, like spinners also hunt in pairs. Fred Trueman had a Biran Statham, Dennis Lillie had a Jeff Thomson while Wasim Akram had Waqar Younis to fall back on during his bad days. The same has been the case of Bumrah. Without Shami, he probably wouldn't have been half as effective as he is at present.

In the just-concluded Centurion Test which India won, Shami became the fifth Indian fast bowler to take 200 wickets or more when he dismissed Kagiso Rabada in the first innings. He joined an elite list headed by Kapil Dev (434 Test wickets), followed by Zaheer Khan and Ishant Sharma (311 wickets each) and Javagal Sreenath (236). For someone who made his Test debut in 2013 against the West Indies at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata, the burly fast bowler has come a long way. Today he is called the 'Sultan of Swing' - an epithet that had earlier been bestowed on legends like Lillee, Waqar and Wasim

and Zaheer. No doubt, he has earned it the hard way.

Currently, India skipper Virat Kohli cannot think of a playing XI without Shami in the mix. He was all praise for the fast bowler after the Centurion match. "Very, very happy for him (Shami) to get 200 wickets and have an impactful performance," Kohli said of Shami. "For me he is absolutely world-class talent. He's among the best three seamers in the world at the moment. His strong wrist, his seam position and his ability to hit a length consistently has made him a fearful proposition to all batsmen," Kohli added.

What is important to note is Shami's consistency. In the last 20 Test innings he has bowled, Shami has gone wicket-less on only four occasions. It just goes to show his ability as a strike bowler. You cannot win a game without taking wickets and Shami has consistently done that for Team India. And it is not that his success has been away from home only where conditions favour pacers. In his debut Test only, he picked up nine wickets against the West Indies to be adjudged the man of the match.

Credit should be given to Shami for the way he has battled all odds. In 2018 there was the incident of his estranged wife Hasin Jahan who alleged him of torture, having extramarital affairs and even being involved in match-fixing. It ended up with Shami being repeatedly interrogated by the police and also being trolled viciously on various social media platforms on a regular basis. For some time even the BCCI sidelined him. However, Shami's teammates stood solidly by him and he returned to don the national colours with elan.

Amid all this what did Shami do? He constructed a cricket pitch at his native place in Amroha district of Uttar Pradesh and immersed himself into rigorous training. He knew cricket was the only way out from all controversies and so he concentrated wholeheartedly in the game. He came back with a vengeance - fitter, stronger and bet-

ter than ever before. And with it he scripted many memorable victories against formidable opposition.

Even in the recent past, when India lost the T20 World Cup game against Pakistan this year, Shami was viciously trolled by people who picked on him because of his religion. Again teammates and formers came to the defence of Shami and slammed back the trolls who questioned his integrity. Shami returned the faith by giving another match-winning performance against South Africa.

Two of his Bengal teammates - one a former and the other a minister now in the Mamata Banerjee government vouch for Shami's talent. "His ability to hit the deck and keep the seam straight is absolutely sensational," said ex-minister Laxmi Ratan Shukla. "From the first day he came into the Bengal under-23 nets, we knew he was special," Shukla added.

Manoj Tiwary also has the same opinion. "It is very difficult to understand which way the ball will swing or move off the pitch because of Shami's ability to keep the seam straight. So batsmen at times have to play the guessing game and more often than not perish. Also Shami has the ability to bowl long spell, he can be the workhorse as well as the strike bowler. These qualities make him very special indeed," Tiwary stated.

Tiwary also was quick to point out that Shami should not forget the contribution of another person in his success story. "One should not forget the contribution of Akram in Shami's development. As the mentor of KKR, Wasim bhai used to spend hours with Shami in the nets. He fine-tuned Shami, taught him the intricacies of seam and swing bowling. Shami is reaping rewards for what Wasim bhai taught him," Tiwary said.

Yes, for the blossoming of a cricketer, efforts are needed from various quarters. Family members, coaches, dieticians, trainers, mentors - all have a role to play. Ultimately however, it is the player who has to deliver the goods in the 'arena' of pressure. Shami has done just that.

RECORD 8TH TITLE FOR BOYS IN BLUE

India colts triumph in under-19 Asia Cup



Indian U-19 cricketers celebrate the fall of a Sri Lankan wicket PHOTO COURTESY: BCCI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Dec 31: India reaffirmed their supremacy in the U-19 Asia Cup with a record eighth title as they hammered Sri Lanka by nine wickets in a rain-hit summit showdown here Friday. The Indian bowlers were all over Sri Lanka, who were gasping at 74 for seven in 33 overs, when heavy rain lashed the Dubai International Cricket Stadium and stopped play for more than two hours. It became a 38-over-a-side contest when play resumed with Sri Lanka limping to 106 for nine.

India were set a revised 102-run target in 38 overs via DLS method which they reached rather comfortably in 21.3 overs with opener Angkrish Raghuvanshi (56 n o, 67b, 7x4) leading the chase. He was well-supported by Shaik Rasheed (31 n o, 49b, 2x4). The two put on an unbeaten stand of 96 runs for the second wicket, to script an emphatic win for the Boys in Blue.

Raghuvanshi grew in confidence after playing a back-foot punch

early on in the innings. His back-foot play was impressive against the pacers and his feet movement against the spinners was assured.

Earlier, Sri Lanka opted to bat though early morning showers made conditions ideal for seam bowling first up.

The Sri Lanka batters looked completely at sea against the Indian bowlers, be it fast or the spin pair of Kaushal Tambe (2/23) and Vicky Ostwal (3/11).

Ostwal got two in one over to leave Sri Lanka in dire straits at 57 for seven. Southpaw Dunit Wellagalle attempted a slog sweep to break the shackles but ended up getting caught in the deep. Two balls later Ranuda Somaratne missed Ostwal's arm ball on the back foot, and was trapped plumb in front.

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 106 for 9 in 38 overs (Yasiru Rodrigo 19 n o, Vicky Ostwal 3/11, Kaushal Tambe 2/23) lost to India 104 for 1 in 21.3 overs (Angkrish Raghuvanshi 56 n o, Shaik Rasheed 31 n o) by nine wickets.



THE CREDIT FOR MY SUCCESS GOES TO MY FATHER. I GREW UP IN A VILLAGE WHICH HAD NO FACILITIES. MY FATHER FORCED ME TO TRAVEL 30KM DAILY TO TRAIN. SOMETIMES HE WOULD ACCOMPANY ME. THAT STRUGGLE HAS ALWAYS STAYED WITH ME AND WHAT I AM TODAY, THE CREDIT GOES TO HIM

MOHAMMED SHAMI

Rohit ruled out, Rahul to lead in ODIs

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 31: Captain Rohit Sharma was Friday ruled out of India's upcoming ODI series in South Africa due to a hamstring injury. This development forced the selectors to appoint KL Rahul as skipper of an 18-member team for the white-ball leg of the tour. Pacer Jasprit Bumrah was named as vice-captain of the team.

All-rounders Axar Patel and Ravindra Jadeja were also not selected as they were not fit while senior pacer Mohammed Shami, who is in the team for the on-going Test series, has been rested.

"Rohit is not fit, he is in rehab. We never wanted to take chance with him," BCCI chairman of selectors Chetan Sharma told reporters after the meeting. "We are looking to groom KL Rahul. He has proved his leadership qualities. KL is the best one who can handle the



INDIA FINED

CENTURION: The victorious Indian cricket team was Friday fined 20 per cent of their match fee for maintaining a slow over-rate against South Africa in the first Test here. India will also lose one point from their ICC Men's World Test Championship tally due to this offence, the ICC said. Captain Virat Kohli pleaded guilty to the offence and accepted the proposed sanction, so there was no need for a formal hearing.

side," Sharma added. The three ODIs will be played at Paarl and Cape Town January 19, 21 and 23 respectively.

THE SQUAD: KL Rahul (captain), Shikhar Dhawan, Rituraj Gaekwad, Virat Kohli, Surya Kumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, Venkatesh Iyer, Rishabh

Pant (wicket-keeper), Ishan Kishan (wicket-keeper), Yuzvendra Chahal, Ravichandran Ashwin, Washington Sundar, Jasprit Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Deepak Chahar, Prasidh Krishna, Shardul Thakur and Mohammed Siraj.

'Requested Kohli to remain captain'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 31: Virat Kohli was requested by everyone, including BCCI office bearers, to reconsider quitting T20 captaincy before the ICC T20 World Cup. This information was given by the chairman of the BCCI selection committee Chetan Sharma here Friday. Sharma thereby contradicted the statement given by Kohli before the latter's departure for South Africa.

The Indian Test skipper had contradicted BCCI president Sourav Ganguly's claim that he was never asked by anyone to quit the T20 captaincy and was informed about his sacking from ODI leadership only 90 minutes before the Test squad selection for the tour of South Africa.

"When meeting started, it was a surprise for everybody. If the World T20 is round the corner and you hear something like this, what will be your reaction? Everyone present in that meeting had told him that he should think hard about his decision (to quit T20 captaincy) and we can talk about it after the World Cup," Sharma said during a media conference after the ODI team selection.

"All selectors felt at that time

that this can affect us in the World Cup. It was told to Virat for sake of Indian cricket, please continue as the captain and it was told by everybody (Ganguly and BCCI secretary Jay Shah) present in the meeting. But since we had a World T20 to play, we never wanted it (decision) to affect team. He (Kohli) had his plans and we respect him," Sharma added.

Sharma stated that there were others also who did not Kohli to quit T20 captaincy and continue till the World Cup this year. However, he did not change his decision.

Sharma also said that the committee did not want to take any chance with skipper Rohit Sharma for the upcoming three ODIs in South Africa as there are many important series and a T20 World Cup lined up in the coming year.

Sharma also informed that all the selectors including himself, had a good chat with Kohli before making the announcement. "We had a good chat with Kohli after which the decision was taken that he will not be going to South Africa. It was then decided to appoint KL (Rahul) as the captain to groom him for the future," informed the chairman.

Good show by Odia players

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 31: Kaamlesh Rath annexed the doubles title and finished runner-up in the under-16 category of the All India Tennis Association (AITA) Championship series which concluded recently at the Snigdha Tennis Academy in Jalandhar.

In the under-18 boys' doubles final, Rath partnered Pushkar Srivastav and defeated Akshat Sharma and Yuvraj Bhardwaj 6-1, 4-6, 10-7 to win the title. However in the singles final of the under-16 segment Rath lost to Uday Batra of Punjab 6-4, 2-6, 4-6. By winning the doubles title Rath got 25 AITA points while for reaching the final in the singles he got 20 points.

Earlier in two back-to-back tournaments played in Hyderabad, Avhipsa Dehury of Odisha emerged champion in doubles in two different age categories. In the first final, which was in the under-12 category Avhipsa and Vasundhara Balaji defeated Shrishti and Kiran of Andhra Pradesh 6-2, 7-6 (14-12). In the second final played Friday, Avhipsa and Vasundhara annexed the under-14 title at the AITA championship.



ସତର୍କ ରୁହନ୍ତୁ, ଭୟଭୀତ ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ

‘ଓମିକ୍ରନ୍’ କରୋନା ଭୂତାଣୁର ସଂକ୍ରମଣ ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ବ୍ୟାପୁଥିବାରୁ ଏଥିପ୍ରତି ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ସତର୍କ ରୁହନ୍ତୁ

‘ସାମାନ୍ୟ ଅସାବଧାନତା ବା ଅବହେଳା ସମଗ୍ର ମାନବ ସମାଜ ପାଇଁ ଘାତକ ହୋଇପାରେ’

ନିଜକୁ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କୁ ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ ରଖିବା ପାଇଁ

- ନିୟମିତ ୪୦ ସେକେଣ୍ଡ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ହାତକୁ ଭଲଭାବରେ ଧୁଅନ୍ତୁ
- ସର୍ବଦା ସଚିତ ଭାବରେ ମାସ୍କ ପିନ୍ଧନ୍ତୁ
- ନିଜର ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ୨ ମିଟର ଦୂରରେ ରଖନ୍ତୁ
- ଜନଗହଳିବା ଭିଡ଼ରୁ ଦୂରରେ ରୁହନ୍ତୁ
- ୧୫ ଦର୍ଶରୁ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ୨ ଡୋଜ୍ କୋଭିଡ୍ ଟାକା ନିୟମ ନିଅନ୍ତୁ

ବିବାହ/ବ୍ରତ, ଅନ୍ୟକ୍ଷ୍ମିକ୍ରିୟା ଆଦି ସାମାଜିକ/ଧାର୍ମିକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ସମୟରେ କୋଭିଡ୍ ପୁରୁଷା ନିୟମ କଡ଼ାକଡ଼ି ପାଳନ କରନ୍ତୁ । ବୟସ୍କ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି, ଅଣସଂକ୍ରମଣ ରୋଗୀ ଓ ଶିଶୁମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଅଧିକ ସତର୍କତା କରନ୍ତୁ ।

‘ଓମିକ୍ରନ୍’ ସଂକ୍ରମିତ ଦେଶରୁ ସତର୍କ ଫେରିଥିବା କିମ୍ବା ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସଂସ୍ପର୍ଶରେ ଆସିଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି କୋଭିଡ୍ ନେଗେଟିଭ୍ ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ୭ ଦିନ ସଜାଗତାରେ ରହିବେ ଓ ଅଷ୍ଟମ ଦିନ ଆର୍.ଟି.ପି.ସି.ଆର୍ ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରାଇବେ । ପଜିଟିଭ୍ ଟିକ୍ସଟ ହେଲେ ହସ୍ପିଟାଲ୍ ଆଇସୋଲେସନ୍ ବାଧ୍ୟତାମୂଳକ । ରିପୋର୍ଟ ନେଗେଟିଭ୍ ହେଲେ ଆଉ ୭ ଦିନ ନିଜ ନିରୀକ୍ଷଣରେ ରହିବେ ।

କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର, କାଶ, ଶ୍ୱାସକ୍ରିୟାରେ କଷ୍ଟ ଅନୁଭବ କିମ୍ବା ଫୁ ଉଲି ଲକ୍ଷଣ ଦେଖାଦେଲେ ସଜାଗତାରେ ରହିବା ସହିତ ଦୂରତା କୋଭିଡ୍ ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରାଇ ନିଅନ୍ତୁ ।

ଅଧିକ ଜାଣିବା ପାଇଁ ସାମ୍ବ୍ୟ ସହାୟତା ନଂ.୧୦୪କୁ କଲ୍ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

ସାମ୍ବ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବିଭାଗ ଏବଂ ସୂଚନା ଓ ଲୋକସମ୍ପର୍କ ବିଭାଗ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଜନସଚ୍ଚରେ କାରି

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Calendar

SATURDAY | JANUARY 1 | 2022 | BHUBANESWAR
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JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30	31					1
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MARCH

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MAY

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JULY

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SEPTEMBER

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Models: Bijayini

Photo : Kumar Sharat & Chandan, OP

FEBRUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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APRIL

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JUNE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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AUGUST

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OCTOBER

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30	31					1
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DECEMBER

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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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HOLIDAY LIST

- Jan 14: Makar Sankranti / Pongal
- Jan 15: Pongal
- Jan 26: Republic Day
- Mar 1: Maha Shivaratri
- Mar 18: Holi
- May 3: Eid -al- Fitr
- May 16: Buddha Purnima
- Sep 17: Vishwakarma Puja
- Nov 24: Diwali
- Apr 15: Good Friday
- Apr 10: Rama Navami
- Apr 17: Easter
- Apr 14: Mahavir Jayanti
- Aug 15: Independence Day
- Aug 18: Janmashtami
- Aug 9: Muharam
- Aug 31: Ganesh Chaturthi
- Oct 02: Gandhi Jayanti
- Oct 5: Dussehra
- Dec 25: Christmas Day