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WORLD 8 ELON MUSK SOFTENS STAND ON H-1B VISA PROGRAMME, CALLS FOR 'MAJOR REFORMS'

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DELHI I LUCKNOW I BHOPAL I BHUBANESWAR I RANCHI I RAIPUR I CHANDIGARH I DEHRADUN I HYDERABAD I VIJAYWADA

Heartbreaking! 7 farmers die in 7 days due to crop loss in State Similarly, on December 26,

Despite compensations assured by govt

PNS BHUBANESWAR

In an alarming situation, unseasonal and incessant rainfalls in Odisha that wreaked havoc causing massive crop loss in December have also allegedly claimed the lives of at least seven farmers within a span of about seven days.

Reports from different parts of the State recorded farmers either taking their own lives or succumbing to 'shock' after allegedly witnessing the destruction of their crops following the recent spell of rains at times of harvest and paddy procurement.

In the most recent case, a farmer from Sarana village under Balikuda police station in Jagatsinghpur district took his own life on Monday allegedly due to pressure and shock from crop loss.

Sources reported that the deceased, identified as Krutibas Swain, had gone to

harvest paddy along with his brother and crumbled to grief one farmer allegedly killed over the large-scale loss of himself in Ganjam district crops. After returning home in whereas another one suffered the evening, he reportedly a heart attack seeing his damhanged himself inside the aged crops in Kendrapara. house.

More unfortunately, on De-Family members stated cember 23, a 75-year-old that Swain was in a state of farmer from Dungara village extreme worry as a huge porin Puri died of alleged shock tion of his harvest was ravaged after crop loss. by the unseasonal rains. Fur-It is pertinent to note that ther, he was also under finanthe Odisha Government has cial stress owing to accrued taken all necessary steps to debts for medical expenses of ensure adequate compensa-

his family. Meanwhile, though police reached the spot and carried out an investigation, they did not offer any comments.

ter Mohan Charan Majhi and other Ministers to the affected The incident came right after two farmers died on Deregions, the State has ancember 28 in separate cases. nounced the extension of com-While one paddy farmer, pensation to all farmers, even Manibhadra Mohanty, from to those who do not grow Chikana village in Jajpur paddy. passed away after allegedly falling unconscious upon seeof the claim registration peing his destroyed crops, an-

riod along with an advisory to other sharecropper, Daitari insurance companies urging Jena, in Kendrapada allegedly sensitivity towards farmers ended his life after consuming has also been issued by the pesticide. State government.

Zeenat being translocated to Odisha

PNS BHUBANESWAR

Following an intervention by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), tigress Zeenat was translocated by the West Bengal Forest Department back to the Similipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha in a special vehicle on Tuesday.

Official sources said a team of the neighbouring State shifted Zeenat from the Alipore Zoo to Similipal. The three-year-old tigress was likely to reach Similipal by midnight.

The tigress would be kept at a soft enclosure under south division of Similipal, the sources added.

On Monday, the NTCA under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change had asked the Chief Wildlife Warden of West Bengal to translocate the tigress back to the Similipal Tiger Reserve at the earliest following the due process of SOP of the tiger conservation authority.

Ahead of New Year Srimandir sees massive rush of devotees

60 police platoons deployed in Puri PNS PURI

Devotees in large numbers made a beeline outside the Jagannath Temple here to get a glimpse of the Holy Trinity on the occasion of the last day of English calendar on Tuesday. The shrine is also expected to witness a huge turnout of devotees on the first day of the New Year on Wednes-

day. To ensure a hassle-free darshan for the devotees, the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) has implemented strict measures, including barricades extending up to Market Square. While the devotees gained

entry into the temple only through the Singhadwar on Tuesday and the same arrangement will be made on Wednesday, a 'No Vehicle Zone' was declared from Market Square to the temple for



InSiDE

these two days

As many as 60 platoons of police forces have been deployed to maintain law and order situation in the city. Besides, a dedicated traffic system is in place for vehicles arriving in Puri.

"The arrangements have been made to ensure that every devotee visiting the Srimandir should have a darshan of Lord Jagannath. We have decided to perform the Pahuda ritual by 11 pm tonight and open Singhadwara at 1 am," said Rama Chandra Das Mohapatra, a senior servitor. "As per the ritual, the



Darshan at Puri temple from Jan 20

the pioneer

HAPPY NEW YEAR

PNS 📕 PURI

A fresh arrangement with ramps and some other facilities for a smooth lane darshan (Dhadi Darshan) at the Jagannath Temple here would commence on January 20, 2025, said Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan on Tuesday.

With huge crowds of devotees during the New Year time, it is not feasible to conduct an experiment (trial run) of the new arrangement now. The rush may continue thereafter due to the Ganga Snan ritual attracting many visitors.

The minister also said ramps would be installed to aid the differently-abled persons coming to the shrine.

With the expected high influx of devotees, measures such as installing large fans, coolers, providing ample drinking water and sprinkling will be implemented.

To stop harassment of men, old parents ba Balia wants formation of Men's Commission

BHUBANESWAR

L he recent suicide of Bangalore-based engineer Atul Subhash came as a major concern owing to harassment faced by men allegedly due to biased laws. Amidst such a controversy, spiritual guru and prominent social activist, Baba Balia on Tuesday called for the establishment of a Men's Commission in India to address the increasing 'ha-

rassment of men'. He emphasised the necessity of instituting such a body to tackle these growing issues effectively.

Padma Shri Guru Baba Balia highlighted that men, often overlooked in discussions of social justice, are facing a myriad of challenges, including false allegations and unfair treatment. He stated, "With the rise in harassment

men's rights.' Baba Balia also addressed

tion and relief to farmers at

sessment visit by Chief Minis-

Along with a damage as-

Additionally, an extension

this time of crisis.

cases, it is crucial to set up a the issue of neglect faced by



Men's Commission to protect elderly parents, underscoring the importance of establishing a Parental Commission to ensure their welfare. He ex-

pressed his readiness to approach the Supreme Court if necessary to push for this cause, aiming to bring attention to the overlooked needs of senior citizens.

"A family works like a democracy and there needs to be harmony among members. We welcome the Women's Commission but there is now a need for Men's Commission as well. We will discuss the matter and will soon ap-

proach the Supreme Court in this regard. Apart from this, there is also a need for Pitru-Matru Commission as well (Commission for elderly men and women)," said Baba Balia.

It has been learnt that a programme will be organised soon to discuss several issues concerning families, societal values and other aspects.

"All such things are happening because sons and daughters-in-law are harass-

ing their elderly parents. The dowry torture cases are also increasing in society as there has been misuse of women's laws. Our aim is to create a balance in society as already there is a Commission for women and if a similar Commission for men is constituted various issues can be resolved. We also want that men and women and neglected parents to get justice within a stipu-

lated time," said Baba Balia.

Kumar Sahoo, Administrator

(Niti), SJTA. Vehicles arriving

from Bhubaneswar will have

designated parking on the Jail

Road while those from Konark

sides will be parked at

Talabania. Visitors from

Brahmagiri area need to use

parking facilities at Sterling or

Yatrika. No four-wheelers will

be allowed from Medical

Square to the temple and the

beach with Market Square be-

ing declared a vehicle-free zone.





ନୂଆ ବର୍ଷ ୨୦୨୫ ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ ମୁଁ ରାଜ୍ୟବାସୀ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଶୁଭକାମନା କଣାଉଛି ।

ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦରୁ ନୂଆ ବର୍ଷ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ଆନନ୍ଦ, ସୁଖ ଓ ସମୃଦ୍ଧି ଭରି ଦେଉ । ଆସନ୍ତୁ, ନୂଆ ବର୍ଷ ଅବସରରେ ସଂକଳ୍ପ ନେବା – ଏକ ସମୂଦ୍ଧ ଓ ବିକଶିତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଗଠନ ଦିଗରେ ନିଜର ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ଅବଦାନ ରଖିବା ।

> empromit (ମୋହନ ଚରଣ ମାଝୀ) ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

ନବବର୍ଷ-୨୦୨୫ ଅବସରରେ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା

ନବବର୍ଷ–୨୦୨୫ ଅବସରରେ ମୁଁ ରାଜ୍ୟବାସୀ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ହାର୍ଦ୍ଦିକ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଓ ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ କଶାଉଛି । ନୂତନ ବର୍ଷ ରାଜ୍ୟବାସୀଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ହସ, ଖୁସି, ଶାନ୍ତି ଓ ସମୃଦ୍ଧି ଭରିଦେଉ, ଏତିକି କାମନା । ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଦେଶର ଏକ ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ପରିଣତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସମସ୍ତେ ନିଜ ନିଜ ସ୍ତରରେ ନିଷ୍ଠାପର ପ୍ରୟାସ ଜାରି ରଖିବାକୁ ମୁଁ ଆହ୍ୱାନ ଜଣାଉଛି ।

> ରାଜ୍ୟପାଳ ଓଡ଼ିଶା



Road Safety Week to kick off from today

Stringent action against drunk, reckless driving PNS BHUBANESWAR

The Road Safety Week will be observed across the State from Wednesday. Therefore, special enforcement drives would start from the Zero Hour and continue till January 7.

There would be rigorous checking against drunk driv-

ing. SOPs have also been issued so that vehicles coming to tourist destinations comply with all safety rules.

Similarly, it has been decided to conduct checks near schools and colleges against driving by minors. Along with this, checks related to motor vehicle insurance would also be done

stated. The three IPS officers

were ascended in Level-14 of

Besides, three more officers

namely Pinak Mishra, Banoth

Jugal Kishore Kumar and

Battula Gangadhar were el-

evated to the grade of DIG of

Police. The three IPS officers

were promoted in Level-13A

Notably, all eight promo-

tions would be effected from

January 1, 2025, the notifica-

pay matrix.

of pay matrix.

Besides, police and transport officials are taking stringent measures, particularly in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar

and Cuttack, to ensure safety and security of revellers. Officials have made it clear

that strict action would be taken against those who violate the restrictions. Partygoers have been advised to refrain from driving after consuming alcohol. They should opt for designated drivers or public transport instead

Driving under the influence of alcohol would lead to cancellation of driving licence and

nual Conference of the Nikhil

Odisha Lawyers' Association

concluded on Monday in

Malkangiri, where thousands

of legal practitioners from

across the State gathered to

address critical issues affecting

The conference sent a pow-

erful message that the lawyers

need more government sup-

port to ensure quality justice

and safeguard their future. The

event was inaugurated by

Orissa High Court Judge

Sibashankar Mishra, with no-

table dignitaries such as former

High Court Judge V Gopal

Gouda and representatives

from the Odisha State Bar

All Odisha Lawyers Associa-

Council in attendance.

the legal community.

a hefty fine would also be imposed, said Transport Commissioner Amitabh Thakur.

If the driver of the vehicle violating the rules does not cooperate in providing identification, all the details will be sought from the owner of the vehicle. If he fails to provide it, a case will be registered against the driver under the Motor Vehicles Act. The decision in this regard has been taken by the State Transport Authority (STA).

PNS BHUBANESWAR retariat.

 $T_{he \ new \ BJP \ government,}$ led by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, has initiated steps to restore journalists' access to the Lok Seva Bhavan (State Secretariat).

The Department of Information and Public Relations (I&PR) has issued a notification in this regard.

This decision overturned the restrictions introduced by the previous BJD government during the Covid-19 pandemic, which had barred journalists from entering the sec-

Both accredited and nonaccredited journalists will now be granted entry into the secretariat

The revised policy, titled "Guidelines for Issue of Secretariat Admission Pass to Representatives of Press/Media," defines media representatives as individuals associated with newspapers, periodicals, news agencies, or electronic media. These guidelines will remain in effect unless amended in the future.

Scribes now allowed to Secretariat | Utkal Sammilani holds foundation day

capital 02



PNS BHUBANESWAR

 ${
m T}$ he Utkal $\,$ Sammilani on Monday celebrated its 122nd foundation day at the organisations's central office here.

Sammilani State president Annanta Prasad Jena hoisted the organistion's flag. Later, floral tributes were paid by the Sammilani members at the statue of Utkal Sammilani

to the statue of Smmilani's first president Maharaja Shriram Chandra Bhanjadeo and Oisha's first Prime Minister Krushna Chandra Gajapati Narayan Deb. Former Minister

Panchanan Kanungo was the chief guest and Padmacharan Nayak and Sitabllabh Mahapatra were the guests of honours on the occasion. Utkal Sammilani general secretary and Mancheswar branch president Dillip Dashsharma coordinated the function.

SPARC Workshop at **IIT Bhubaneswar**



'Learning to Teach Inclusively' PNS BHUBANESWAR

 ${
m A}$ five-day SPARC Workshop, titled "Learning to Teach Inclusively: Navigating dilemmas of practice", from December 26 to 30 was organised by the School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Management, IIT Bhubaneswar in association with NIT, Warangal. Prof Srikala Narain, Teacher's College, Columbia University, USA, conducted the workshop, which aimed to bring together teachers, educators, scholars and experts to explore innovative strategies and practices for fostering inclusivity in educational set-

brings together students from varied backgrounds, abilities, and experiences. These differences pose unique challenges and, more importantly, provide opportunities to create environments where every learner feels valued, understood and supported. To understand these challenges, participants engaged in the workshop sharing knowledge and personal experiences. The participants explored strategies to address the challenges of inclusive classrooms; reflected on their own teaching practices and how they can evolve; and shared personal experiences, insights and tools that empower them as inclusive educators.

State-level conf: Lawyers raise various demands 8 IPS officers get promotions BHUBANESWAR promoted to the grade of Inspector General (IG) of Police, BRAHMAPUR the official communiqué The 53rd State-Level An-

he State Government on Tuesday issued a notification promoting eight IPS officers to Additional Director General (ADG), Inspector General (IG) and Deputy Inspector General (IG) ranks.

Yatindra Koyal and Prateek Mohanty were promoted to the position of ADG of Police, the notification issued by the Home Department stated. The two IPS officers were ascended

in Level-15 of pay matrix. Awinash Kumar, Sarthak Sarangi, and Niti Shekhar were

tion stated **In 2024** Vig lodges 200 cases, detects Rs 131-cr DA

CUTTACK

In the year 2034, the Vigilance police registered over 200 criminal cases and apprehended 181 persons, mostly government officers, for their involvement in various corruption and disproportionate asset (DA) cases.

Cases were registered against 50 Class-I officers, including six Chief Engineers, a Joint Commissioner of Excise, a Deputy Director of Fisheries, two Assistant Commissioners of CT and GST, a Jail Superintendent, a Sub-Collector, two Tehsildars, two BDOs and several others

Besides, 19 engineers, 22 revenue officials, 20 PR and DW officials, nine police officcorded.

cracked down on bribery, registering 96 trap cases where 115 people, including 99 gov-

while accepting bribes amounting Rs 19.25 lakh. In terms of investigation, the department carried out searches at 483 locations, froze 792 bank accounts of corrupt

As many as 194 buildings and projects valued at approximately Rs 27.03 crore were evaluated. Additionally, 38 wives of officials were made co-accused in various DA cases. The investigation team successfully completed probes in 307 cases, achieving a disposal rate of 154%, which is

Satapathy and general secretary Sanjit Panigrahy were also ernment officers, were caught

public servants.

said to be the highest-ever re-

tion president Nandanandan

present. Discussions during the conference highlighted the critical role of lawyers in strengthen-

ing the judicial system and de-

Talk 'Advancements in Materials Chemistry' held

livering quality justice. The need for continuous professional training for lawyers was emphasized, alongside the proposal for establishing an Advocate Academy in Odisha to support the development of legal professionals. One of the key points raised

was the demand for pension schemes for legal practitioners, with participants calling for the government to extend financial

assistance to their families. There was also a push for support in the form of higher education for lawyers' families, ensuring their long-term welfare and growth.

The conference concluded with a unified plea to the government to address these legitimate demands and provide the necessary support to the legal community.

Malkangiri Legal Practitio-

ners' Association president Narsingh Charan Mohanty, who chaired the conference, emphasized the urgency of government action to meet the pressing needs of legal professionals across the State. This year's conference marked a significant moment for the legal community in Odisha, as practitioners rallied together for a more robust framework of support and advocacy.

founder Madhusudan Das at Raj Bhavan Square. Besides, floral tributes were also paid

ers, five doctors, three forest officials and three ICDS functionarieswere arrested by the Vigilance.

The anti-graft agency also made a notable headway in tackling disproportionate assets cases, registering 60 such cases and unearthing assets worth over Rs 131 crore. It also



To be installed in new State BJP hdqrs PNS CUTTACK

With the aim of turning waste into art, Sanjib Biswal, an artist from Cuttack has created a beautiful replica of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, crafted entirely from scrap materials.

Using old nuts, screws, and GI wires, Sanjeev meticulously welded together pieces of metal to bring PM Modi's face to life. The result is a striking 4-foot-tall sculpture that showcases both artistic skill and creativity.

Besides, the Vigilance registered a conviction rate of 50% with nearly 105 convictions. The conviction rate in DA cases is said to be around 80%. Following conviction in several cases, as many as 25 government functionaries were dismissed from their service.

The unique artwork weighs

approximately 27 kilograms

of nuts and 3 kg of screws, all

Prime Minister.

nal details remaining.

in the State.



PNS 📕 BHUBANESWAR

L he inaugural day of the National Conference on Advancements in Materials Chemistry was successfully held by Orissa Chemical Society (OCS) at the Odisha University of Technology and Re-(OUTR) search in Bhubaneswar on Saturday.

The event was graced by Minister of Supplies and Consumer Welfare Krushna Chandra Patra, who, as the chief guest, underscored the pressing need for the establishment of a dedicated Institute of Chemistry in the State and assured the audience of his unwavering commitment to bringing the vision to fruition at the earliest opportu-Acharya.

nity. Odisha Chemical Society (OCS) president Prof Ajay Kumar Behera and Vice Chancellor of OUTR Prof Bibhuti Bhusan Biswal served as guests of honour along with convenor Prof Bijnyan Ranjan Das and treasurer-cum-secretary, OCS, Prof Achyutananda

They made insightful deliberations, offering valuable perspectives to the researchers, scholars and practitioners in attendance.

The conference will continue over the next two days with a series of technical sessions and a valedictory ceremony

The educators are constantly navigating an evolving classroom dynamic, one that

Shelters (MCS/MFS) in differ-

ent strategic locations of 25

districts (except Angul,

Kandhamal, Sundargarh) to

provide safe shelter during any

disaster, out of which 535 are

Multipurpose Cyclone Shelter

(MCS) and 309 Multipurpose

Flood Shelters (MFS), the

Apart from these, 65 MCSs

have been constructed by the

Indian Red Cross Society,

Odisha State Branch in 6

coastal districts. Another 27

MCSs are under construction,

constructed in such a strategic

location as to providing safe

shelter to vulnerable people of

The shelter buildings are

Deogarh,

sources said.

they said.

Balangir,

tings.

IIT Bhubaneswar Director Prof Karmalkar motivated the participants with the teaching-learning concepts of inclusive classrooms.

USDMA gets Rs 3,754 cr for disaster-resilient infra

Till Nov end, Rs 3,137.71 cr spent PNS BHUBANESWAR

welded with precision to cre-For creation of disaster reate a lifelike depiction of the silient infrastructure, the State According to reports, Government has provided a Sanjeev began the project in total of Rs 3,754.35 crore to the the first week of September Odisha State Disaster Manthis year and is now nearing agement Authority (OSDMA).

completion, with only a few fi-For implementation of different projects and construc-Sanjeev's innovative use of tion of cyclone shelters and scrap materials has transdifferent resilient infrastrucformed discarded objects into ture, the sum was provided to a stunning tribute to PM Modi. OSDMA from different fund-Reports suggest that ing sources like SDRF, CMRF, Sanjeev has received a pro-World Bank Supported posal to install the sculpture projects, Central Sponsored at the new BJP headquarters Project (Gol), State Government Budget, official sources

Till November end, Rs 3,137.71 crore has been spent and a balance of Rs 616.64 crore is available with the **OSDMA**

According to the sources, the State Revenue and Disaster Management Department has released Rs 638.38 crore to eight different departments from State Disaster Mitigation Fund (SDMF) from the FY 2022-23 to FY 2024-25 (Till November end).

To increase disaster resilient infrastructure, funds have been provided to the Energy, Agriculture, Forest, Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD), Rural Development, Water Resource and Works departments.

sanctity to the department from SDMF, it said. The State has released Rs

57.49 crore to Rural Development Department, Rs 26.91 crore to Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department, Rs 6.79 crore to Housing and Urban Development Department and nearly Rs 2 crore to Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment Department from the SDMF.

Besides, the OSDMA has received Rs 28.66 crore fund from the SDMF to carry out some of its own disaster resilient infrastructure projects in the State.

For management of disaster, the State Government has already constructed 844 Multipurpose Cyclone and Flood the main villages and about 2 3 nearby villages.

In addition to MCS and MFS, the public buildings like academic buildings are being strengthened to act as shelters. At present the maximum percentage of vulnerable communities/villages are getting shelter constructed by the government and Indian Red Cross Society. Construction of more MCSs and MFSs is being undertaken by the government based on its requirement and availability of funds, the sources informed.

Steps are being taken to develop a Unified Command Control System for EWDS and other disaster management activities.

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data said.

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During the period, the highest amount of Rs 146.98 crore

has been released to the Energy Department from SDMF while another Rs 100.30 crore has been released to the Department from Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA).

Similarly, the Water Re-

source Department has re-

ceived a total fund of Rs 135.29

crore including Rs 100 crore

from OSDMA for building di-

saster resilient infrastructure

during the period, the official

The OSDMA has released Rs

107.98 crore to the Works De-

partment for the purpose while

another Rs 25.96 crore was



'Peripheral areas' merger in BeMC ambit soon'

H & UD Min assures delegation at Brahmapur RAJEEV RATHAN BRAHMAPUR

Housing and Urban Development Minister Dr Krushna Chandra Mahapatra, during his visit to Brahmapur, received a delegation led by Brahmapur MLA K Anil Kumar representing the Milita Kriyanusthan Committee here on Monday.

The delegation presented a memorandum demanding the inclusion of the city's peripheral areas and 18 adjoining panchayats, as per the 2008 Gazette Notification, into the Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC).

During a review meeting held at the BeMC conference



The delegation also aphall, the Minister acknowledged the long-standing deprised the Minister of the mand and expressed his com-Orissa High Court's directive mitment to ensuring its impleand supporting resolutions mentation. The Minister difrom the concerned rected the BeMC Commispanchayats, reinforcing their sioner to initiate development demand for inclusion. The Minister assured that the inworks in the peripheral areas immediately and instructed tegration process would face the Ganjam Collector to preno further hurdles and prompare a proposal for governised rapid action to transform Brahmapur into a full-fledged municipal corporation.

The meeting witnessed active participation from Gopalpur MLA and Minister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena, Brahmapur MP Dr Pradeep Panigrahy and local representatives. The Minister's assurance has raised hopes for accelerated urban development and seamless inclusion of the peripheral areas into BeMC.

The committee representatives, including president Sanjeev Kumar Pattnaik and other members, expressed their gratitude to the Minister and public representatives for their support. They remain optimistic about an official notification being issued by the State government soon, realizing their long-standing efforts for integration and development.



Rest Day celebrated by Bhadrak activist

BHADRAK PNS

Looking at the importance of rest in our day-to-day life, rights activist and Supreme Court lawyer Radhakant Tripathy celebrated the eleventh Rest Day on December 30 in Bhadrak district. He began observing the day first in 2014 and the 'India Book of Records' recognised the unique day in the year 2018.

According to Tripathy, the main objective of such celebration is to generate awareness

among the public to take adequate rest in their day-to-day life. Besides, every individual should be concerned to put negative thoughts, beliefs and practices at rest for the betterment of life, he added. The main celebration was held at Dagamanda Leprosy Colony and other parts of the district.

Among others, Jagannath Kar, Manju Singh, Ravi Singh, Pravati Singh, social activist Sitakant Tripathy, Sridhar and other members of the leprosy colony took part.

INBRIEF

Seminar held at Maniabandha College

Athagarh: The Political Science Department of Maniabandha College in Athagarh held a seminar on the topic 'India i.e. Bharat' recently, The chief resource person was Prof Narottam Gaan while Dinesh Chandra Das and Dharanidhar Jena were the chief speaker and the guest of



honour, respectively. The seminar was chaired by Mniabandha College Principal Ajaya Kumar Satpathy and coordinated by department head Nilambar Rayguru. The Honours students of the college presented relevant papers on the topic. The speakers criticised the dual name of the country and urged to name it Bharat as per our civilisation.

Tiger skin seized in Keonjhar; 2 held

Keonjhar: Police and forest officials arrested two persons in connection with wildlife product smuggling from Patna in Keonjhar district on Monday and seized a tiger skin from their possession. The arrested were identified as Ram Bandia (33) of Basantapur village and Sagar Kulapadia (37) of Khadipal village under the Thakurmunda police station in Mayurbhanj district. Police also seized a bike and two mobile phones from the accused. Ghatgaon SDPO Prabhat Tripathy, Assistant Conserva-



tors of Forest Ashok Kumar Das and Jitendra Behera and other officials took part in the raid.

SBI donates school bus, pickup van

Bhubaneswar: The State Bank of India (SBI), Bhubaneswar Circle, donated a school bus and a pickup vehicle to Open Learning Systems,

Bhubaneswar and Govind Godham Goshala Puri, respectively. In a function organised here, Rana Ashutosh Kumar Singh,



Managing Director (RC & SARG) Corporate Centre, Mumbai handed over possession of the vehicles to representatives of these NGOs in the presence of Dinesh Pruthi, Chief General Manager Bhubaneswar Circle, Kaushal Kishor Singh, General Manager (NW-II), Prashant Kumar DGM(B&O) AO Bhubaneswar Manoj Kumar Singh, DGM and other senior officials of SBI.

Book by Parala Women's College Principal released

Paralakhemundi: Principal of Degree Women's College, Paralakhemundi Dr Rina Sahu's book "Ananya Parala Ananta Byaktitwa" was released at Buddha Mandir premises



of Bhubaneswar. On the occasion prominent writers Indira Dutt, Basanti Mohanty, editor of "Pourusha"Dr

K'jhar lad wins runners-up in State Para Badminton KEONJHAR Abhay Jena (38), a youth

ment approval.

from Keonjhar district, has brought laurels to the district by becoming the runners-up in the State Para Badminton 2024-25 Competition.

He said he won two matches (21/12 and 21/13) and won the silver medal. After this, he got a chance to play at the national level to be held next vear. His home is in Sahi in Jagannathpur Keonjhar town.

The tournament was held from December 28 to 30 at the Stadium Indoor in

Bhubaneswar. Para badminton requires special wheelchairs. However,

Abhay played by arranging from others as he did not have his own and has achieved this status. Therefore, if such a

Vedanta helpe young archer achieve medal **PNS** ■ BHUBANESWAR

0

Janjay Majhi, a promising young archer from Vedanta Sports Programme, has won a bronze medal in the Indian



wheelchair is provided, he will tional level competitions and bring benefits to the State,

He can practice well if he gets a wheelchair for the na-

Sports lovers are of the view that the administration should provide proper support to such talented players like Abhay.

Kendrapada visit Naveen demands immediate succour for crop loss

Assures farmers of raising loan waiver issue in Assembly RAJESH BEHERA KENDRAPADA

Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday visited Shyamsundarpur village in Pattamundai block of Kendrapada district to make a ground assessment of the crop damage due to the recent unseasonal rains and interacted with the affected farm-

Thousands of farmers came to meet the former CM bringing samples of the damaged crops and narrated their sorry plight. A couple of the farmers with tear rolling down the eves prostrated in front of Patnaik and narrated their

ordeal. They urged Patnaik to fight for the rights of farmers and pressurise the State Government to provide crop damage assistance on a war footing basis along with waiver of all agriculture loans.

Patnaik said that the crop Charan Sahoo, Aul MLA damage is severe and farmers Pratap are in distress. They must be compensated quickly as was a practice during his tenure.

"Farmers are committing suicides. The government

The affected farmers of the district alleged that the BJP government was giving only lip services while earlier during BJD government, Naveen Patnaik was serious about the farming community.

Keshari Deb, Kendrapada MLA Ganeswar Behera, Derabish MLA Aurobinda Mohapatra, and other BJD leaders were present during Patnaik's visit. Earlier, BJP national vicepresident and Kendrapada

MP Baijayant Panda, on Tuesday visited Kendrapada district to take stock of the crop loss in his Parliamentary segment. District Collector Smruti Ranjan Pradhan, the DAO and other officials of the line departments accompanied him.

Panda interacted with the affected farmers and assured them that the State govern-

ment was taking necessary steps to provide compensation for the extensive crop loss. The farmers expressed their gratitude as the leaders and government officers are now at ground zero to assess the crop damage due to unseasonal rains in the State.

"Both the Centre and the State are concerned about the farmers. I discussed with the district Collector and District Agriculture Officer how our affected farmers could get help as soon as possible. I request all the farmers to register their complaints related to damage on toll-free number 14447 by January 1," tweeted MP Panda.

be able to participate in na-Abhay said.

tional level, he further said.

must give immediate relief to the distressed farmers," he said assuring to raise the issue of quick compensation and loan waiver in the State Assembly

Rajnagar MLA Dhruba

gious NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation) Senior National Archery Championship 2024.

Round category at the presti-

Supported by Vedanta Lanjigarh, Sanjay's achievement concludes Odisha's 21year quest for a senior category national medal in archery and making it a moment of pride for the State and Vedanta's Sports Programme.

Vedanta Alumina Business CEO Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya said, "Our sports development initiative in Lanjigarh are aligned with our mission to create opportunities for local youth and enabling them to shine on national and global platforms." Since its inception in 2018,



the Vedanta Sports Programme has been a beacon of hope for young athletes in Odisha's tribals-dominated Kalahandi district. With a focus on archery and karate, the initiative provides comprehensive support to budding athletes, including expert coaching, modern equipment,

uniform, and logistical support. More than 300 athletes have benefited from the programme so far with 110 currently undergoing professional training in archery and

karate.

Naveen visits deceased farmer's kin in Balikuda

KAHNU NANDA JAGATSINGHPUR

A farmer, Krutibasa Swain [35] of Tandikula panchayat's Sarana village under Balikuda block, committed suicide after he found his paddy crops damaged due to the unseasonal rains.

Family sources informed that deceased Swain had cultivated about 3 acres of paddy crop on his land, of which about 1 acre was shared with other landowners. He had taken a loan from a bank and private lenders for the cultiva-

tion. But he was upset for the

destroy his crops. He was worried about repaying the loan after seeing all the cultivated paddy get wet and damaged. Later on Monday night, he was found hanging in his

last two days after seeing rains

room. He was immediately shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital for treatment where he was declared dead.

On Tuesday, former Chief Minister and LoP Naveen Patnaik visited Baharana village under Balikuda block and interacted with the affected farmers whose paddy crops have been damaged.

Hundreds of farmers from Balikuda and Erasama blocks congregated at the Baharana village and showed soaked paddy to Patnaik and described their miseries due to repeated unseasonal rains.

Although the State government has announced compensation for the affected farmers no government official has visited paddy fields for loss assessment, some farmers alleged. Moreover, many peasants registered complaints that the insurance companies have not started the survey for granting compensation.

In reply to farmers' griev-

In Brahmapur

ances, Naveen pledged he and his party BJD always are with farmers and he will take up the matter to the State government seeking redressal measures. Later Patnaik visited late farmer Krutibasa Swain's residence at Sarana village.

MLAs Sarada Jena, Ramakanta Bhoi, former Minister Raghunandan Das, former MP Dr Rajashree Mallick, former MLAs Sambit Routray, Prasanta Muduli, and senior leaders were present and greeted Naveen and talked with him about the farmers' miseries.

Mohanty, Reader of Ramadevi University Dr Manas Behera, Bhijamati editor Chinmayee Sarangi, Tirataranga editor Bandana Mishra and as evaluator Er Bishnumohan Adhikari shared the dais.

CCD holds free health camp in Gajapati

Paralakhemundi: A free health camp was organised at Galaganda village of Jirango panchayat of Rayagada block in Gajapati district by Centre for Community Development (CCD). Sarpanch of Jirango inaugurated the camp. Medical tests of the participants and distribution of medicines were done free. Doctors of James Hospital of Srikakulam of Andhra



Pradesh checked health of the patients. Specialists from medicine, eye, skin and dental departments attended. They advised the people to keep regular cleanliness of surrounding areas and not to be swayed by blind beliefs and superstitions. They also urged the people not to take medicines without doctor's prescriptions.

28 students get DPCL merit scholarships

Dhamra: The Adani Foundation, the CSR arm of Adani Group, has been awarding the DPCL Merit Scholarships to meritorious students of 10 government high schools located in the vicinity of the Dhamra Port Company Limited (DPCL). This year, the foundation recognised top 28 students from



10 vernacular medium high schools in the Adani Dhamra Port periphery with DPCL Merit Scholarship. The students were honoured with a Medal, Certificate of appreciation, T-Shirt, Learning Kit and financial assistance for pursuing their Higher Secondary Education.

1 teacher for 5 classes; 5 classes in 1 room

Deplorable conditions in K'ihar schools **PNS** ■ KEONJHAR

Education in Keonjhar district is grappling with severe challenges. Staff shortages have led to situations where a single teacher is managing five different classes, while classrooms are overcrowded with students spanning five grades sharing the same space.

For instance, education has been severely affected in Danara Primary School under Hatadihi block. Only one teacher is reportedly available to instruct pupils from grades one to five in the school. The additional duties assigned to the lone educator have led to a decline in the quality of



teaching being delivered in the school.

"There are more than a hundred students in the school. It is getting difficult for a single teacher to manage the affairs of the entire school. As a result, the students are the worse sufferers," rued Headmaster of Danara Primary School Shiva Charana Sethi. Compounding the problem

is the scarcity of classrooms. Only three teachers are teaching the children from grades

one to five in the confines of a single room at Raipal village school under Anandpur block in the district. This situation has sparked concerns among parents. Moreover, students have also started expressing their dissatisfaction. They had reportedly staged a protest expressing their concern over it. In response, the Block Education Officer (BEO) acknowledged the issue and assured that the shortages will be rectified once the necessary approvals for district-level recruitment are granted.

"We are trying our best to solve the issue as soon as possible," said BEO Omkar Anwesh

Major fire breaks out at women's hostel



BRAHMAPUR PNS

 ${
m A}$ major fire broke out at a women's hostel of the Berhampur University on Tuesday, reducing furniture

worth lakhs of rupees to ashes. According to sources, the fire broke out on the top floor of the hostel and spread to several rooms causing massive destruction.

Several students first spotted smoke billowing from one of the rooms of the hostel and informed the university au-

thorities about it. Being informed about the

incident, Fire Service personnel rushed to the spot and doused the flame.

Though the exact reason behind the fire was yet to be ascertained, it was suspected that an electric short circuit might have triggered the blaze. Fortunately, there were no

reports of any injury to anyone. Further investigation to ascertain the exact cause of the fire and damage assessment was underway.





DD to screen 4k restored version of Manthan on Jan 1

PNS NEW DELHI

 $\mathbf{N}_{ ext{Doordarshan on Tuesday}}^{ ext{ational broadcaster}}$ announced that it will ring in the new year by screening the 4K restored version of Shyam Benegal's film "Manthan" as homage to the veteran filmmaker.

Benegal, the pioneer of the parallel cinema movement in Indian cinema in the 1970s and 1980s, died on December 23 at a hospital here due to chronic kidney disease. He was 90.

Film Heritage Foundation (FHF), which restored the 1976 classic film for its premiere in the Cannes Classic section at the Cannes Film Festival earlier this year, shared the update

on its official X page. According to FHF, "Manthan" will be broadcast on Doordarshan on Wednesday at eight pm. "To pay tribute to the Benegal, Shyam late Doordarshan will begin the new year with a screening of

Naxals violence declined by 48%: Ministry of Home Affairs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

The latest report from Union Home Ministry, facing tough action from the security forces, the Naxals are making efforts to seep into new areas along inter-state borders but without any notable success. The Government's multipronged approach anti-Naxal operations by paramilitary and state police and simultaneous development initiatives in Maoist-affected areas -- has resulted in a 48 per cent reduction in violent incidents, from 1,136 in 2013 to 594 in 2023, the report said. A 65 per cent reduction was also noticed in the deaths of civilians and security forces, which came down from 397 to 138 in 2023 as compared to 2013, it said. Home Minister Amit Shah has said that the country would be free of Naxalism by March 31, 2026. The geographical spread of

Manthan" narrates the story of how a young veterinary doctor (Girish Karnad) fights against Left-Wing Extremist (LWE) violence has shrunk considerably. In 2023, 171 oppressive forces to establish a milk cooperative that empowpolice stations in 42 districts ers rural farmers. It also starred reported such incidents, compared to 328 police Smita Patil, Naseeruddin Shah,

the Union Home Ministry's report said. "The arc of has been violence considerably restricted with just 25 districts accounting 91 per cent of the LWE violence," it said.

According to the Ministry's annual report 2023-24, the CPI (Maoist) continues to be the most potent among the various LWE outfits in the country, accounting for more than 90 per cent of total violent incidents and 95 per cent of resultant deaths. "Amidst increasing reverses, the CPI (Maoist) has been making efforts to expand to new areas along inter-state borders, albeit without any significant success," the report said. They wish to keep the population in their areas of influence marginalized to perpetuate their outdated ideology, it said.

"Consequently, the process of development has been set back by decades in many parts of the country under LWE influence," it said. Various measures adopted by (state) governments anḋ the developmental outreach by the Union government have

stations in 76 districts in 2013, seen an increasingly large The overall improvement in number of LWE cadres shunning the path of violence returning to the and mainstream.

> Continued operations and crackdowns in the "core Maoists' areas" have slightly increased the number of resultant deaths and casualties to security forces when compared with the corresponding period in 2022, the report said. Noting that improvised explosive devices cause the majority of casualties to security forces in anti-LWE operations, the Home Ministry issued a Standard Operating Procedure to promote best practices in IED management besides putting in place extensive counter-IED capacity building of CAPFs and state police forces, it said. "During the first half of 2024, the LWE situation has witnessed quantum positive jump (1.7 times) in security forces-initiated operations (59 103), which have to consequently resulted in a more than five-fold increase in the neutralization of Maoists (30 to 159) as compared to the corresponding period of 2023," the report said.

the LWE scenario can be attributed to a greater presence and increased capacity of the security forces across the LWE states, affected better operational strategy and better monitoring of development schemes, it said. In addition, beefing up intelligence coordination has also played a major role in planning action

against the Naxals. Round-the-clock intelligence sharing through Multi Agency Centre (MAC) at the Central level and State Multi Agency Centre (SMAC) at the state level, setting up of Joint Command and Control Centre at Jagdalpur (Chhattisgarh) and Gaya (Bihar), and strengthening of technical and human intelligence have helped in action against Naxals, the report said. Besides, thrust on the generation of real-time intelligence and creation as well as strengthening of State Intelligence Bureaus (SIBs) in the LWE affected states for which central assistance is provided through the SIS have also helped security forces take action against Naxals, it added.

CBI cancels medal of officer caught accepting bribe

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

 $T^{he}_{"forfeited"} Government has$

Home Minister's medal for

Excellence in Investigation

awarded to CBI Inspector

Rahul Raj in 2023 who was

later caught by the agency red-

handed, allegedly receiving Rs

10 lakh bribe and dismissed

from the service, officials said.

The action comes on the

recommendation of CBI

Director Praveen Sood who

has cracked down on corrupt

elements detected in the

agency's internal vigilance

Raj, a recipient of a prestigious

medal in 2023, was caught

"red-handed" on May 19 while allegedly accepting an illegal gratification of Rs 10 lakh

from Malay College of Nursing

chairman Anil Bhaskaran and

his wife Suma Anil, an official

alleged. The couple were also

arrested. The CBI swung into

action after inputs and

surveillance by its internal

vigilance unit indicated that

one of the support teams

constituted on the orders of

the Madhya Pradesh High

Court to examine the

infrastructure in nursing

colleges in the state was

developments said that CBI

indulging in corruption. Officials in the know of

process.

clear in no uncertain terms that "internal vigilance is prerequisite to external They said that, action". following its policy of "zero tolerance to corruption and misdemeanours," the CBI dismissed its officer under Article 311 of the Constitution within days of his arrest. The CBI also recommended cancelling his medal, which the home ministry has accepted.

Director Sood had made it

'Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation-2023 awarded to Rahul Raj, Inspector of the Central Bureau of Investigation vide Ministry's notification No. 11024/05/2023-PMA dated 17/11/2023 published in...Gazette of India on November 17, 2023 is hereby cancelled and the medal forfeited under Rule-9 of the Rules governing the award of Union Home Minister's Medal Excellence in for Investigation," the notification issued by the Ministry on

Monday said. Following its zero-tolerance policy towards internal corruption, three CBI officers were dismissed without enquiry under Article 311 of the Constitution while five were compulsorily retired under 56J rule in 2023-24, officials said.

BJP accuses AAP of using kids for poll gains

'Manthan' (1976) restored by

FHF with support from the

Gujarat Co-operative Milk

Marketing Federation Ltd.

(Amul) on Jan 1, 2025 at 8 p.M.

On Doordarshan," the foun-

"Manthan" was inspired by the

groundbreaking milk cooper-

ative movement by Dr

Verghese Kurien that trans-

formed India into one of the

largest milk producers in the

The Hindi film, titled

"Churning" in English, was

financed by 5 lakh farmers of

Gujarat 48 years ago who con-

tributed Rs 2 each. The open-

ing credits of the movie read:

"500,000 Farmers of Gujarat

dation said.

world

present.

and Amrish Puri.

STAFF REPORTER NEW DFI H

¬he BJP on Tuesday accused TAam Aadmi Party leader Arvind Kejriwal of using children for political gains, charging him with practising "petty, cheap and dirty" politics. Addressing a press conference, BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said Delhi's ruling party has not taken down a post, which shows some children raising pro-Kejriwal slogans, despite the National Human Rights Commission raising serious concerns on the matter.

Such a depiction of children is a violation of the Juvenile Act and the Election Commission guidelines, he said. "Kejriwal and Chief Minister Atishi are not sparing even children. They are violating the dignity of children. Is it because Kejriwal knows that he is losing the elections in Delhi," Bhatia asked.

He asked why Kejriwal was "playing with young and

impressionable minds for his petty, cheap and dirty politics".

The BJP, he claimed, will ensure that the "destroyer of children and a hater of children" is thrown out of power. He accused the AAP government of converting school toilets into classrooms for children and deliberately failing students in Class 9 and Class 11 to ensure higher pass percentages in Class 10 and Class 12. He added that people will cel-

ebrate "Happiness Utsav" -- a Delhi government initiative to commemorate the 'Happiness Curriculum' in its schools -by teaching the AAP a lesson in the upcoming polls.

The AAP government opened no new school despite promising over 500 of them, and is behind the vacancy of almost 80 per cent post of teachers, he alleged. Bhatia dubbed Kejriwal's announcement of Rs 18,000 monthly honorarium to temple and gurudwara priests as yet another "false promise" by the AAP, claim-

ing the former chief minister knows that his "political life

is coming to an end. Until recently his government was opening liquor shops outside religious places, he said. The BJP spokesperson noted that the AAP government has also promised a similar amount to imams but has not paid them for 17 months. There has been no bigger fraud and deceitful politician in India than him," he alleged. Asked about the Congress' charge that the BJP government at the Centre has disrespected former prime minister Manmohan Singh, the BJP leader hit back at the opposition party's "insult" of former PM P V Narasimha Rao, saying it did not even allow his cremation in the national capital.

There has been a bitter war of words between the Congress and the ruling BJP over arrangements at Singh's funeral and over the setting up of a memorial to the ex-PM

Three Crore applications disposed in governance drive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

N early three crore service delivery applications were disposed of during a recently concluded campaign aimed at further ensuring ease of governance mainly at the grassroot level, a senior government official said on Tuesday.

He said through the nationwide "Prashasan Gaon ki Ore" campaign conducted from December 19-24, the government has tried to implement Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision and made the eco-system transparent, faster by simplifying procedures and processes at every level.

Through various citizen centric initiatives, including redressal of public grievances, disposal of service delivery applications, the government expanded the outreach of service delivery mechanisms and made them more effective,"

said Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) Secretary V Srinivas.

He said the emphasis is on projecting the immense potential of technology to bring citizens and government closer, as a powerful tool to empower citizens as well as a medium to optimise transparency and accountability in day-to-day functioning.

The Prashasan Gaon ki Ore campaign was conducted in 700 + districts across India, said Srinivas, a 1989 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Rajasthan cadre. A total of 2,99,64,200 applica-

tions were disposed of under service delivery category and – 18.29 lakh public grievances were redressed (14.84 lakh raised on state portals and 3.44 lakh on the Centre's CPGRAMS), he said.

"The campaign represents a milestone for doorstep delivery

of services on a size and scale that makes it India's largest people centric campaign for good governance," Srinivas said.

In Uttar Pradesh, the Prashasan Gaon ki Ore was conducted in all 75 districts, in Madhya Pradesh (55 districts), Rajasthan (50 districts), Bihar (in all 38 districts), in Assam (all 35 districts), in Maharashtra (in 33 of the 36 districts), in Gujarat (in 32 of the 33 districts), in Chhattisgarh (in all 33 districts), in Karnataka (in all 31 districts), in Odisha (all 30 districts), in Jammu and Kashmir (all 20 districts) and in Jharkhand (in 23 of 24 districts), he said.

The campaign was spearhead-ed by the chief secretaries, principal secretaries of Administrative Reforms and district collectors across the nation, the senior bureaucrat said.

Gurugram Police resolve 97,896 complaints, 5,759 pending

STAFF REPORTER GURUGRAM

The Gurugram Police have received a total of 1,03,655 complaints through various means, out of which 97,896 complaints have been resolved by the district police and 5,759 pending complaints are being investigated this year so far, police said. According to the police, these complaints were received by the Gurugram Police through various channels including a total of 693 complaints received in the Police Commissioner's Office, Gurugram through various com-missions (NHRC, HHRC, NCW, HSWC, NCPCR, HCPCR, out of which 664 complaints have been resolved and 29 complaints are being investigated.

Similarly, a total of 1642 complaints were received in the Gurugram Police Commissioner's Office, through the office of the Director General of Police, Haryana, out of which 1635 complaints have been resolved, and 07 complaints are being investigated. A total of 8390 complaints were received in the office of Commissioner of Police, Gurugram all these 8,390 complaints have been resolved by the police.

Likewise, a total of 12,559 complaints through e-mail were received all these complaints have been resolved by Gurugram Police, the police said. The city Police have also received a total of 919 complaints during public hearings in the police commissioner's office, out of which 829 complaints have been resolved.

nation 04

Suvendu Adhikari threatens Mamata with jail

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

 $B_{\rm Suvendu}^{\rm engal \ Opposition \ Leader} \\ {}^{\rm Constant}_{\rm Suvendu \ Adhikari \ on}$ Tuesday said that his party would institute a commission on atrocities against women in Sandeshkhali when it comes to power and send Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to jail for the alleged offences she had committed. Adhikari, who was addressing a "reply rally" at Sandeshkhali a day after the CM held her own, stated, "Mamata Banerjee has accused the BJP of misleading the villagers and asked the women not to fall into the trap of 'mischievous' people. I must say that the biggest mischievous person is Mamata."

Quad celebrates 20 years of cooperation PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

to take place in the second half Tndia and other Quad memof 2025 The foreign ministers of the four ber nations on Tuesday reaffirmed the grouping's steadfast nations said the Quad will work

commitment to work towards a free, open and peaceful Indo-Pacific amid China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the vision of a free and open Indo-

The foreign ministers of the member nations of the grouping made the pledge in a joint statement commemorating the 20th anniversary of "Quad cooperation".

region.

India, the US, Australia and Japan came together 20 years ago to extend assistance in response to the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, and that coalition subsequently took form of the Quad. In the last few years, the Quad has

rolled out a number of initiatives addressing some of the most pressing needs and challenges of the Indo-Pacific region, including in areas of maritime securi-

the Indian Ocean Rim ty, infrastructure and connectivity. India is scheduled to host the Association, the region's premier next Quad Summit that is likely organisation," they said.

The Quad foreign ministers also referred to the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami and how the four countries came together in responding to the together to respond to the chalfuture needs of the Indo-Pacific. lenges.

"The tsunami was one of the "As four partners, we share a worst disasters in history, claim-Pacific that is peaceful, stable ing the lives of nearly a quarter million people and displacing 1.7 million across 14 countries," and prosperous, underpinned by effective regional institutions," they said.

"Together our four countries contributed over 40,000 emergency responders, working with other partners across the Indo-Pacific region to support mil-lions of people affected by the catastrophe.

"We reaffirm our unwavering In the statement, the ministers support forEAN's centrality and unity as well as mainstreaming further noted that the foundaand implementation of the EAN tional commitment of the four nations to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief remained strong.

"We continue to work side-byal architecture, foremost the Pacific Islands Forum. We are side to prepare for and respond also steadfast in our support for quickly and effectively to disas-

ters across the region," they said.

"In 2024, our four countries collectively supported disaster preparedness and life-saving relief efforts across the Indo-Pacific and we continue to build on those efforts to identify new ways to respond rapidly to humanitarian crises and disasters," they added.

The ministers also briefly highlighted the Quad's focus on addressing complex challenges in the Indo-Pacific. "What began as an emergency response to a catastrophe has grown into a full-fledged partnership delivering positive outcomes for the people of our region," the statement noted.

It said the Quad countries now work together and with partners across the Indo-Pacific to address complex challenges -from fighting climate change, cancer and pandemics, to bolstering quality infrastructure, counter-terrorism efforts, critical and emerging technologies, and cyber security.

Fake cancer and diabetic drugs seized in Kolkata raid

PNS NEW DELHI

Ajoint investigation con-ducted by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and the Drugs Control Directorate, West Bengal at the premises of a wholesale firm in Kolkata recently led to the seizure of spurious drugs estimated to be worth Rs 6.6 crore.

The investigation has led to the arrest of a woman identified as the proprietor of the wholesale firm who was taken into custody by the Drugs Inspector of CDSCO, East Zone, the Union Health Ministry said in a statement.

The raid, carried out at the firm 'Care and Cure For You' in Kolkata resulted in the seizure of a large quantity of anti-cancer, anti-diabetic, and other drugs suspected to be spurious.

The drugs, labelled as being manufactured in various countries including Ireland, Turkey, the USA, and Bangladesh, were found without any supporting documents to prove their legitimate importation into India, it said.

In the absence of such documentation, these drugs are deemed to be spurious, the ministry said.

The investigating team also discovered several empty packing materials, further raising concerns over the authenticity of the seized products, the statement said.

The total market value of the drugs seized is estimated at approximately Rs 6.60 crore, it said.

To ensure proper investigation, samples of the drugs have been sent for quality testing. The remaining seized quantity is being kept in safe custody by the CDSCO, the statement said

A court granted judicial custody of the arrested proprietor for 14 days and permitted further interrogation. Further investigation into the matter is ongoing. "The Ministry of Health and

Family Welfare remains committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of the public. The seizure and ongoing investigation underscore the government's zero-tolerance policy towards the circulation of counterfeit and substandard drugs in the market," the statement stated. The CDSCO and state authorities will continue to work in close coordination to combat the threat posed by spurious drugs and to safeguard the interests of consumers, it stated.

Unnao startup honours Jimmy Carter with peanut butter tribute

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

housands of miles away from his home in Georgia where he breathed his last, former US president Jimmy Carter will live on - in the form of two will live on – in the form of two new varieties of peanut butter dedicated to the "champion of peanut farming" from Unnao-based startup Nutty Village. Carter, who was elected in the wake of the Watergate scandal and the Vietnam War, died at his home in Plains, Georgia on Sunday at the age of 100. Nutty Village has decided to honour Carter for his "commitment to agriculture", Aman Kumar, who started the com-

pany in 2020, told PTI. As a tribute to the former pres-

ident of the United States of America, considered a champion of peanut farming and rural development, we will be dedicating our upcoming range of coffee-flavoured peanut butter and barbeque-flavoured peanut butter in his honour," the 29year-old entrepreneur said. The two new flavours -- coffee and barbeque -- are being added to the existing dark chocolate,

jaggery and unsweetened varieties. Carter was the third American

president to visit India. A village Gurugram district, Daulatabad Nasirpur, was named Carterpuri at the sug-

gestion of the then Indian prime minister Morarji Desai.

the joint statement said.

Pacific.

The Quad foreign ministers

also talked about the centrality

of 10-nation grouping

Association of Southeast Asian

Nations (ASEAN) in the Indo-

Outlook on the Indo-Pacific,"

'We respect Pacific-led region-

the ministers said.

According to The Carter Center, he was the only one with a personal connection to India as his mother, Lillian, had worked there as a health volunteer with the Peace Corps during the late 1960s.

Kumar said the Nutty Village's tribute acknowledges Carter's life-long commitment to agriculture and sustainable development.

Nutty Village, co-founded with Sushant Berma, was inspired by small farmers around Ganga, who cultivate peanuts but struggle to receive fair prices due to dependence on intermediaries and lack of market linkages, he



said. "Observing this challenge, we designed a solution to empower these farmers by ensuring better price realisation through direct market access." "Nutty Village works with around 50 farmers and purchases groundnuts from 5-6 farmers for its peanut butter. It is working with the women self-help groups to do both the primary and secondary processing to make peanut butter, creating livelihood opportunities as well at the grassroots level," added Kumar, who has a Master's in Social Entrepreneurship from Tata

Peanut farmers also benefit from

the almost triple purchase price Nutty Village offers them, he said.

Fourteen-fifteen villages in Unnao district have around 10,000 farmers who grow peanuts, 2,000 of whom use

organic farming techniques. Manish Singh, a 36-year-old farmer from Unnao, said, "We first met Aman when he want-

ed to discuss how we could all work together for better profits. He brought us seeds and we worked on figuring out the best farming methods."

Chandkali, a 60-year-old member of a self-help group, said being involved in the secondary processing of the peanuts gets her good money.



UP Politics 2024: A Year of tumult, transformation, and tough battles

BISWAJEET BANERJEE LUCKNOW

s the curtain falls on 2024, AUttar Pradesh stands as a microcosm of India's shifting political winds. This year has been nothing short of a rollercoaster for the state, often described as the cradle of Indian politics. The BJP, once dominant, found itself grappling with a severe blow in the Lok Sabha elections, only to stage a dramatic recovery in the assembly by-elections. On the other side, the Samajwadi Party (SP) surged ahead during the national polls but faltered in maintaining its momentum when it came to the state elections, reflecting the ever-changing allegiances of the electorate.

The year began with Uttar Pradesh brimming with anticipation. It was the first general election after the completion of the Ram temple in

Ayodhya, a project deeply intertwined with the BJP's identity. Yet, the saffron party, which had been riding high on its Hindutva and development narratives, faced unexpected challenges. The Lok Sabha elections dealt the BJP a crushing defeat in the state, reducing its tally from 62 to 33 seats. This marked one of the party's most significant electoral setbacks in recent years, with defeats in key constituencies like Ayodhya, Kannauj, and Amethi. The opposition INDIA alliance, spearheaded by the SP, capitalized on this vulnerability, securing 43 seats and emerg-ing as the dominant force in the state.

The BJP's losses in Ayodhya and Amethi were particularly symbolic. Ayodhya, considered the centerpiece of the BJP's Hindutva agenda, rejected its candidate, Lallu Singh, in favor of SP's Avdhesh



Prasad. Voter dissatisfaction over local issues, coupled with resentment over the demolition of small temples during the construction of the Ram

temple, played a significant role in this outcome. Similarly, in Amethi, Congress candidate Kishori Lal Sharma defeated BJP stalwart Smriti

Irani by a significant margin, signaling a shift in public sentiment despite Irani's highprofile campaigning. However, just as questions

began to surface about the BJP's future in Uttar Pradesh, the party made a resounding comeback in the assembly by-elections held later in the year. Contests were held for nine seats, and the BJP won six, with ally RLD securing one. This recovery was driven by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's assertive leadership and a wellassertive leader sinp and a real coordinated campaign strategy. Yogi's slogan, "Batenge To Katenge" (If divided, they will be cut), struck a chord across caste divisions, consolidating Hindu votes and neutralizing the oppo-sition's efforts to build alliances based on caste arithmetic.

The Kundarki constituency, with its Muslim-majority population, became a symbol of the BJP's ability to transcend traditional vote banks. BJP candidate Ramveer Singh campaigned aggressively in Muslim-dominated areas, presenting a message of inclusivity that resonated even in a

fragmented field. This success, combined with victories in other critical seats, underscored the party's adaptability and resilience.

For the SP, which had basked in the success of the Lok Sabha elections, the by-poll results were a reality check. Akhilesh Yadav's strategy of focusing on a coalition of backward classes, Dalits, and minorities (PDA) had worked well in the national elections but failed to replicate the same impact in the state contests. The loss in Kundarki and other key seats highlighted the limitations of this approach against the BJP's aggressive narrative and organizational strength.

Meanwhile, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) continued its downward spiral, unable to reclaim its traditional vote bank, which is increasingly gravitating towards newer players like Chandrashekhar

Azad's Azad Samaj Party. Mayawati's party appeared adrift, further diminishing its relevance in the state's political landscape. The turbulence of 2024 has set

nation 05

the stage for an intriguing contest in the years to come. Uttar Pradesh remains a battleground where strategies are tested, alliances are forged, and leaders are defined. For Yogi Adityanath, the year ended on a high note, solidifying his position as a Hindutva icon and a key play-er in the BJP's national politics. For Akhilesh Yadav, the challenge lies in translating his Lok Sabha successes into sustained gains at the state level. As Uttar Pradesh heads towards the 2027 assembly elections, the lessons of this year will shape the strategies of all political players, ensuring that the state remains at the heart of India's political drama.

Ayodhya, Varanasi, Mathura packed with devotees for New Year celebrations ISKCON devotees pray for safety of Hindus in Bangladesh

PTI AYODHYA /MATHURA /VARANASI

As the New Year approach-es, Uttar Pradesh's iconic religious destinations --Ayodhya, Varanasi and Mathura -- are experiencing an overwhelming influx of devotees.

With enhanced security measures and detailed crowd management plans in place, these holy cities are prepared to accommodate the huge number of pilgrims flocking to temples and sacred sites for a spiritual start to 2025.

Ayodhya is witnessing a massive surge in devotees ahead of the New Year, particularly with the newly consecrated Ram temple attracting thousands eager to seek blessings from Lord Ram.

The hotel accommodations in Ayodhya and nearby Faizabad are fully booked and the temple trust has extended the darshan" hours to manage

the expected crowd. "We are ready to welcome the devotees and all our rooms have been reserved through January 15," said Ankit Mishra, the owner of a hotel. While the Hindu New Year is



celebrated around March-April, many devotees opt to visit on the first day of the English calendar year for a glimpse of Ram Lalla. They wish to start the year with blessings from the deity,'

explained Ramakant Tiwari, a local priest. This New Year marks the first since the Ram temple's consecration, making it a particularly significant occasion. Ayodhya Senior

Superintendent of Police (SSP) Rajkaran Nayyar confirmed robust security arrangements across key religious sites like the Ram temple, Hanumangarhi and

Guptar Ghat. Varanasi is also bracing for an unprecedented number of visitors this New Year.

To handle the influx, the Kashi Vishwanath Temple has banned "sparsh (touch) darshan" from December 31 to January 1. The visitors will be allowed to view the deity from a distance to avoid overcrowding.

The police have implemented extensive security measures, with 45 duty points across major locations, including Assi Ghat and Sankat Mochan Temple.

Deputy Zone Kashi Commissioner of Police (DCP) Gaurav Bansal said the NDRF. Water Police and PAC

teams have been deployed at key points. With an estimated five to

seven lakh visitors, the temple area has been divided into five sectors and 12 quick reaction teams are on standby to handle any emergency. Mathura-Vrindavan is also seeing an enormous crowd of devotees. The temple author-ities have urged the elderly, sick and children to avoid visiting during peak time. "We advise the devotees to

assess the crowd before visiting to prevent inconvenience," said Munish Sharma, the manager of Banke Bihari Temple.

The temple has implemented a strict one-way entry and exit system to prevent jostling. To manage the influx, the

security personnel have been increased and heavy vehicles have been banned from Vrindavan. E-rickshaws have been introduced to transport the visitors to the temples. The police have set up barriers and deployed officers to ensure smooth movement and safety, with special park-

ing arrangements for the visitors arriving from different routes.

PTI KOLKATA

ISKCON devotees on Tuesday joined in prayers in Kolkata for the safety of Hindus and a peaceful 2025 for the minority community which has been facing attacks in Bangladesh since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government.

Hundreds of followers of ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) chanted 'Hare Krishna' and sang songs to express solidarity with the

Hindus in Bangladesh. Holding placards seeking the safety and security of Hindus and a peaceful 2025 in the neighbouring nation, the devotees joined in the prayers at the Albert Road centre on the eve of the new year, led by ISKCON Kolkata spokesperson Radharamn Das.

"We are praying to God that the Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh can live in peace every day in 2025," Das said.

Maintaining that life has been terrible for Bangladeshi



Hindus in 2024, he said "We hope that they will get justice and peace in 2025.

Bangladesh's minority Hindus, who constitute only about 8 per cent of the 170 million population, have faced hundreds of attacks in 50-odd districts of the country since the fall of Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government on August 5.

Das had earlier demanded that the interim government in Bangladesh take strong action against the fundamen-talists fomenting trouble in

Odisha universities alloted Rs 676.70 crore under PM-USHA scheme provisions have also been made University vice chancellor Geetanjali Dash said, "We are rooms, laboratories, libraries happy as the central governand hostels and making the ment approved the muchneeded project

so as to build confidence

They have also demanded

the immediate release of jailed

Hindu spiritual leader

Chinmoy Krishna Das and

other monks arrested in

Das is scheduled to be pro-

duced before a Bangladesh

The ISKCON Kolkata

spokesperson said that he is

hopeful that Das and the

other three monks in jail in

Bangladesh will get justice.

court on January 2.

among the minorities.

Bangladesh.

Amity University contributes to biological payload aboard Spadex

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI Tt was a historic moment for

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE



PTI BHUBANESWAR/BERHAMPUR

The Union government has

launched its first Biological Payload from India into space by ISRO through PSLV C60 Spadex Mission, from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, SHAR, ISRO, Sriharikota, on Monday night. This was part of POEM-4 and the payload is Callus of Spinach (Spinacia Oleracia). According to a statement from the university, the colour changes and the lateral growth will be studied through onboard cameras and sensors. "This experiment is a first step towards space grown food which will be helpful in future

for manned missions and Bhartiya Antariksh Station. This important scientific research is headed by Dr. A. W. Santhosh Kumar, Dr. Sneha Gokani, Dr. R. Selvakumaran and Dr. Ravi Shankar from Amity University," the statement said.

Before the Gaganaut is placed

in space, this biological payload will study the effect of microgravity of growth and morphology of plant Callus. To support human exploration in space, we need to provide fresh food as well and hence cultivation of plant needs to be addressed through a series of experiments.

addressing challenges related to space exploration and ensuring the success of future space missions.", said Dr. W. Selvamurthy, President, Amity Science, Technology & Innovation Foundation (ASTIF).

Amity Plant Experimental Module in Space (APEMS) is a Sharing his views, Dr. Ashok K. cutting-edge experimental Chauhan, Founder President of module designed to monitor how plants adapt to space con-Amity Education Group, remarked that this historic ditions, such as gravitational stress, and regulate their launch signifies Amity University's unwavering comgrowth direction in response to stimuli like gravity and light. It mitment to scientific innovaaims to explore the potential for tion and its contribution to make India, a Viksit Bharat. food and nutrition sustainability during prolonged space 'The launch underscores the role of academic institutions in missions

for infrastructural develop ment of various universities and colleges in Odisha under Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA), state Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj said here on Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters here Suraj said that of Rs 676.70 crore, the state would bear Rs 268 crore (40 per cent) while the Centre would provide the remaining Rs 408.70 crore (60 per cent).

The fund has been approved under different components, including Multi Disciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERU), Grants to Strengthen Universities (GSU), Grants to Strengthen Colleges (GSC) and Gender Inclusion and Equity Initiatives (GIEI), and Management Monitoring Evaluation and Research (MMER), he said



He said Rs 100 crore each has been approved for Berhampur University; Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University, Éaripada; Ravenshaw University, Cuttack; and Sambalpur University, under the MERU component of the scheme. Similarly, under the GSU com-

ponent, Vikram Dev University, Jeypore, Odisha ponent, University State Open Sambalpur, Kalahandi University, Bhawanipatna, Raiendra University, Bolangir

and Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur would get Rs 20 crore each for development of infrastructure, Suraj said.

The education ministry has also sanctioned Rs 5 crore each for 24 colleges under the GSC component, while five dis-Kandhamal, tricts Mayurbhanj, Bhadrak, Nabarangpur and Sambalpur would get Rs 10 crore each for carrying out gender inclusion and equity initiatives, he added. Under the PM-USHA scheme,

sons with disabilities, he said. Besides, the higher educational institutions can procure software and hardware to enhance digital education, the minister said.

for the development of class-

To attract more women students, the higher educational institutes can offer skill development, career buildings and self-defence training under the gender inclusion and equity initiative component of the central scheme.

With the implementation of the scheme, the NAAC ranking of the higher educational institutes would improve in coming years, he hoped.

The minister said that the government is working to implement the National Education Policy 2020 to make the educational institutions multi-disciplinary and students compatible with global standards. Meanwhile, Berhampur Berhampur

development of the university." "The fund will help the university have better infrastructure and increase research output, putting the university on the map as a top-tier institution," she said, adding, the fund will be utilised over the next five years.

from the central government to the Berhampur University, which will celebrate its foundation day on January 2, local MP Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy thanked Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan for giving his nod to the release of much-needed fund to the university

Describing MERU as a big gift

"We hope the university will use the fund to meet the goals in research, ranking and infrastructure and to make the institute competitive on the international level," the MP said

SpaDeX mission: Spacecraft placed in right orbit, ISRO eyes another feat

PTI SRIHARIKOTA, (ANDHRA PRADESH)

wo spacecraft that would aid ISRO in demonstrating space docking, a critical technology for future space missions, got separated successfully and were placed into the desired orbit late Monday, the country's space agency said. "PSLV C60 Spadex mission is accomplished with respect to Spadex A&B satellites," said

Mission Director M Jayakumar. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief S Somanath said the rocket has placed the satellites in the right orbit of 475 km circular orbit, after over 15 minutes of flight. "So, as far as we are concerned. the rocket has placed the spacecraft in the right orbit and the SpaDeX satellites have moved one behind the other, and over the period of time, it will pick up further distance, travel about 20 km away and then the

rendezvous and docking process will start. And we hope that the docking

process can happen in another week and the nominal time is going to be approximately January 7," he said in his address from the Mission Control Centre.

tant part is the POEM-4 with payloads from startups, 24 industries, academia and also from ISRO centres, he said. These are scheduled to be fired on Tuesday morning. Scientists would work through the night to ensure that the POEM-4 reaches the desired orbit level to perform the operation, Somanath said.

Later, talking to reporters at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Somanath said the PSLV-C60 mission placed the two SpaDeX satellites weighing 220kg in a circular orbit and 475 km as against the projected 470 km and this mission also has the

In this mission, the very impor-

POEM-4 which has 24 payloads to perform research and development.

"They are payloads and are not satellites. They are going to be attached to the fourth stage (of the PSLV rocket) for conducting experiments over the next two months. The upper stage of the PSLV rocket will be brought down to a lowered orbit to 350 km and that process is currently going on. After that, we will have many activities to continue," Somanath, also the Secretary, Department of Space, said.

On the Space Docking Experiment, he said the scientists would have many operations from December 31 at the ISTRAC Bengaluru and he expected that the docking condition 'possibly on January 7'. 'So, we will be able to see that from the Control Centre, ISTRAC, Bengaluru. All those activities of docking, including telecasting of the onboard



images from the camera of the docking processes," he said. Somanath, flanked by SpaDeX Project Director N Surendran, Javakumar and Directors of the various Centre said ISRO was "very proud" of this accomplishment and expressed hope that the SpaDeX mission's objective can be achieved in the coming days.

"Really important mission for us, this you know, with the space sector reforms, and expansion of space activities. Then we have human space flight programmes, building space stations etc. This (Monday's) mission is so critical for us to work on future missions like the Chandrayaan-4, missions to the Moon as

well," he said. "I believe this is not the first SpaDeX and there will be many more SpaDeX varieties including complex versions of docking systems in the coming days," he said.

"We had two launches of the PSLV from the same launch pad that is the first launch pad in December. So, after the first launch (on December 5 for PSLV-C59/Proba-3 mission), the Satish Dhawan Space Centre team was quick in raising to the occasion (for Monday's mission)," he said. Surendran said, "I would like to congratulate the PSLV team for the successive successful launch of PSLV in a month, it is a record, we have also placed our twin babies in a perfectly circular orbit, as per our requirement."I am happy to say that our solar panels are successfully deployed and the spacecraft are on their journey and holding their wings towards the dock-

ing and it is expected to happen around January first week," ĥe said.

As you are aware the space sector is going through a phase to enable private players to meet the growing demands, as per the policy guidelines, SpaDeX was assembled and integrated here for the first time, he said. Dubbed as a prelude to the ISRO setting up its own Space Station by 2035, the PSLV-C60 mission would also make India join an elite club in achieving this feat which is expected to take place in the coming days.

The 44.5-metre-tall rocket carried two spacecraft --Spacecraft A and B, each weighing 220 kg which would help in space docking, satellite servicing and interplanetary missions

After the culmination of the 25-hour countdown which commenced on Sunday, the rocket lifted off at 10 pm from

the First Launch Pad at this spaceport, emanating thick orange-coloured fumes and thunderous sound in the island, located about 135 km east of Chennai.

According to ISRO scientists, the two spacecraft-Spacecraft A (SDX01) or the 'Chaser' and Spacecraft B (SDX02) or the Target' would be merged together later at an altitude of about 470 km after travelling at the same speed and distance. By mastering the docking technologies, ISRO is set to enhance its operational flexibility and also expand its mission hori-

zons. This technology is essential for some of India's space ambitions like Indian on the Moon, getting samples from the Moon (Chandrayaan-4 mission), and building and operating the Bharatiya Antariksh Station. The others to achieve this technological feat are China, Russia and the US.

BHUBANESWAR | WEDNESDAY | JANUARY 1, 2025

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

A wish list for 2025

As we reflect on the year that has passed and welcome the new one, let us resolve to make this a year of progress and unity

s we welcome year 2025, the world stands at the cusp of opportunities and challenges. The new year offers a chance to reflect, reset, and reimagine the future. Amidst the advancements and setbacks of recent years, 2025 should be a time for hope, action and collaboration. Here is a wish list for a better world and an earnest appeal to global and Indian leaders to strive for transformative change. The urgency of addressing climate change cannot be overstated. We hope for concrete actions to reduce carbon emissions, promote renewable energy, and protect biodiversity. Let 2025 be the year when words transform into impactful deeds. The pandemic underscored the disparities in healthcare access. A global commitment to equitable healthcare systems, and increased investments in public health are essential. Bridging the digital divide, improving infrastructure and making quality education accessible to marginalised communities should be a universal priority. As AI and other technologies advance, their applica-



tion should focus on solving pressing global issuesfrom poverty to climate resilience-rather than exac-

erbating inequalities. The crises we face are interconnected and so must be our solutions. A concerted effort is required under the UN to bring an end to wars raging in Ukraine and West Asia. The untold misery of Gaza people must end. All involved must work to deescalate tensions and bring about a lasting peace in the region which has seen enough misery and human tragedy. Policies should reflect empathy and foresight, ensuring that no one is left behind. India, with its diversity and potential, holds a unique position in shaping the global future. As we

step into 2025, Indian leaders must focus on rural development, job creation and support for small businesses to bridge economic disparities. They should invest in vocational training and innovation to prepare the youth for a competitive global market. Ambitious climate targets must be implemented, alongside enhanced urban planning for sustainable cities and promotion of water and energy conservation. Transparency, accountability and citizen participation must remain central to policy-making, fostering trust and unity. The fringe elements must be brought to mainstream and efforts must be stepped up in places like Manipur to bring about a lasting peace. The government and the citizens alike must work to have a country which is as per the wishes of our Constitution makers—a country which ensures dignity, liberty and freedom for all and no section of society is alienated. The people on the fringe-tribals and dalits need to be given their due and efforts must be made in that direction. The minorities must not feel alienated and targeted. They deserve their due respect and dignity. All religious issues must be settled amicable as per the law. The democratic institutions must be strengthened and parliamentary democracy must work for the people in the right earnest. Wishing all our readers a very happy new year!



A turning point in Taliban politics



NISHAKANT OJHA

The assassination of Maulvi Khalil-ur-Rahman Haqqani, a key leader in the Haggani network, has sent shockwaves across Afghanistan and the region

he assassination of Maulvi Khalil-ur-Rahman Haqqani, the Taliban's Minister for Refugees and a senior figure in the Haqqani network, has exposed significant fractures within the Taliban leadership and deepened the complexities of regional geopolitics. Claimed by the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISKP), the attack not only highlights the Taliban's internal divisions but also reshapes the broader strategic landscape, especially for India. On December 11, 2024, Khalil Haqqani was killed in a highprofile suicide bombing in Kabul. This incident underscored the Taliban's failure to ensure internal security and revealed growing tensions between its Kandahar faction, led by Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada, and the Haqqani network, headed by Sirajuddin Haqqani. These tensions have been fueled by the Haqqanis' perception of neglect or even sabotage by the Kandahar faction. In response to this crisis, Sirajuddin Haqqani convened an emergency meeting in Gardez with key network leaders to address security breaches and the escalating threat posed by ISKP. This development points to potential fragmentation within the Taliban, which carries significant implications for regional stability

and India's security. A fragmented Taliban could destabilize Afghanistan, creating fertile ground for extremist groups like ISKP. This faction's hostility toward both the Taliban and regional actors, including India, raises the specter of increased attacks targeting Indian interests. The resultant instability might also spill over into Pakistan, indirectly affecting India's border security, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir.

Another concern lies in the potential strengthening of the Pakistan-Taliban nexus. alliance could align with akistan's historical ties to the Haqqani network could enable it to leverage this faction against Indian activities in Afghanistan, including infrastructure and

development projects. Such a scenario could escalate cross-border terrorism, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, and erode India's strategic influence in Afghanistan. Indian investments in key infrastructure projects like the Zaranj-Delaram Highway and the Chabahar Port route may face heightened risks amidst this instability.

India also faces an increased terror threat as ISKP may collaborate with groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), which are active in Pakistan. Such alliances could intensify attacks on Indian targets, while prolonged conflict in Afghanistan might radicalize vulnerable populations across the region, including within India.

Regionally, these developments complicate India's diplomatic landscape. Iran, for instance, might shift its focus to countering Afghan instability, potentially undermining its collaboration with India on projects like Chabahar Port. Similarly, a stronger Pakistan-Haqqani Chinas ambitions under the Belt and Road Initiative, further sidelining India in the region. Globally, Pakistan's backing



FOR INDIA, THE ASSASSINATION OF

KHALIL HAQQANI SIGNIFIES A CRITICAL MOMENT TO RECALIBRATE ITS APPROACH. INDIA MUST **BOLSTER ITS** INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES AND BORDER SECURITY,

PARTICULARLY IN

of the Haqqani network provides it with a lever to influence Afghan politics but risks alienating the Kandahar faction and exacerbating internal Taliban conflicts. ISKP's growing power, meanwhile, poses a direct challenge to South Asian security, threatening to destabilize the region and affect India's geopolitical interests. For India, the assassination of Khalil Haqqani signifies a critical moment to recalibrate its approach. India must bolster its intel-

ligence capabilities and border security, particularly in sensitive areas like Jammu and Kashmir. Strengthening partnerships with Iran, Central Asia, and Russia could counterbalance Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan. Coordinating with international allies to combat ISKP and other extremist groups will also be vital. Furthermore, India must protect its investments in Afghanistan through global partnerships and maintain diplomatic efforts via multilateral platforms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the United for regional destabilization. For India, this evolving scenario demands vigilance, proactive diplomacy, and strengthened security measures to safeguard its interests amid shifting geopolitical realities.

For India, the implications are profound, ranging from the potential rise of terrorism to a weakening of its strategic foothold in Afghanistan. The escalating instability could embolden extremist groups like ISKP, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Jaish-e-Mohammed, increasing the risk of attacks targeting India. To address these chal-

lenges, India must adopt a multi-pronged strategy. Enhancing intelligence capabilities, securing its borders, and deepening ties with Iran, Central Asia, and Russia are crucial steps. Engaging multilateral platforms to combat the ISKP threat and protect investments is equally vital. The situation demands vigilance and proactive measures to safeguard India's interests in an increasingly volatile region, ensuring its strategic and security objectives remain intact amidst snifting dynamics. (The writer is an eminent expert on counter terrorism in West Asia; views are personal)

ations SENSITIVE AREAS LIKE JAMMU AND KASHMIR

The killing of Khalil Haqqani has revealed the fragile balance within the Taliban and underscored the potential

THE EDITOR

New year resolutions: Small steps, lasting change



O P SINGH

A meaningful new year vow isn't about dramatic reinvention; it is about mindful reflection, small adjustments and cultivating habits that truly last

n every new year eve a lot of people take a vow to make a new beginning. Families come together, friends exchange greetings, and bold resolutions quietly take shape. "I'll wake up at 5 a.m.," someone might vow, or "This year, I'll get back in shape." However, by February, alarms are snoozed, fitness goals abandoned, and life returns to its

familiar rhythm. Why do resolutions often fail? They are usually ambitious yet unrealistic, conceived more in the excitement of the moment than with a long-term perspective. A meaningful New Year doesn't demand grand reinvention; it thrives on small, deliberate adjustments-holding on to what works, letting go of what doesn't, and fostering habits that last.

The New Year feels unique due to the "fresh start effect," a concept psychologists use to describe how temporal milestones—such as January 1, birthdays, or even a new week—create a mental reset. These milestones give the illusion of starting afresh, prompting us to buy planners or sign up for gym member-



ships. But enthusiasm alone doesn't guarantee success. Without reflection and structure, even the most wellintentioned plans falter.Reflection is the starting point-not the kind that dwells on failures but one that evaluates life with curiosity. What brought joy or progress last year? Perhaps it was reconnecting with family, starting an evening walk routine, or improving time man-

agement. What left you feeling drained? Overcommitting to work, excessive screen time, or trying to please everyone might top the list. Psychologists recommend "self-distanced reflection," where you analyse your life as if observing someone else's. Why did this person abandon their plans? Why did they agree to activities they didn't enjoy? This detached perspective helps pinpoint habits to retain and those to discard. Even with clarity, life is seldom linear. Setbacks are inevitable, but resilience-the ability to adapt and recover-makes all the difference. Resilience isn't innate; it can be nurtured through practices like gratitude, mindfulness, and

reframing challenges. Gratitude shifts focus to what's working. Recognizing small positives rewires the brain to spot opportunities over obstacles. Mindfulness, on the other hand, anchors the mind in the presentwhether during a heartfelt conversation or a quiet morn-

> These practices reduce stress and enhance focus. Reframing failure is equally crucial. Unmet resolutions aren't defeats; they're feedback. Adjusting goals is far more effective than abandoning them altogether. Strong relationships are another cornerstone of happiness.

This insight resonates deeply in India, where family bonds and social networks are integral. However, maintaining

these connections in today's fast-paced world requires conscious effort. Being present is challenging in a world of constant notifications, endless emails, and overflowing to-do lists. Yet studies show that mind-wandering-even toward pleasant thoughtscorrelates with reduced happiness. The richest moments are those we fully engage in, whether during a family meal, a morning walk, or a simple act of kindness. Adaptability is another essential skill. Life rarely unfolds as planned, and the ability to pivot determines how well we navigate change. After reflection and building resilience, action must follow. Instead of sweeping declarations like "I'll meditate for an hour daily" focus on creating systems. Systems grounded in routine, rather than fleeting motivation, are more sustainable. The New Year isn't magical. It's a psy-

chological cue to pause and reassess, but its real value lies

in how you use it. Progress,

not perfection, is the key to a

(The writer is author and

DGP and head, Haryana

Bureau; views are personal)

State Narcotic Control

fulfilling year.

in the 5-match series. The match played at the Melbourne Cricket Ground saw Australia take seven wickets after tea on day five to secure a famous win. Despite a valiant effort from Yashasvi Jaiswal, İndia's batting collapse on the final day sealed their defeat. Meanwhile, Australia has bettered their chances to face South Africa in the WTC Final at Lord's next year with the win. The Proteas have booked their spot in the WTC final after a thrilling two-wicket win over Pakistan on Sunday. Interestingly, the Australian last wicket fought hard for adding more than 60 runs, whereas after the final day tea break India's last seven wickets tumbled for just 34 runs in 20.3 overs.

AUSTRALIA DEFEATS INDIA

Madam -- India's hopes for the World Test

Championship final took a major hit with

a big loss to Australia in the Boxing Day

Test at Melbourne, when Australia beat

India by 184 runs in the fourth Test of the

Border-Gavaskar series to take a 2-1 lead

Wicket had no devils. This fragile nature of the Indian team is very discouraging. Fighting till the last ball - spirit is missing. And we are now blaming the third umpire for Jaiswal's out to malign the Aussies victory and India's shocking performance. But the true cricket lovers are completely agreeing with the Indian skipper Rohit Sharma about Jaiswal's controversial dismissal at the post-match press conference: 'Look, I really don't know what to make of that because the technology didn't show anything. With the naked eye, it seemed that he did touch something. I don't know how the umpires want to use the technology, but in all fairness, he did touch the ball? Now it is the time to assess Team India's performance. Actually, Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja passed their prime sometime ago but they won't gracefully retire like Ashwin. Please drop them out to build a future team. We only do hero worshipping- only to be disappointed by our so-called heroes. Indian fans and media need to immediately stop making celebrities of hero worship. Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Elon Musk stands with immigrants



rift has emerged among the supporters of US President-elect Donald Trump over the contentious issue of immigration. The faction spearheaded by billionaire Elon Musk and fellow entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy contrasts sharply with Trump's MAGA (Make America Great Again) base, which firmly endorses his stringent anti-immigration policies. Amid the simmering row, the President-elect seems to be aligning with

STOP POLITICAL BLAME GAME

Madam- It is indeed a matter of concern to one and all that rape being predominantly a social issue is playing in the hands of political parties to settle political scores over the other parties. The recent incident in Anna University abjectly exposes again the lapses in handling such a serious issue by the government, university authority, the police department and also the political parties. As a matter of fact, for most of the political parties addressing rape and prevalence of drugs, especially in the educational institutions, it is not in their active agenda. BJP sits muted on the shabby happenings in Manipur but cries foul over such incidents taking place in the states ruled by other parties.

Manipur has even seen women being paraded nude in public. Such incidents must have taken place during the tenure of the other parties also, who are now out with fierce protest programmes. Every criminal claims support of some political party or the other to escape punishments. The existing system of dealing with such shabby incidents needs reconsideration to

Musk and other supporters in the tech industry over the immigration visa issue. Those who claim to be 'natives' of the country themselves have foreign roots

It is meritocracy that has thrived in that country over the centuries and that has made America the world's most powerful nation by attracting top talents in many fields from across the globe. However, many people may claim that the next century belongs to China or some other country, the fact is that behind all modern day tech innovations and inventions have all been the products greatly attributable to the 'American Dream.' That dream will keep the United States of America as the land of opportunities for a long time to come. That is what will attract the best brains from across the world to sail the oceans to reach the shores of America and create new ideas and inno-

vations that the world will need to use N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

make them more foolproof. More than deterrent acts combined efforts of all institutions and socially conscious individuals, irrespective of political lenience should make sustained efforts to tide over this menace.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

JIMMY CARTER PASSES AWAY

Madam - The 39th president of the United States has died at age 100. Jimmy Carter was a peanut farmer and US Navy lieutenant before going into politics, eventually serving one term as governor of Georgia and as president of the United States from 1977 to 1981. He was the only former US president to reach 100 years old. He championed the human rights at the centre of US foreign policy, Carter forged a still-standing peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. He will always be remembered for his key policy decisions making and action-driven blueprint into the execution. Dimple Wadhawan | Kanpur Nagar

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com BHUBANESWAR | WEDNESDAY | JANUARY 1, 2025

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the pioneer

FIRSTCOLUMIN EMPOWERING ADOLESCENTS WITH SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

Spirituality can help adolescents face life's challenges with resilience



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

e all know that as per the laws of nature, we live our lives through various stages such as infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age. Of these life stages, the most adventurous and interesting stage is adolescence which represents an inner emotional upheaval, a struggle between the eternal human wish to cling to the past and the equally powerful wish to get on with the future. It's indeed a very critical phase in the life of every human being because, in this phase, there is intense growth not only physically but also morally, cognitively, emotionally and intellectually.

Hence, in this stage of life, parents elders or peers must provide adolescents with proper guidance, and support and create an environment to facilitate their holistic development. The primary goal of every adolescent is to achieve complete independence, for which they often seek a lot of space and freedom. They start to think more rationally and abstractly as they form their moral code. In the process, they may often become assertive, rebellious, non-conformist, sell-opinionated and aloof. Therefore, they need to be guided and supported with great sensitivity and maturity.



To attain a well-integrated maturity, a series of factors need to be addressed for adolescents, like they need to acquire self-certainty, be ready to try out new roles, strive for achievement, acquire a self-identity, balance their rights with responsibilities and identify personal goals and ideals. One should understand that while dealing with the problems of adolescents, one should try and step into the young person's world and treat them with discerning respect rather than suspicion. It always helps when we share their joys and sorrows and genuinely address their questions whilst engaging them in moral and spiritual discipline.

It is so unfortunate that in the formative stage of adolescence when children need a strong sense of direction & guidance, there is no source for them to get it. The family is no longer the strong institution it used to be. Hence, under this scenario, adolescents try to find support from other means such as their peer group, TV, internet, books etc.

Tempted by the glamour and gloss that is promoted by the media, there is a constant conflict that adolescents go through to measure up to their peer group's values and to cope with the ideals and the reality of life.

Capitalising on 'China Plus One': Will India step up?



analysis 07

As global trade dynamics shift under Donald Trump's policies, India stands to gain from the move by multinational companies to diversify supply chains beyond China

eleasing a report the 'Trade Watch', on December 25, 2024, NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam has suggested that trade policies under US President-elect Donald Trump could result in a potential economic boom for India, driven by significant trade diversion in global trade. He said 'Whatever Trump has announced so far, which is likely to come up... there are opportunities. We are the man at first slip. The ball is coming in our direction. Whether we hold the catch or drop it is for us to decide. There will be huge disruption, and if we prepare for it, there will be a massive boom due to trade diversion?

This comes after Trump announced additional tariffs on imports from its biggest trading partners - 25 per cent on Canada and Mexico if they fail to check illegal immigration and drug trade. He also announced a general 10 per cent tariff by the US on all imports and a 60 per cent tariff on imports from China. Meanwhile, the US has also announced restrictions on the export of computer chip-making equipment, software, and high-bandwidth memo-ry chips to China. Trump has also threatened to impose 100 per cent tariffs on BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) countries if they try to undermine the US dollar. The US is the biggest importer in the world with a mammoth import valued at US\$ 3200 billion during CY 2022. During that year, its import from China alone was US\$536.3 billion which works out to 16.7 percent of total goods imports.

US goods imports from Canada and Mexico were US\$436.6 billion and US\$454.8 billion or 13.6 per cent and 14.2 per cent respectively. În sharp contrast, US goods imports from India during 2022 were US\$85.5 billion or a meagre 2.6 per cent of its total goods import. Now, if Trump executes his threat of imposing a 60 per cent additional tariff on imports from China, this will lead to an exorbitant increase in the cost of the latter's goods to American consumers thereby rendering them uncompetitive vis-à-vis similar goods coming from other exporting countries such as India. This should help India capture a big slice of the US import bas-ket currently served by China. This should be possible even if Trump imposes a 10 per cent additional tariff on all its imports including from India. As for Trump's threat to impose 100 per cent tariffs on BRICS countries (India is one of them) in the event of the latter putting into action their so-called 'de-dollarization' plan (De-dollarization is a process of moving away from the world's reliance on the U.S. dollar as the chief reserve currency), this is theoretical At the 16th summit held on 22-24 October 2024 in Kazan, BRICS leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping, publicly voiced their commitment to jointly introduce an alternative payment system that wouldn't be dependent on the U.S. dollar. The feasibility of implementing this idea anytime soon is suspect. Second, the US is also hell-bent on taking measures that will undermine the capabilities of China to



boost the production of its goods such as electronics (including smartphones), automobiles etc in which it has a comparative advantage. So, it has imposed restrictions on the export of computer chip-making equip-ment, software, and high-band-width memory chips to China. As a result, China not have much surplus to send to the US (and other countries), and India will have more space to boost its export of electronics, automobiles etc.Third, European Union (EU) countries have also imposed tariffs on Chinese EVs (electric vehicles) and solar equipment. Moreover, the multinational companies (MNCs) headquartered in the US and EU countries are shifting their factories away from China, thanks to growing geopolitical uncertainties, the ongoing trade war between the United States and China, cyber-security, and rule-of-law concerns, ris-ing labour costs in China etc.

ing to substantial surge in their exports especially in high-growth sectors, India has lagged. Although India has achieved production gains, they have not significantly contributed to domestic value addition, unlike

its peer economies. In India's high-tech sector, while exports surged by 350 per cent between 2017 and 2023, domestic value-added output fell by 18 per cent. In manufacturing, by contrast, during this period, even as domestic value-added grew at 26 per cent, it still trailed behind merchandise export growth of 44 per cent.In electronics, India's share in US imports has grown from 0.2 per cent in 2017 to 2.1 per cent in 2023, courtesy of, the government's push toward hightech exports. However, competi-tors like Vietnam, Taiwan,

Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) etc which help the country to better integrate into the global economy and benefit from expanded trade opportunities by facilitating access to mar-kets of their member countries duty-free or at close to zero tariffs. Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) contribute nearly 40 per cent of exports. But, India not being a part of such trade alliances, they are denied an opportunity to boost exports. At the same time, they suffer due to high protective tariffs on the import of basic materials such as steel. A 25 per cent hike in import duties on steel products asked by the Ministry of Steel - will impart a deadly blow to the MSMEs.

There are four major reasons as Malaysia, and Thailand domi- to why costs in India are high. First, businesses in basic materi

Unfortunately, in the absence of proper guidance, it is natural that many adolescents are pulled into crime, abuse and drug addiction. While family, educational institutions and social groups do have a major role to play in guiding and supporting adolescents, spirituality lends a deeper and stronger basis for forming a clear identity and value system upon which the edifice of a strong character can be raised.

Since spirituality touches on the core goodness of every human being, it is the most potent tool for guiding all sections of society. The process of empowering adolescents begins with the practice of treating them with respect and facilitating their growth in such a way that they can realise their hidden potential. So, instead of looking at them as helpless or ignorant beings who need to be chastised and controlled, spiritual treatment calls for accepting them as potential carriers of higher wisdom, pure values, fresh ideas and skills that need to be channelised in the proper direction. Such a growth process is driven by their inner self, gently guided by wisdom and love rather than a forced development compelled by insecurity, fear and false expectations. Remember! If adolescents are motivated to explore spirituality at their age they will be equipped with excellent powers to cope with any life situation and excel in their chosen roles, thereby living a quality life.

(Writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views are personal) COMING IN OUR DIRECTION IS A HIGH-COST DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT WHICH MAKES

AN

OVERARCHING

'DROPPING THE

CATCH DESPITE

THE MAN AT

AND THE BALL

FIRST SLIP

REASON

BEHIND

INDIA

OUR PRODUCTS UNCOMPETITIVE IN THE EXPORT

AS WELL AS DOMESTIC MARKET

All of this reinforces a case for 'China Plus One', a potent business strategy that involves diversifying manufacturing and sourcing away from China aimed at reducing the risk of over-reliance on China for manufacturing and sourcing. Is India ready to capitalise? None other than NITI Aayog's

This opens up opportunities as

these MNCs can relocate their

production bases to India.

'Trade Watch' report says that even as many Asian countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, table a proposal for a 25 per cent Cambodia, and Malaysia have hike in steel import duties. It is emerged as bigger beneficiaries also a major factor behind India's of the 'China Plus One' strategy reluctance to join major multilateral trade agreements, such as the - enabled by factors such as cheaper labour, simplified tax Regional Comprehensive laws, lower tariffs, signing Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) – lead-Economic Partnership (RCEP) and Comprehensive and

nate, with each holding a sub-stantially higher market share in US electronics imports.

als and feedstock such as copper, zinc, aluminium, oil and gas, An overarching reason behind chemicals, petrochemicals etc are natural monopolies enabling India 'dropping the catch despite the man at first slip and the ball them to set high prices. Second, coming in our direction' is a tax rates are pretty high particularly when it comes to petrolehigh-cost domestic environment (this is despite a host of incenum products which are still taxed under the pre-GST regime. By tives given under the Production increasing movement costs, these Linked Incentive or PLI schemes to industries) which makes our increase the cost of all goods products uncompetitive in the across the board. export as well as domestic market. It also explains why our industries demand high protective tariffs and government yields; for instance, it has on the

Third, power tariffs are exorbitant thanks to excessive State controls on power distribution companies. Finally, industries operate in highly interest-rate environments. India can catapult itself to the position of fully leveraging the 'China Plus One' strategy only if it effectively addresses the present high-cost

syndrome

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

a unified currency represent

De-dollarisation: A bold step toward economic equity or a path fraught with uncertainty

The global economy stands at a crossroads as the concept of 'de-dollarisation' gains momentum, sparking debates about the future of international trade and finance

◄he global economy is currently rife with discussions surrounding a potential 'de-dollarisation, which pertains to the anticipated transition away from the supremacy of the US dollar in international trade and finance.

Advocates argue that it could stabilise economies, reduce inflation, and ultimately relieve financial pressure on everyday individuals. However, is this change truly the solution to the world's economic problems, or does it introduce a new set of challenges?

De-dollarisation refers to the reduction of dependence on the US dollar in the realms of global trade, investments, and reserves. For many years, the dollar has held its posi-



RACHNA LAKHPATI

tion as the leading reserve currency globally, influencing markets and moulding economic strategies across nations. Nevertheless, numerous countries have begun to challenge this reliance on the dollar. The drive towards de-dollarization arises from a combina- could offer a pathway to sta-

dependence on the dollar.

tion of elements: an increasbilise prices for traded goods through a singular global ing yearning for financial independence, the unpre-dictability of US policies, currency unit.

Countries that rely on and the necessity for a differimporting oil or other essenent system that is more tial items ought to engage in resilient against sanctions and market instability. negotiations for fixed prices, free from the influence of Several nations, particularly market fluctuations driven by those within economic the volatility of the dollar alliances like BRICS (Brazil, rate. Inflation, frequently Russia, India, China, and influenced by fluctuations South Africa), have put forth the concept of establishing a in local currency, could, in principle, be mitigated withnew shared currency to facilin a cohesive framework. itate trade and lessen their The reasoning is straightforward: when trade and pricing Undoubtedly, a significant appeal of a unified currency frameworks are synchronised with a single currency, fluclies in its potential to mitigate tuations in the dollar will inflation. By minimising the likely exert a diminished volatility of exchange rates impact from external shocks. and reducing reliance on Having more stable prices for fluctuations in the dollar, it essential items would alleviate the financial strain on



them to provide savings to

Nevertheless, the transition

to a unified currency faces

several challenges. A cohesive

monetary system requires

customers.

families. A unified currency could simplify many aspects their of daily life for the average person. Crossing border lines may appear quite effortless, as there will be no need for currency exchange. Global enterprises will thrive in an exceptional coordination among countries with diverse environment where stable economic priorities, growth financial conditions enable rates, and fiscal strategies.

Creating confidence and setting up governance frame-works for the currency would present a significant challenge.

currency could unfairly benefit more robust economies, putting smaller or developing countries at risk. Without the ability to modify their currency values, nations may find it challenging to address specific economic crises effectively. In the immediate term, this may unsettle global financial systems, leading to instability as markets adjust. Although the dollar's strength might not be flawless, it serves as a stabilising force in a tumultuous global economy. The ideas of de-dollarisadaring approaches to addressing enduring eco-nomic challenges. The outcome of lower inflation and an improved quality of life hinges on the ability of nations to collaborate effectively and create frameworks that prioritise fairness and stability. However, the journey towards this transformation is set to be long and complex. The discussions it has ignited suggest a more equitable economic future. Whether they evolve into genuine transformation is something only time will reveal-or if the world navigates towards fresh financial horizons is yet to be determine.

(The writer is a freelance tion and the potential rise of writer; views are personal)

Critics contend that a unified

world 08

martial law enactment

Yoon has claimed he wasn't try

ing to stop the functioning of

the assembly, saying that the

troops were sent to maintain order, and also denied planning

to arrest politicians. But com-



officers into Seoul streets.

with North Korea.

him.

determine whether to dismiss

Yoon as president or reinstate

Experts said Yoon is likely to

ignore the warrants. He's ignored repeated requests by

South Korean court issues warrants to detain impeached President Yoon, search his office

South Korean court issued warrants on Tuesday to detain impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol and search his office and residence over his short-lived

declaration of martial law. The country's anti-corruption agency said it is investigating whether his declaration amounted to rebellion. But experts still say there is little chance of detention or searches unless Yoon is formally removed from office.

The Seoul Western District Court issued warrants to detain Yoon and to search the presidential office and residence in central Seoul, according to a statement from the Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials, which is leading a joint investigation with police and military authorities.

Under South Korean law, the presidential security service has blocked attempts to search leader of a rebellion can face the death penalty or life imprishis office and residence citing onment if convicted. Yoon has a law that bans raids on sites presidential immunity from with state secrets. A lawyer for Yoon rejected the most criminal prosecution, but the privilege does not extend to anti-corruption agency's allegations of rebellion or trearequest for warrants on

Yoon's powers have been sus-

pended since the opposition-controlled National Assembly lion charges.

The anti-corruption agency said it has no immediate plans voted to impeach him on December 14 over his imposion how to proceed with the tion of martial law, which drew warrants.

"Unless Yoon voluntarily lets hundreds of troops and police them detain him, there is no way to detain him," said Choi Yoon has argued his decree was a legitimate act of governance, Jin, director of the Seoul-based Institute of Presidential Leadership. "Should investicalling it a warning to the main liberal opposition gators have hand-to-hand Democratic Party, which he has called "a monster" and "antifights with the security serstate forces" that has used its vice?

Choi said that investigators were still likely to visit Yoon's legislative majority to impeach top officials, undermine the residence to show they are government's budget, and strictly and fairly carrying out which he claims sympathises their work. The Constitutional Court is to

Park Sung-min, president of Seoul-based political consult-ing firm MIN Consulting, said the push for an arrest warrant is likely an attempt to pressure Yoon to cooperate with investigations.

Former President Park Geuninvestigative authorities to appear for questioning, and the hye, who was thrown out of office in 2017 following an impeachment over a corrup tion scandal, also refused to meet with prosecutors while in office. She underwent questioning by them and was arrested after the Constitutional Court removed her from office. Monday, arguing it lacked legal Yoon's imposition of martial authority to investigate rebellaw lasted only six hours but

industry's need to hire foreign

"Anyone - of any race, creed or

nationality - who came to

America and worked like hell

to contribute to this country

will forever have my respect

America is the land of freedom

and opportunity. Fight with

every fibre of your being to keep it that way!" he wrote on

Musk's statement also received

X on December 28.

workers.



Supporters of impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol stage a rally near the presidential residence in Seoul. South Korea. The letters read 'Oppose Impeachment', and 'Arrest Lee Jae-myung'. AP/PTI

triggered huge political turmoil, halting high-level diplomacy and rattling financial markets.

Despite Yoon's deployment of assembly chamber to overturn troops and police, enough lawmakers managed to enter the

it unanimously. Yoon's defence minister, police

chief and several top military commanders have already been arrested over their roles in the ments by now-arrested commanders of military units sent to the assembly have contradicted this claim. Kwak Jongkeun, the commander of the Army Special Warfare Command, testified at the National Assembly that Yoon called on troops to "quickly knock down the door and drag out the lawmakers who are inside". Kwak said he did not carry out Yoon's orders. The country's political crisis

deepened last Friday, when the Democratic Party and other small opposition parties voted to impeach acting President Han Duck-soo as well over wrangling over his refusal to fill in three justice seats at the Constitutional Court. Observers say adding more justices could affect the court's ruling on Yoon's impeachment

The deputy prime minister and finance minister, Choi Sang-mok, has become South Korea's new interim leader

healthcare in north-west

Elon Musk softens stand on H-1B visa programme, calls for 'major reforms'

PTI WASHINGTON

After vowing to "go to war" Ato defend the H-1B visa $% \left({{{\rm{T}}_{{\rm{T}}}} \right) = {{\rm{T}}_{{\rm{T}}}} \right)$ programme, tech billionaire Elon Musk has softened his stand on the issue by calling for reforms in the "broken" system used to bring skilled foreign workers to the US.

Musk, along with Indian-American tech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, has been tapped by Trump to lead his Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). Last week, Musk argued that foreign workers were needed for tech companies like Musk's SpaceX and Tesla

"The reason I'm in America along with so many critical people who built SpaceX, Tesla and hundreds of other companies that made America strong is because of H-1B," Musk last

week wrote on X.

Musk, however, appeared to retract his earlier statement in response to a post by an X user who said America needed to be a destination for the world's most "elite talent" but argued the current H-1B system was the US. not the solution. Musk, who was once on an H-1B visa and whose electric

'Easily fixed by raising the minimum salary significantly and adding a yearly cost for maintaining the H-1B, making it materially more expensive to hire from overseas than domestically. I've been very clear that the programme is broken and needs major reform," Musk on Sunday said in a post on X.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

Technology companies depend backing from president-elect on it to hire tens of thousands Donald Trump whose first of employees each year from administration restricted the countries like India and China. programme in 2020, arguing The tech industry has long called for more H-1B visas to that it allows businesses to replace Americans with lowerattract highly skilled workers to paid foreign workers. However, Trump recently said:

'I've always liked the visas, I have always been in favour of the visas. That's why we have vehicle company Tesla has hired workers using the pro-gramme, defended the tech them?

Musk has been consistently posting on X in favour of the programme.

There is a permanent shortage of excellent engineering talent. It is the fundamental limiting factor in Silicon Valley," Musk wrote on December 25 on X. Several of Trump's supporters and immigration hardliners have been increasingly pushing for scrapping the H-1B visa programme amid debate over immigration.

ommunity leaders, cam-Cpaigners, academics and medics are among over 30 Indian-origin professionals to be recognised in King Charles' 2025 New Year Honours List released in London in time for New Year's Eve.

Ranil Malcolm Jayawardena, a Conservative member of Parliament of Sri Lankan and Indian heritage, has been con-ferred a Knighthood for political and public service along with recently resigned England men's football team manager Gareth Southgate, for services to the game.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan and former West Midlands Mayor Andy Street are also among those receiving Knighthoods among more than 1,200 recipients on the 2025 honours list released on

Indian-origin 'unsung heroes' on King Charles' 2025 New Year Honours List

PTI 📕 LONDON

untary service.

tors, with particular commendation to role models in sport, healthcare, academia and vol-

"Every day, ordinary people go out and do extraordinary things for their communities," UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said.

Monday night across all sec-

They represent the very best of the UK and that core value of service which I put at the centre of everything this government does. The New Year Honours List celebrates more of these unsung heroes, and I thank them for their incredible contribution," he said.

The list, released annually by the Cabinet Office in the name of the British monarch, includes Commanders of the Order of the British Empire (CBEs) for Satwant Kaur Deol for services to further education, Charles Pritam Singh

Dhanowa OBE for services to Competition Law, and surgeon Professor Sneh Khemka for services to healthcare, science and innovation and tech-

Others of Indian heritage receiving CBEs include Leena Nair, Global Chief Executive Officer of Chanel, for services to the retail and consumer sector; Mayank Prakash, President of the British Computing Society, for services to the advancement of technology professionals; and Purnima Murthy Tanuku OBE, chief executive of the National Day Nurseries Association, for services to early years education.

Among the 2025 Indian-origin Officers of the Order of the British Empire (OBEs) include cardiologist Professor Sanjay Arya for services to black and minority ethnic doctors and order.

England; Nandini Das, Professor of Early Modern Literature and Culture and Tutorial Fellow at Exeter College, University of Oxford, for services to interdisciplinary research in the humanities and to public engagement; Tarsem Singh Dhaliwal, CEO of Iceland Foods, for services to the Welsh economy, retail and charity; Jasmine Dotiwala for services to broadcasting, music, equality, diversity and inclusion; Monica Kohli, President of Women's International Shipping and Trading Association UK and Chair of the Indian Maritime Association UK, for services to promoting diversity in the maritime industry; and Soumya Majumdar from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for services to law and

Bangladesh's interim govt to announce 'proclamation of July uprising'

be based on the views of

dence, Alam said the declaration Tuesday afternoon at Dhaka's people and exactly how we want The party won 160 of the 162 The platform leader said the proclamation was expected to Pakistan. declare "irrelevant" the deposed premier's "Nazi Awami League" in Bangladesh as well.

PTI DHAKA

The interim government in

Yunus' official Jamuna resi- mation of the July uprising on destroyed the aspirations of the ing an absolute majority.

Central

nology.

workstations, documents: US Treasury

Chinese hackers remotely accessed

AP WASHINGTON

hinese hackers remotely ⊿accessed several US Treasury Department workstations and unclassified documents after compromising a third-party software service provider, the agency said on Monday.

The department did not provide details on how many workstations had been accessed or what sort of documents the hackers may have obtained, but it said in a letter to lawmakers revealing the breach that "at this time there is no evidence indicating the threat actor has continued access to Treasury information".

The hack was being investigated as a "major cybersecurity incident", it added. 'Treasury takes very seriously all threats against our systems, and the data it a department holds," spokesperson said in a sepa-

rate statement. "Over the last four years Treasury has significantly bolstered its cyber defence, and we will continue to work with both private and public sector partners to protect our financial system from threat actors." In Beijing, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson gave China's standard response to hacking allegations.

"We have repeatedly stated our position on such groundless accusations that lack evidence, Mao Ning said at a daily brief ing. "China consistently opposes all forms of hacking, and we are even more opposed to the dissemination of false information against China for political

purposes? The incident comes as US officials are continuing to grapple with the fallout of a massive Chinese cyberespionage cam-paign known as Salt Typhoon that gave officials in Beijing access to private texts and phone conversations of an unknown number of Americans.

▲ Bangladesh has announced that it will prepare a "proclamation of July uprising", a day after it distanced itself from a proposed declaration with an identical title by the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement that led to the ouster of then-prime minister Sheikh Hasina four months ago.

"We hope within few days the proclamation will be prepared with the participation and consensus of all and presented before the nation," Shafiqul Alam, Press Secretary to the chief adviser of the interim government of Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus, said in a midnight press conference on Monday.

Addressing reporters in front of

all participating students, political parties, and stakeholders, including the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement that led to the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League regime on August 5.

Alam said the government took the initiative to prepare the proposed charter to "consolidate the people's unity, anti-fascist spirit and desire for state reform developed through the July uprising". The Anti-Discrimination

Students Movement along with National Citizens the Committee, another grouping led by the students, two days ago in a surprise development said it would announce the procla-

However, the students' platform hurriedly called an emergency meeting around 1:30 a.m. on Tuesday and told the media that instead of the proclamation they would rather stage a "march for unity" at the same venue and time.

'The Mujibist '72 constitution will be buried (in the proclamation) in the very place where the one-point declaration was made during the July uprising," the platform's convener Hasnat Abdullah told a press conference on December 29.

Abdullah at that time said that "Indian aggression was initiated through the principles of the 1972 constitution (and) the proclamation will make it clear how the Mujibist constitution

"We believe the way our revolution was embraced by all antifascists, this proclamation will also contain everyone's hopes and aspirations," said Sariis Alam, anti-discrimination students' movement leader and National Citizens' Committee chief organiser. The 1972 constitution was framed a year after the emergence of independent Bangladesh by representatives elected in the 1970 elections in line with their "mandate" as "constitute assembly" members with Awami League under

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gain-

women's seats in then-East

However, Pakistan's then-military junta under General Yahya Khan eventually launched a sudden army crackdown leading to the Liberation War.

The interim government visibly distanced itself from the "proclamation" with Yunus' press secretary saying "the government has nothing to do with it" and "wants to see it (proclamation) as 'private initiative."

Awami League has not been seen in the public sphere since the August 5 ouster of the regime as many of its leaders have been arrested or are on the run at home and abroad, limiting their activities on social media platforms occasionally.

Cities welcome New Year in celebrations tinged with local traditions

AP WELLINGTON

Tities around the world are ready-Cing to ring in the New Year with celebrations highlighting local cultures and traditions, after a year roiled by ongoing conflict and political instability.

Countries in the South Pacific Ocean will be the first to welcome 2025, with midnight in New Zealand striking 18 hours before the ball drop in Times Square in New York.

In New Zealand's largest city, Auckland, thousands were expected to throng the downtown or climb the city's ring of volcanic peaks for a fireworks vantage point and a light display recognizing Auckland's Indigenous tribes. It follows a year marked by protests over Maori rights in the nation of 5 million.

Two hours later in Australia, more than 1 million people are expected at Sydney Harbor for the traditional fireworks. British pop star Robbie Williams will lead a singalong and Indigenous ceremonies and performances will acknowledge the land's first people.

Snake: Much of Japan has shut down ahead of the nation's biggest holiday, as temples and homes underwent a thorough cleaning, including swatting floor mats called "tatami" with big sticks.

The upcoming Year of the Snake in the Asian zodiac is heralded as one of rebirth — alluding to the reptile's shedding skin.

Stores in Japan, which observes the zodiac cycle from January 1, have been selling tiny figures of smiling snakes and other snake-themed products. Other places in Asia will start marking the Year of the Snake

later, with the Lunar New Year. In South Korea, celebrations were cut back or cancelled as the country observes a period of national mourning following the Sunday crash of a Jeju Air flight at Muan that killed 179 people.

West's rivals exchange goodwill: Chinese state media covered an exchange of New Year's greetings between leader Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin in a reminder of growing closeness between two leaders who face tensions with the west.

Xi told Putin that their countries will "always move forward hand in Asia gets ready for the Year of the hand", the official Xinhua News

Agency said Tuesday. China has maintained ties and a robust trade with Russia since the latter's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, helping to offset Western sanctions and attempts to isolate Putin. Midnight Mass, with bubbles: Rome's tradi-

tional New Year's Eve festivities have an additional draw: the start of Pope Francis' Holy Year, the once every quarter-century celebration projected to bring some 32 mil-

lion pilgrims to the Eternal City in 2025

On Tuesday, Francis will celebrate a vespers at St. Peter's Basilica, followed by Mass on Wednesday, when he is expected to once again appeal for peace amid wars raging in Ukraine and the Middle East. Meanwhile, in the United States, the Cathedral of Saint Paul in Minnesota will host an 11 p.m. Mass followed by a champagne reception with toasts. January 1 is a day of obligation for Catholics, marking the Solemnity of Mary, and many churches will hold vigil Masses on Tuesday afternoon and evening. Paris recaptures the Olympic spirit: Paris will cap a momentous 2024 with its traditional festive countdown and fireworks extravaganza on the famed Champs-Elvsées.

The Summer Olympics and Paralympic Games hosted in the French capital from July to September transformed the city into a site of joy, fraternity and astonishing sporting achievements, and marked another major mile-

stone in its recovery from deadly Islamist extremist attacks in 2015

Britons will brave wintry weather: London is due to ring in the New Year with a pyrotechnic display along the River Thames and a parade through the city centre on Wednesday featuring 10,000 performers. The fireworks will explode against the backdrop of the London Eye, the massive Ferris

wheel across the river from Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament.

With a storm bringing bitter weather to other parts of the United Kingdom, however, festivities in Edinburgh, Scotland including the Hogmanay Street party, garden concert and castle pyrotechnics show — were already cancelled.

Rio to see 2 million revellers: Rio de Janeiro will throw Brazil's main New Year's Eve bash on Copacabana Beach, with 10 ferries offshore bearing 12 straight minutes of fireworks. Thousands of tourists in six cruise ships will witness the show up close.

Rio's City Hall was closely guard-ing its plans for a display of lights and sounds. More than 2 million people are expected at the Copacabana, hoping to squeeze in to concerts by superstar Brazilian artists such as pop singer Anitta and Grammy-award winner Caetano Veloso.

American traditions old and new: In New York City, the organization managing Times Square has tested its famous ball drop, and inspected 2025 numerals, lights and thousands of crystals, as part of a tradition going back to 1907. This year's celebration will include musical performances by TLC, Jonas Brothers, Rita Ora, and Sophie Ellis-Bextor.

The party, covering multiple blocks around the city's main tourism and theatre hub, is expected to draw large crowds despite rain and chilly weather.

Meanwhile, Las Vegas will bid farewell to 2024 with old — and some new - traditions. Its annual eight-minute pyrotechnic show will be on in the Las Vegas Strip, with 340,000 people anticipated as

fireworks are launched from the rooftops of nine casinos.

Nearby, the massive Sphere venue will display for the first time countdowns to midnight in different time zones.

Country music, football and a midnight race: In Pasadena, enthusiastic Rose Parade spectators were to camp out on the cold streets and ring in the New Year hoping for prime spots for the iconic Southern California tradition. The parade precedes the Rose Bowl football game between the Ohio State Buckeyes and the

Oregon Ducks on January 1. Thousands are to participate in a midnight 5K race following the parade route.

Some 200,000 people will flock to a party in Nashville, Tennessee, featuring a five-hour show by some of country music's biggest stars. At midnight — an hour after New York's — a 16-feet tall music note weighing 400 pounds will drop as

fireworks light the sky. Celebrations will echo around the globe as the New Year arrives in different time zones, with American Samoa among the last to welcome 2025 a full 24 hours after New Zealand.





US, Boeing investigators examine site Russian missiles, drones attack on Ukrainian targets of deadly South Korean plane crash AP KYIV Russia launched an aerial attack on Ukraine on

AP SEOUL

team of US investigators Ateam of commentatives from Boeing have examined the site of a plane crash that killed 179 people in South Korea while authorities were conducting safety inspections on all Boeing 737-800 aircraft operated by the country's airlines

All but two of the 181 people aboard the Boeing 737-800 operated by South Korean budget airline Jeju Air died in Sunday's crash. Video showed the aircraft, without its landing gear deployed, crash-landed on its belly and overshoot a runaway at South Korea's southern Muan International Airport before it slammed into concrete fence and burst into a flame

The plane was seen having an engine trouble, and preliminary examinations also say the pilots received a bird strike warning from the ground control centre and issued a distress signal as well. But many experts say the landing gear issue was likely the main cause of the crash. The South Korean government has launched safety inspections on all the 101 Boeing 737-800s in the country. The Transport Ministry said authorities are looking at maintenance and operation records during five days of safety checks that are to run until

Friday. The ministry said that a delegation of eight US investigators one from the Federal Aviation Administration, three from National Transportation Safety Board and four from Boeing — made an on-site visit to the crash site on Tuesday. The results of their examination weren't immediately available.

Kim E-bae, Jeju Air's president, told reporters Tuesday that his company will add more maintenance workers and reduce flight operations by 10-15 per cent until March as part of efforts to enhance the safety of



sionally do overshoot runways

barrier over there was really

very bad luck for this particu-

South Korean officials have

said they will look into whether

the Muan airport's localiser –

a concrete fence housing a set

of antennas designed to guide

aircraft safely during landings

with lighter materials that

would break more easily upon

The crash was the deadliest dis-

aster in South Korea's aviation

history in decades. A seven-day

national mourning has been

should have been made

lar airplane," he said

impact.

"Having such a big concrete

aircraft operations.

John Hansman, an aviation expert at MIT, said the crash was most likely the result of a problem with the plane's hydraulic control systems. He said that would be consistent with the landing gear and wing flaps not being deployed "and might indicate a control issue which would explain the rush to get on the ground". The Boeing 737-800 — an ear-

lier version of 737 than the Max — is a widely used plane with a good safety record, according to Najmedin Meshkati, an engineering professor at the University of Southern California who has studied aviation safety.

He said the failure of the plane's system for broadcasting location, operating its landing gear and extending the wing flaps to slow down indicate a wide-spread problem that affected electrical and hydraulic systems. He is confident that investigators will learn what went wrong by analysing information from the flight data and cockpit voice recorders. These are really the two pillars for accident analysis and acci-

dent reconstruction," Meshkati said. Like other aviation experts, Meshkati also questioned the location of a solid wall just a few hundred feet (metres) past the end of the runway, given that planes occaand other regions with multiple missiles and drones. Ukraine's air force reported a ballistic missile threat at 3:00

a.m. (0100 GMT), with at least two explosions heard in Kyiv minutes later. Another missile alert was issued at 8:00 a.m. followed by at least one explosion in the city. Missile debris fell in the Darnytskyi district of the capital with no reports of casualties or damage, the local administration said.

Tuesday, striking the capital

Authorities in the northeastern Sumy region reported strikes near the city of Shostka, where the mayor, Mykola Noha, said 12 residential buildings had been damaged as well as two educational facilities. He said some "social infrastructure objects" were destroyed, without providing detail.

The air force also reported missiles and drones targeting several other regions of Ukraine

Around half of Ukraine's energy infrastructure has been destroyed during the war, and rolling electricity blackouts are common and widespread.

Kyiv's Western allies have provided air defense systems to help Ukraine protect critical infrastructure, but Russia has



A Ukrainian serviceman cries upon seeing his daughter after returning from captivity during a POWs exchange between Russia and Ukraine, in Ukraine AP/PT

throughout the year.

western Russia,

depot, sparking a blaze.

Tuesday.

Early Tuesday, Russia's Defence

Ministry said that air defences

shot down 68 Ukrainian drones

over several regions early

Head of the Smolensk region in

Anokhin, said drone fragments

fell on the territory of an oil

In Russia-occupied Crimea,

the Moscow-appointed head of

Vasily

sought to overwhelm its air defences with combined strikes involving large numbers of missiles and drones Russian attacks come as uncer-

tainty looms over the course of the nearly three-year conflict. US President-elect Donald Trump, who takes office next month, has vowed to end the war and has thrown into doubt whether vital US military support for Kyiv will continue.

On Monday, President Joe Biden announced that the United States will send an additional USD billion in weapons to Ukraine as his administration works quickly to spend all the money it has available to help Kyiv fight off Russia before Trump takes office.

Ukraine has struck back at Russia with a steady barrage of missile and drone attacks

the city of Sevastopol, Mikhail Razvozhayev, said that Russian defenses downed four aerial drones attacking the city and sank two uncrewed boats near the shore

world 09

Meanwhile, Ukraine's Military Intelligence Directorate, known under its acronym GUR, claimed that one of its naval drones on Tuesday shot down a Russian helicopter with a missile, marking the first time when an aerial target was destroyed by an uncrewed vessel.

It said a MaguraV5 naval drone downed a Russian Mi-8 helicopter with an R-73 missile near Cape Tarkhankut, the westernmost point of Crimean peninsula. Another Russian helicopter was damaged but managed to reach an airfield, GUR said.

Russia has held the initiative this year as its military has steadily rammed through Ukrainian defences in the east in a series of slow but steady offensives.

Still, in August, Ukraine launched a raid into Russia's Kursk region that caught Moscow by surprise, dealing a significant blow to the Kremlin's prestige. The Russian army has been able to reclaim some territory of the area there from Ukrainian forces but has failed to fully dislodge them.

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China Russia ties advancing to higher levels, says President X

PTI BEIJING

hina and Russia are mov-Uing forward hand in hand along the "right path" of nonalliance, non-confrontation and have advancing towards "higher levels," Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday in his New Year message to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin. Xi and Putin exchanged New Year greetings highlighting their burgeoning strategic ties in recent years. "In the face of the accelerated transformation unseen in a century and a volatile international landscape, China and Russia always move forward hand in hand along the right path of non-alliance, non-confrontation, and not targeting any third party," Xi said in the message Putin in his message said both countries have advanced the Russia-China comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era to new heights.

orderly manner, the Russian national and regional issu president according to China's state-run Xinhua news agency. Both leaders exchanged greet-

President-

technology is progressing in an eral relations and major i

common concern. "The political mutual trus strategic coordination bet ings ahead of the January 20 the two sides have ect advancing towar under the strategic guidance of the two leaders," Xi said. Putin in his message said looking ahead to 2025, he stands ready to maintain close communication with Xi to jointly promote the development of bilateral relations and cooperation in various fields, and further strengthen coordination and cooperation on multilateral platforms such as the United Nations, BRICS, the SCO and the G20.

itenance of to its stak holders by creating a platform where chosen processes of BBSSL can be automated Interested Agencies must submit their EOI in sealed envelop by not later than 15:00 hours (IST) on 10th January, 2025. The consultancy firm/organization shortlisted based on this REOI and ToR will be eligible to submit Request for Proposal (RFP) upon request Managing Director Bharatiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited (BBSSL)

The mutually beneficial cooperation between China's and Russia's economy, trade, energy, transportation, science, and

Pak govt, Imran's PTI to meet to resolve political differences

Khan.

PTI ISLAMABAD

The Pakistan government and opposition Pakistan Tehreeke-Insaf (PTI) negotiators are scheduled to meet for a crucial in-camera meeting to resolve sticky political differences, a report said on Tuesday.

The meeting on Thursday has been called by National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq who has been facilitating the talks between the two sides.

The Express Tribune reported the meeting will take place at Parliament House at 11 a.m. and is expected to build on the discussions that began on December 23. Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan founded PTI, following internal consultations, is set to present two key demands in writing during the upcoming session.

(MWM) leader Allama Raja These demands include the for-Nasir Abbas.

Donald Trump who threatened to impose punitive tariffs on Chinese exports to the US besides hardening American policy towards China and hinted at a strategic shift of warming up to Putin to end the Ukraine war.

aring_in of

Since taking power in 2012, Xi has elevated China's ties with Russia to a higher level as part of Beijing's efforts to build strategic alliances to ward off increasing adversity towards China in the US and EU countries

China followed a guarded policy as it refused to condemn Moscow over Russia's war in Ukraine even while maintaining ties with Kyiy. In his message to Putin, Xi

recalled their meetings in the last three years in Beijing, Astana, and Kazan apart from their periodic communication through phone calls, exchanges of letters, and other means to reach broad consensus on bilat-

mation of a judicial commission

to investigate the violent events

of May 9, 2023, and the

November 26 crackdown on

PTI workers in Islamabad, as well

as the release of all political pris-

oners, including 72-year-old

Assembly Speaker and PTI leader

Asad Qaiser reiterated these

demands and said the party was

firm on the need for a commis-

sion to investigate the May 9 and

November 26 incidents. He also

stressed the need for Khan's

release. The first round of talks

on December 23 was described

as positive, with both sides agree-

Representing the PTI in the pre-

vious meeting were Qaiser, Sunni

Ittehad Council (SIC) Chairman

Sahibzada Hamid Raza, and

Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen

ing to continue the dialogue.

Former National

PUBLIC NOTICE My client Mr. Tarun Goyal, Ms. Sneha Goyal and Miss. Pakhi Goyal owner of Freehold Residential Building, Total area measuring 155.54 sq. yards i.e. 138.41 sq. meter, Total Covered area 415.23 sq. meter, put of Kiasra no. 1531H. situated at Village Dankaur Dehat (Dankaur Inner Town Area), Mohalla Prempuri, Town and Pargana-Dankaur, Hohsl and District Gautam Budh Nagar. U.P., Hrough Registered Gift Deed Dated 22.07.2024 executed by Smt. Shyam Lata Devi W/o Late Sh. Ved Prakash. Vide Reg. no.2215.04 St.S-Sadar Greater Nida, Gautam Budh Nagar, the above-mentioned property is going to be mortgage with Fedbank Financial Services Limited. If any person/bank/financial institution having any claim /right, lien, Any objection whatsoever in regard to the above property, should notified to the undersigned / Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713. Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092 along with documentary evidence under address through registered within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which any claim, lien or objection shall be deemed to have been waived **Adv. Vishal Mehan**, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092; Mob.: 9811215181 PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that Surendr Mohan Sharma claims to be owner and in possession of First Floor, Prop No. 4, Raj Block, Naveen Shahdara, Shahdara Delhi 32 (herein after called the said property) by virtue of Sale Deed Dated 10.06.2013 regd. vide Doc No. 2901 r/w Relinquishment Deed executed by Kirar Issar, Suman Sharma and Archana Thapar in favor of Surendra Mohan Sharma (legal Heirs of Murari La 31/12/2024 before Notary Sharma) Regd vide doc. No. 2024/23/I/

8999 & said Surendra Mohan Sharma has agreed to sell the said Property to Nama Aggarwal & said Naman Aggarwal agreed create a mortgage in favour of our clients IDFC First Bank Ltd, ITO Branch, any

person/s having claim against the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, lien o otherwise howsoever, are hereby intimated to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7days from the date hereof, failing which the clair or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof Vishal Diwan (Advocate For Diwan and Company LLP House No.2 (LGF), NRI Complex, N.D-19

Mobile No. 9818399999

डिलिजेंट बिल्डर्स प्राइवेट लिमिटेड (अंतरिक्ष वैली) 34/C-8, सेक्टर-8, रोहिणी, नई दिल्ली, 110085

पब्लिक नोटिस

यह सूचित किया जाता है कि डिलिजेंट बिल्डर्स प्राइवेट लिमिटेड (अंतरिक्ष वैली) द्वारा बनाए गए आवासीय परिसर में निम्नलिखित यूनिट/फ्लैट का आरक्षण/बुकिंग निर्धारित भुगतान न करने और संपर्क में न रहने के कारण रद्द कर दिया गया है:

ग्राहकों के नाम

1- श्री नितिन उपाध्याय पुत्र - पीO एनO उपाध्याय यूनिट -B -2009 2- श्रीमती नीतू कुमारी पत्नी - मनीष कुमार यूनिट - B- 708 3- श्री वसीकुर रहमान पुत्र - श्री ख़लीकुर रहमान यूनिट - B 1201B

डिलिजेंट बिल्डर्स प्राइवेट लिमिटेड ने उपर्युक्त ग्राहकों से संपर्क करने के लिए सभी प्रयास किए हैं, लेकिन वे ग्राहकों से संपर्क स्थापित करने में असफल रहे इस कारणवश, यह नोटिस सार्वजनिक किया जा रहा है। उपर्युक्त बुकिंग रद्द होने पर संबंधित व्यक्ति या पार्टी के लिए कोई दावा या कानूनी अधिकार नहीं होगा। सभी ग्राहकों से निवेदन है कि वे अपने द्वारा जमा की गई राशि को डिलिजेंट बिल्डर्स प्राइवेट लिमिटेड से 15 दिन के अंदर प्राप्त करें। आपका ध्यान आकर्षित करने के लिए धन्यवाद।

डिलिजेंट बिल्डर्स प्राइवेट लिमिटेड (अंतरिक्ष वैली) 34/C-8, सेक्टर-8, रोहिणी, नई दिल्ली, 110085

Public Delhi.

Public Delhi.

purposes.

information

accordingly.

SREENIVASULU K

that

Parkash Chachra, No. of Shares : 264 Distinctive Nos. From / To : 308308726 308308989 Certificate Nos. From / To PD(1181)C I, Gaurav S/o- JC-303758P 1125553/1125553 Sub(DMT) Raj Kumar, R/o-Vill-Date : 1/1/2025 Bagpur PO- Sahpau, Teh-Place : New Delhi Sadabad, Dist- Hathras, U.P.-ELECTRICAL GENERAL 281307, have changed my WORKS IN KATIHAR DIVISIO name from Gaurav to Gaurav Kumar, vide affidavit dated

PD(1183)C

I, hitherto known as Arora

175, 3rd Floor, Ambika Vihar,

Paschim Vihar, West Delhi,

known as Prabhjot Singh.

Tender Notice No: EL_GEN_25_24-2 Dated: 27-12-2024; E-Tender are invitby the undersigned for the following wor Name of Wok : Electrical General wo PD(1182)C in connection with "At New Jalpaigur I, JC-356836H Nb/Sub Vitthal Construction of one coach length sick Lin 2 coach Holding (Extention-1)". Appro Eknath Dange R/o- At- Nele, Value: ₹67,12,799.31/-; Earnest Mone Post- Kidagaon, Teh+Dist-₹1,34,300/-; Last Date & time for closi Satara, Maharashtra- 415015, of tender at 15:00 hrs and opening at 15:3 have changed my daughter's hrs. on 28-01-2025. For comple name from Shradha Vitthal information with the tender document above e-tender will be available upto 15:0 Dange to Shraddha Vitthal hrs. on 28-01-2025 in the websi Dange, vide affidavit dated www.ireps.gov.in 31/12/2024 before Notary

Sr. DEE/TRD, Katih INORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILW Serving C

Name of Shareholder(s

Rachna Mehta

PUBLIC NOTICE

Prabhjot S/o- Iqbal Singh, R/ot is to inform to the public at large that Mrs. B nad acquired Double Storey Built-up Property NW/198-A, area measuring 25 sq. yrds., Kha No. 3/17, situated in the area of Vill, Khyala, col Delhi- 110087, have changed IGPA Dt. 24.05.2011 along with Ars a key of the said of the second of the second of the second of the said property of the said propert my name and shall hereafter be OR

PD(1184)C Anv person / firm / institution / company hav any claim or right in respect of the said Property way of inheritance, share, sale, agreement, lea license, gift, possession, legal heirs, partners I, Ajay Dubey S/o Dinesh Chandra Dubey R/o B/1606, encumbrance howsoever or otherwise is her Apex The Florus, Sector-18, required to intimate in writing to the undersig within 07 days from the date of publication of 1 notice of his/her/their share or claim, if any, with supporting documents at below mention address. After expiration of notice period, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad (U.P) have changed my daughter's name from Arshi Dubey to claims, if any, of such person shall be treated and void and also treated as waived and indig on our client. Aarshi Dubey for all future Ajay Kumar Giri (Advocate) H.No. 26/161, Basem Vikram Vihar, Lajpat Nagar 4, New Delhi -1100

PD(1179)A

PUBLIC NOTICE It is for general public Manpreet Kaur D/o Dalje Ι, ingh R/o 61A, Ground Flo alias Pocket-B, Hari Nagar, New Dell 110064, has severed all relation KADIYALA SREENIVASULU S/0 ANJAPPA K born on 21 July with my brother, Avinder Sing S/o Daljeet Singh, having h Aadhar No. 5640-9087-0448 & r 1981, R/o 146/801, SEKHON VIHAR PALAM, DELHI CANTT, sister-in-law, Japmeet Kaur having NEW DELHI-110010 inform her Aadhar No.5044-9283-469 with immediate effect. I decla that I have changed my name that Avinder Singh and Japme from SREENIVASULU K to Kaur have been disowned an KADIYALA SREENIVASULU debarred from my movab vide affidavit dt 31 Dec 24, and immovable properties. The have no rights, claims, or intere which may be amended in my properties, under a circumstances. Any person deali with them shall do so at hi PD(1180)A her own risk and responsibility.

	RELEVAN	IT PARTICULARS				
1.	Name of the corporate debtor	HI TECH FERROUS & N	ION FERROUS INDIA			
	along with PAN & CIN/ LLP No.	PRIVATE LIMITED				
		CIN: U28112UP2009PTC037895 PAN: AACCH2609D 106, Chander Puri Ghaziabad-201001, Uttar				
2.	Address of the registered office					
2.	Address of the registered office	Pradesh				
	URL of website	https://hitechwires.com	des			
	Details of place where majority of fixed assets are located	The Corporate Debtor has two factories at- 1. Bawal, Haryana and 2. Murad Nagar, Ghaziabad				
	lixeu assels ale localeu					
5.	Installed capacity of main	Not known as the suspe				
	products/ services	not yet provided the rec				
	Quantity and value of main products/ services sold in last financial year	Not known as the suspended management has not yet provided the records to the RP.				
	Number of employees/ workmen	NIL (Except those hired	by RP for CIRP)			
8.	Further details including last	Last available Balance S	Sheet as per ROC is fo			
	available financial statements (with schedules) of two years,	the FY 2021-22. Further details have not been provided by the suspended management.				
	lists of creditors are available at		ava managoment.			
	URL:		I			
	Eligibility for resolution applicants under section 25(2)(h) of the	Parameters Refundable Earnest	Eligibility			
	Code is available at URL:	Money Deposit (non-	Rs. 2,00,000 (Throug Demand Draft) along			
		interest bearing)	with Expression of			
		along with	Interest			
		Resolution Plan	Rs. 50,00,000 (Through Demand			
			Draft) along with			
		T 110 M 111 11	Resolution Plan			
10	Land data dan sanat di Karala	Tangible Net Worth	Rs. 3,00,00,000			
	Last date for receipt of expression of interest	21.01.2025				
	Date of issue of provisional list of	31.01.2025				
	prospective resolution applicants					
	Last date for submission of objections to provisional list	05.02.2025				
	Date of issue of final list of	15.02.2025				
	prospective resolution applicants					
	Date of issue of information	20.02.2025				
	prospective resolution applicants					
	Last date for submission of	22.03.2025				
		cim_hitach@officavindi	3.000			
	Expression of Interest					
	P	not be entertained.	,			
14. 15. 16. Date:	Date of issue of information memorandum, evaluation matrix and request for resolution plans to prospective resolution applicants Last date for submission of resolution plans Process email id to submit Expression of Interest 31 December, 2024 : New Delhi	22.03.2025 <u>cirp-httech@efficaxindia.com</u> Note: Communication to any other email ID shall				



vious close.

Rupee falls 13 paise to all-time closing low of 85.65 against US dollar

PTI MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated 13 L paise to close at fresh record low of 85.65 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, ending the year with a sharp 3 per cent loss on significant foreign fund outflows and a strong greenback in global markets.

Forex traders said the rupee has been under continued pressure amid the Federal Reserve's cautious stance on rate cuts and the "Trump factor" driving up the dollar index (DXY) and US 10-year 2024.

bond yields. Additionally, slowing domestic macroeconomic growth, widening trade deficit and persistent foreign fund outflows have further fuelled the rupee's depreciation.

At the interbank foreign nearly two years. exchange, the rupee opened at According to



Choudhary – Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Choudhary Sharekhan, the rupee is expected to trade with a neg-ative bias on elevated crude oil prices, overall strength in the US dollar and month-end dollar demand from importers.

Moreover, persistent selling pressure by foreign funds added further strain on the currency. Foreign currency. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded Rs 1,893.16 crore in the capital markets on net basis on Monday, according to exchange data.

In 2024, foreign investors sig-nificantly scaled back their investments in Indian equities, with net inflows amounting to a little over Rs 5,000 crore, as elevated domestic valuations, coupled with geopolitical uncertainties prompted investors to adopt

a more cautious stance. In 2023, Rs 1.71 lakh crore net investment was made in the domestic equity market. "However, any intervention by

the RBI may support the rupee at lower levels. Volumes may remain thin due to the New Year holiday. USD/INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 85.40 to 85.85, Anuj Choudhary – Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan - said.

India's external debt rose to USD 711.8 billion as of September this year, up 4.3 per cent over June 2024, as per the data released by the Finance Ministry. At the end of September 2023, the external debt stood at USD 637.1 billion.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading lower

session, ends 2024 with over 8 pc gains

Sensex declines 109 pts in final

by 0.11 per cent at 108.01. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, surged 0.57 per cent to USD 74.41 per barrel in futures trade. On the domestic equity mar-

money 10

ket front, the 30-share benchmark index Sensex closed 109.12 points, or 0.14 per cent lower, at 78,139.01 points. The Nifty settled on a flat note at 23,644.80 points. On the domestic macroeco-nomic front, India's current account deficit (CAD) mod-erated marginally to USD 11.2 billion or 1.2 per cent of

GDP year-on-year in the July-September quarter of 2024-25, according to Reserve Bank data. The CAD, an indicator of the country's external payment

scenario, was USD 11.3 billion or 1.3 per cent of GDP during the second quarter of 2023-24.

Reliance spends USD 13 bn on acquisitions in five years

PTI 📕 NEW DELHI

 $B_{\rm Ambani's}^{\rm illionaire}$ Mukesh Reliance Industries Ltd has spent USD 13 billion on acquisitions in the past five years across new energy, telecom, retail and media business to script a pivot away from core oil and petrochemicals business to clean energy and consumer facing verticals. Last week, Reliance bought

oncology platform Karkinos Healthcare for Rs 375 crore, adding another stack to its diagnostic and digital healthcare ecosystem, Morgan Stanley said in a report.

"Over the past five years, RIL has announced USD 13 billion in acquisitions with 14 per cent in new energy, 48 per cent in technology, media and telecommunications (TMT), 9 per cent in retail, and increasingly more in healthcare," it said.

Of this, USD 6 billion was in acquisition of companies and assets in media and education business and USD 2.6 billion firm JustDial, the report said. in telecom and internet ver-



on acquisitions in new energy and USD 1.14 billion in retail, according to Morgan Stanley.

RIL's biggest acquisition in the last five years has been buyout of local cable TV and internet service providers Hathway Cable and Datacom Ltd for USD 981 million. It spent USD 771 million on buying Norwegian-head-quartered solar panel maker REC Solar Holdings and another USD 767 million on buying search and database

ticals. It spent USD 1.7 billion per cent stake in Karkinos Healthcare, increasing its exposure to the diagnostic and healthcare ecosystem following previous investments

like HAGI, Netmeds and Strand Life Science. Karkinos provides technology driven, innovative solutions for early detection, diagnosis and management of cancer, according to Morgan Stanley It acts like a care partner during a patient's cancer treat-

> ment. Other investors in the com

pany have included Tata Group, Rakuten, Mayo Clinic, and Hero Enterprise.

"RIL aims to leverage its tech-nological expertise and vast distribution networks to create more integrated healthcare system-digital health platforms, telemedicine services and advanced healthcare delivery models," the brokerage said

Karkinos was incorporated in India on July 24, 2020 and is in the business of providing technology-driven, innova-tive solutions for the early detection, diagnosis, and management of cancer. It had a turnover of about Rs 22 crore in the 2022-23 fiscal year.

Karkinos has cancelled the existing outstanding 30,075 equity shares held by the erstwhile shareholders of the company. Its previous prominent investors included Ewart Investments Ltd (100 per cent subsidiary of Tata Sons), Reliance Digital Health Ltd (a subsidiary of Reliance Industries), Mayo Clinic (US), Sundar Raman (Director at Reliance Foundation Youth Sports and former COO of Indian Premier League since 2008), and Ravi Kant (ex-MD of Tata Motors).

The company is focused on providing end-to-end ser-vices relating to early detec-tion and effective treatment of cancer at substantially lower than prevailing rates, while still generating healthy profitability. In order to meet this vision, Karkinos started partnering with hospitals to provide oncology services (testing, radiation therapy,

etc.). The company has partnered with around 60 hospitals till December 2023. It is through a subsidiary setting up a 150bed multispecialty cancer hospital at Imphal, Manipur. Going forward, its source of income was said to be via Advanced Cancer Care Diagnostics and Research (ACCDR), Distributed Cancer Care Network (DCCN), tie-ups with corporates for early diagnosis of cancer, and cancer care hos-

PTI MUMBAI $B_{\text{and Nifty ended lower in}}^{\text{enchmark indices Sensex}}$ the final session of 2024 on Tuesday amid persistent foreign fund outflows and weak trends in the global markets. Falling for the second straight day, the 30-share BSE bench-mark Sensex declined 109.12 points or 0.14 per cent to set-

tle at 78,139.01. Intra-day, it tanked 687.34 points or 0.87 per cent to 77,560.79. The NSE Nifty dipped marginally by 0.10 points to settle at 23,644.80.

In the entire 2024, the Sensex jumped 5,898.75 points or 8.16 per cent, and the Nifty surged 1,913.4 points or 8.80 per cent.

The BSE benchmark Sensex hit its record peak of 85,978.25 on September 27 this year, and the NSE Nifty also reached the lifetime high of 26,277.35 on the same day. From the 30 blue-chip pack, Tech Mahindra, Zomato, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys,



ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and HCL Technologies were the major laggards on Tuesday.

Kotak Mahindra Bank, ITC, UltraTech Cement and Tata Motors were among the gainers.Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,893.16 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

In Asian markets, and Shanghai settled lower while Hong Kong ended in the pos-

A fitting saying for the current

ended lower on Monday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.46 per cent to USD 74.34 a barreĺ. The 30-share BSE benchmark tumbled 450.94 points or 0.57 per cent to settle at 78,248.13

itive territory. Markets were

closed in Tokyo and Seoul for

European markets were trad-

ing mostly higher. US markets

New Year holidays.

on Monday. The Nifty declined 168.50 points or 0.71 per cent to 23,644.90.

After rough ride in 2024, Indian startups look for a promising new year

PTI NEW DELHI

The Indian startup ecosys-tem experienced a rollercoaster ride in 2024, characterised by a slight-yet-concerning decline in funding activity and a shift in investor lighting ongoing innovation Swiggy Instamart, and promis-ing newcomers Dunzo, Swish, sector.

and Farmako. The overall funding trend reflects a cautious-yet-optimistic approach from investors, the angel tax on investments in as they navigate a more selec- startups to provide a more tive funding environment, conducive environment for ognising the Jeenendra scended its traditional bound aries.

In July, the government announced the abolishment of "By eliminating this tax, the government has provided a much-needed boost to investors and entrepreneurs, enabling greater liquidity and more flexible funding options for startups. However, fewer funding rounds, high operational costs, and infrastructure challenges remain ongoing factors that need attention," said Bhandari, Chairman, JITO Incubation and Innovation Foundation (JIIF). There was an encouraging rise in women entrepreneurs and founders from Tier 2 and 3 towns. Ninad Karpe from 100X.VC said the entrepreneurial culture has tran-"The entrepreneurial



India Initiative

ability

Despite the positive trends,

Global economic uncertainties

"While the number of deals has

ons by existing investors or bridge rounds aimed at extend-ing the runway rather than dri-ving growth. The focus has shifted from valuation-driven funding to sustainability and profitability," FAAD Capital CEO Aditya Arora said.

situation of the Indian startup ecosystem could be: "In the midst of adversity, hope is the seed from which resilience grows." Despite a rough patch in

recent years, the Indian startape has shown remarkable buoyancy. The increasing trend of Indians returning from abroad to establish businesses is also expected to invigorate the ecosystem with global expertise, Bhandari believes. Cautious optimism in 2024 is expected to continue into 2025, broader market recovery may still be two years away, with significant improvements anticipated by 2026, Arora said. "In the interim, the ecosystem is expected to witness an increase in SME IPOs, unlocking real value for investors and startups alike," he said. The rise of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and blockchain technologies is expected to attract significant investment. Startups leveraging he said.

these technologies will likely be at the forefront of funding conversations. Deloitte's Chirag Agrawal said

AI is enabling efficient operations and supporting data-driven decision-making. AI-focused startups are attracting

lining with several startups achieving unicorn status.

Despite facing global economic challenges, India's startups showcased remarkable resilience, adeptly navigating changing market conditions, while continuing to attract investments.

According to data from Tracxn, Indian startups raised a total of USD 30.4 billion in funding throughout 2024, a 6.5 per cent decline from the USD 32.5 billion secured in 2023.

Despite this dip, the Indian startup ecosystem demonstrated resilience, with several companies achieving unicorn status this year. Noteworthy entrants to the unicorn club include Rapido, Ather, Perfios, Porter, and Money View, highpotential of high-growth startups in India.

A slight shift towards earlystage investments was evident during the year, with seed and Series A rounds gaining traction, as investors sought to back innovative ideas with longterm potential.

Businesses that could demonstrate robust underlying unit economics found greater favour this year, Dushyant Singh, Managing Partner at Playbook Partners, noted. Gig economy, retail, and enterprise applications stood out as top-performing sectors, according to Traxcn. Quick commerce emerged as

a high-growth sector, with 40 active companies, including unicorns Zepto, Blinkit, and culture has transcended its tra-

ditional boundaries, seeping into colleges, schools, and even Tier 2 and 3 towns. Founders from these regions are bringing fresh perspectives, solving challenges persist. hyperlocal problems, and crehave a direct impact on investor ating opportunities that were previously untapped. sentiment and funding avail-

"There's a noticeable rise in women entrepreneurs, signalling a positive shift in inclusivity and diversity within the startup ecosystem," he said.

According to official data, reflects a cautious investment climate, with most funding India has more than 73,000 startups with at least one rounds being either follow-

e growth in ventu this year was mainly driven by increase in mid and late-stage investment, Singh seconded. Startups continue to grapple with rising operational costs, which can strain their financial sustainability. Several Indian startups have gained fame and woman director that have been achieved unicorn status despite recognised under the Startup not being profitable.

Many startups still face challenges related to inadequate physical infrastructure, particularly in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. This can hugely affect logistics, supply chain man-agement, and overall operational efficiency.

seen a quarterly increase of 10-20 per cent... Deal values have Moreover, navigating compliance requirements can be cumdeclined significantly. This bersome for new businesses. diverting resources away from innovation and growth.

particularly in high-impact areas such as healthcare, finance, and sustainability, he said "For 2025, India's entrepreneurial ecosystem is poised for continued growth, driven

by technological advancements, government reforms, and a favourable macroeconomic environment.

"Emerging trends include significant investments in Deep Tech, Electric Vehicles, Clean Tech, Defence Tech, and Space Tech. These sectors are expected to attract substantial funding, particularly in AI, sus-tainable technologies, and space commercialization, posi-tioning India as a global leader in these high-potential areas,"

Gold set to extend record run; may hit Rs 90,000 in 2025 on global cues

PTI 📕 NEW DELHI

old, a safe-haven bet, is Glikely to continue its record-smashing journey in the New Year, rising to Rs 85,000 per 10 grams and even Rs 90,000 level in domestic markets if geopolitical tensions and global economic uncertainties continue.

Also aiding the run is a dovish tilt in monetary policy and buying by central banks, but if the geopolitical crisis eases, the precious metal will turn weak on depreciating rupee. Gold price is hovering at Rs

79,350 per 10 grams in spot markets at present, and Rs 76,600 per 10 grams in futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX).

The precious metal capped off 2024 on a strong note with its best performance, notching 23 per cent returns in the domestic markets. The yellow metal hit an all-time high of Rs 82,400 per 10 grams on October 30 this year. Silver mirrored this stellar performance with a 30 per cent gain, surpassing the Rs

1 lakh level per kg level Globally, Comex gold futures

started the year at around USD 2,062 per ounce and rallied to a peak of USD 2,790 per ounce on October 31, giving returns of up to 28 per cent, reinforcing their appeal amid global uncertainties

Experts believe that precious metals remain strong performers in 2025 as well, buoyed by geopolitical tensions, central bank purchases, and a pivot towards lower interest rates by major central banks.

The outlook for gold in 2025 remains positive, though the pace of growth may moderate compared to 2024, LKP Securities VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency,

Jateen Trivedi told PTI. "Domestic gold prices are expected to reach Rs 85,000 as modest targets, with a best-case scenario of Rs 90,000 and silver expected to deliver bit higher gains towards Rs 1.1 lakh on modest and even hit Rs 1.25 lakh, if geopolitical tensions persist or escalate," he said.

He noted that interest rate



cycles are also pivotal as a global shift toward lower interest rates would inject liquidity into markets and weaken the US Dollar, bolstering gold prices.

However, the US Federal Reserve's cautious approach to rate cuts may temper the pace of price increases. Additionally, sustained gold purchases by central banks, driven by diversification strategies and concerns over currency stability will provide strong support to bullion, Trivedi added. Several factors have shaped the demand demand and supply

dynamics of gold in 2024, including a turbulent geopolitical landscape. The ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and tensions in West Asia have spurred safe-haven demand for bullion, thus impacting its prices this year.

"Gold and silver markets have been directly impacted by a turbulent geopolitical environment. These geopolitical crises have typically caused an immediate 2-3 per cent spike in prices, reaffirming investors' preference for precious metals as a shield against uncertainty,' Trivedi said.

However, Commtrendz Research co-founder and CEO Gnanasekar Thiagarajan told PTI that gold prices are struggling to keep up the momentum as the geopolitical uncertainty and economic uncertainty premium have started fading away. "Market participants are now taking into consideration US President-elect Donald Trump's tariff era, economic policies and their potential future impact on the Fed's mandate to bring inflation down to 2 per cent. Higher inflationary expectations could undermine the appeal for bullion."Furthermore, we would not be surprised to see the Fed opt for a cut from May onwards, as it could allow for a clearer picture to be formed on the new administration's actual economic policies rather than comments made potentially to gain negotiation leverage with foreign counterparts," he stated.

The outlook is bearish for gold in the first half of 2025, with the possibility of testing USD 2,455 (MCX: 73,000-73,500), he said.

The rupee is expected to depreciate further, which could arrest the fall in local prices relative to international prices in the coming year, he added.

In the domestic markets, the government's decision in July this year to cut gold import duty by 6 per cent led to a sharp 7 per cent correction in gold prices, equivalent to Rs 5,000 per 10 grams.

The price drop spurred physical demand for gold during the festive and wedding seasons. The reduction not only made gold more affordable but also boosted increased buying, supporting robust consumption by the jewellers and consumers. 'Gold jewellery consumption grew by 17 per cent in 2024, primarily driven by volatility in gold prices, along with festive and marriage-related demand. Additionally, the sharp 900 basis points reduction in import duty announced in the Union Budget of July 2024 spurred demand for jewellery, bars, and coins," Rahul Kalantri, Vice President of Commodities at Mehta Equities Ltd, said.



Gurugram: REC Power Development and Consultancy Limited (RECPDCL), a wholly owned subsidiary of REC Limited, the Maharatna CPSU under the aegis of Ministry of Power, has handed over a project specific SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle). viz, Rajasthan IV 4A Power Transmission Limited to Power Grid Corporation of India Limited on 30th December, 2024 at Gurugram. Power Grid Corporation of India Limited emerged as the Transmission Service Provider (TSP) through Tariff-Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) process conducted by RECPDCL, the Bid Process Coordinator, for development of the transmission project on Build, Own, Operate & Transfer (BOOT) basis. The transmission scheme is planned for evacuation of 3.5 GW of RE power from Rajasthan Renewable Energy Zone, which covers establishment of 765/400 kV, 2 X1500 MVA S/s near Ghiror (Uttar Pradesh), Augmentation of Barmer -I Pooling Station, 283.05 Kms of 765 kV line and 43.28 Kms of 400 kV line along with associated works. The estimated cost of the project is Rs. 5378.03 Crores

RECPDCL HANDOVERS SPV TO POWER GRID CORPORATION



Gauff, Fritz qualify the US for the United Cup mixed teams tennis quarterfinals

n SBI

AP PERTH

The top-seeded pair of Gauff and U.S. Open finalist Taylor Fritz of the United States are into the United Cup mixed teams



tennis quarterfinals. Fritz beat Borna Coric 6-3, 6-2 Tuesday as the American team needed to win only one match to top Group A. For good measure, Gauff beat Donna Vekic 6-4, 6-2 in the later women's singles. The world No. 3 lost to Vekic

at the Paris Olympics but



Gauff on Tuesday. "Really happy with how I played today," Gauff said.

Jasmine Paolini beat Chloe Paquet 6-0, 6-2 to give Italy its winning margin before She's a great player. The also winning the mixed Olympics loss hurt so I definitely was thinking about

it just as motivation to do better and I'm happy to send my team through." The U.S. Beat Canada in its opening match. The Perth quarterfinals were set for Wednesday, with the U.S. Taking on China, which

qualified as the best runnerup, and group winners Kazakhstan and Germany playing each other. In Sydney, Italy also moved

into the quarterfinals Tuesday with a 3-0 win over France at Ken Rosewall Arena. Flavio Cobolli claimed a 6-3, 6-7 (8), 6-2 at the Paris Olympics but upset singles win over Bencic was no match for France's Ugo Humbert.



doubles.

yono

O SBI

Winners of the past two Davis Cups and runners-up

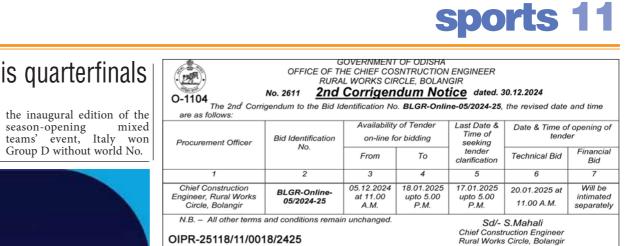
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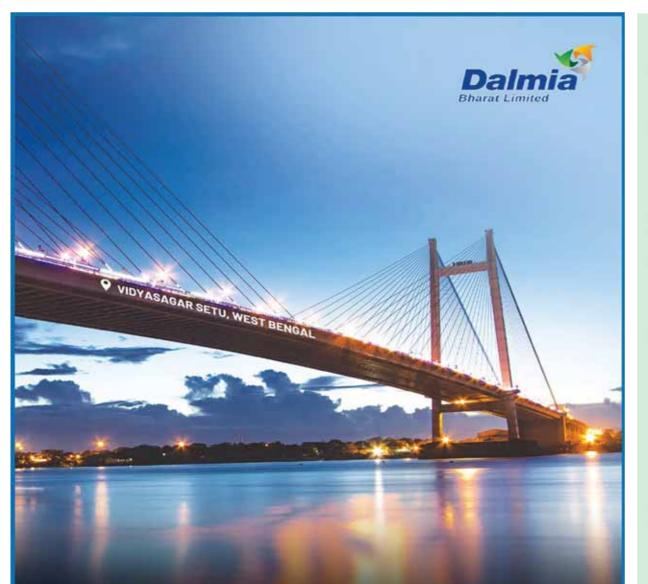
Shri Mohan Charan Majhi Chief Minister, Odisha

Airline Operator	Routes	Frequency	Date of Commencement	
	Jharsuguda	Daily flight	01 January 2025	
Star Air	Jharsuguda> Raipur> Jharsuguda	Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday	01 February 2025	
	Jharsuguda	Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday	01 February 2025	
	BhubaneswarBhubaneswar	Daily flight	03 January 2025	
Air India Express	Bhubaneswar> Jaipur> Bhubaneswar	Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday	03 January 2025	
	Bhubaneswar	Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday	04 January 2025	
HYDERABAD	RAIPUR LUCK	NOW \ КОСНІ	JAIPUR	

OIPR-38001/13/0007/2425

Commerce & Transport Department, Government of Odisha





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