

CITY'S CRIME GRAPH RISING

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: Crime cases in the Capital city went northward, while they declined in neighbouring Cuttack last year compared to 2023, said twin city police commissioner Suresh Dev Datta Singh Wednesday.

Speaking to reporters, Singh said 21,613 cases were registered in the twin cities in 2024 as against 19,410 in 2023.

While murder, swindling, motor vehicle-related cases saw an increase, other crimes like dacoity, robbery, burglary, theft, rape, and rioting declined in the twin cities, he said.

The increase is attributed to "the implementation of free registration policies, encouraging victims to report incidents without hesitation, and the rise in miscellaneous cases or petty crimes," he said.

Singh said a total of 14,392 cases were registered in Bhubaneswar urban police district (UPD), as compared to 11,975 in 2023

"Murder and swindling cases in the Capital city increased by 26.92 per cent and 30.75 per cent, respectively. However, the crime graph for incidents like dacoity, robbery, burglary, theft, and rioting showed a decline in Bhubaneswar," the police commissioner said.



MOMENT TO CHERISH: Girls take a selfie at the entrance of State Museum, decked up by decorative flowers, in Bhubaneswar on the New Year's Day, Wednesday

GRIME SCENE DO

"A total of 7,263 cybercrime cases involving cheating of 82.53 crore were reported in Bhubaneswar city last year. In 2023, the city recorded 4,832 cybercrime cases involving duping of 42.61 crore," police data said.

While investigating the cybercrime cases, Bhubaneswar police arrested 38 persons, froze ₹23.60 crore, and returned ₹2.50 crore to the victims.

Crime cases in Cuttack, however, was relatively lower last year compared to 2023. The city recorded 7.221 cases in 2024 compared to 7,435 in 2023. "Excluding theft and dacoity cases, all other crime cases in Cuttack declined," police data added.

AYUSHMAN BHARAT IN FEBRUARY ₹10 lakh health cover for women

The BJP-led NDA government at the Centre had introduced Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) September 23, 2018. The BJD government, however, was implementing Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) in Odisha. After coming to power in the state in June, the BJP government July 25, 2024 replaced the BSKY with Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana (GJAY), citing flaws in the BJD's flagship health insurance scheme. Meanwhile, Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling Wednesday reiterated about implementation of Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY along with GJAY in Odisha in February this year. While female beneficiaries were receiving cashless treatment up to ₹10 lakh per annum, their male counterparts were availing treatment up to ₹5 lakh per annum under BSKY. However, in other states, there is a provision of ₹5 lakh health cover per family per year under Ayushman Bharat. Once the two schemes - Auyshman Bharat and GJAY-are



Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling

ciaries, Mahaling added.

Agra man kills 4 sisters, mom

man from Agra took his mother and four sisters to a hotel room here and allegedly killed them by slitting their throats and wrists on Wednesday, after which he recorded a video to say he did it because of "helplessness and despair" following "unimaginable atrocities" by people of his locality.



and Rahmeen, 18, -- all sisters of Arshad -- and his mother Asma. according to the police.

The DCP said Arshad's family lived in Agra and preliminary inquiry has revealed that he took the step because of domestic disputes.

He said his family originally hailed from Budaun and pos The purported video surfaced on social media shortly after the sessed documents dating back shocking incident came to light to 1947 through his aunt, proving their identity. Despite this, in which Arshad confessed to they were being falsely accused

grants.

12 PAGE | ₹5.00

HEAVY RUSH AT SRIMANDIR

POST NEWS NETOWRK

Puri, Jan 1: The Srimandir here witnessed unprecedented rush as lakhs thronged the 12th century shrine on the first day of the New Year. A chaotic situation arose when a large number of devotees tried to storm into the shrine for darshan of the Trinity.

According to reports, some people broke the barricades installed in front of the Lion's Gate and pushed past the police to enter the temple. However, Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan rubbished the reports about devotees breaking the barricades.

In order to ensure safety of devotees, the administration had made special arrange ments for the New Year. said sources. Barricades have been set up from Market Square to regulate the crowd. Devotees are only allowed to enter the temple through the Lion's Gate. For entry through the other three gates, devotees have to go through a different route. To manage the crowd, 60 platoons of forces have been deployed.

More than a kilometre-long queue of devotees was seen on the Grand Road leading to the temple from Market Chhak to Singha Dwar (Lion's Gate) of the 12th century shrine.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Lucknow, Jan 1: A 24-year-old

> Central Lucknow Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Raveena Tyagi said the incident took place at Hotel Sharanjeet in the busy Naka area of the city.

The accused, identified as Mohammad Arshad, 24, allegedly killed five members of his own family. Following the gruesome act, the local police apprehended the accused from eo, Arshad claimed his father was also involved in the killings. Assistant Commissioner of Police Dharmendra Kumar Singh told PTI: "Searches are underway for the father and his role in the killings.³ Forensic teams have been

deployed at the spot to collect evidence while a detailed probe has been launched into the matter, Tyagi said. Arshad said, "I, along with my entire family, am forced to take this step in helplessness and de spair ... I have killed my sisters and myself. When the police get this video, I request that they hold the people of the locality responsible for all of this."

and labelled as Bangladeshi mi

SHORT TAKES

Projects worth

₹4,222cr get nod

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I suggested a New Year's resolution for honest politics. They sacked me for anti-party activities

implemented in the state, women members of a family can avail benefits up to ₹10 lakh per annum and males ₹5 lakh per annum, said Mahaling. It is understood that with the implementation of the twin schemes, the GJAY will merge with the Central scheme

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: The state government has decided to implement Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogva Yojana in the state by the end of February 2025, Health and Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling said Wednesday.

The minister said that women beneficiaries of the state will receive health insurance cover of 10 lakh per annum under the flagship scheme while male beneficiaries can avail

cashless treatment at empanelled hospitals up to 5 lakh. He also said the state's Go-

pabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana (GJAY) will be integrated with Ayushman Bharat scheme.

The insurance coverage will be linked to the e-KYC database, ensuring a seamless issuance of health cards. This integration will facilitate access to healthcare services in approximately 30,000 empanelled hospitals in the state and outside, the minister added. The twin health schemes will cover around 3.5 crore benefi-

ber to December) and har-

Warmest year since 1901

June)

vest them in summer (April to

Meanwhile, the IMD said

He said a Central team has already visited the state to ensure smooth implementation of Ayushman Bharat scheme and that the state government is committed to increasing the number of medical colleges and nursing colleges in the New Year to strengthen the healthcare sector.

He said a memorandum of understanding (MoU) is likely to be signed between the Centre and the state for implementation of the two schemes.

Significantly, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who also holds the Finance portfolio, had allocated 500 crore for execution of Ayushman Bharat in the Budget for financial year 2024-25.

the crime scene." she said. The deceased were identified as Alia, 9, Alshia, 19, Aksa, 16,

slitting the wrists and throats of his sisters and mother. In the 6.5-minute selfie vid-

GOVT EXTENDS DAP FERTILISER SUBSIDY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: The Union Cabinet Wednesday extended a one-time package to subsidise key fertiliser DAP at the cost of up to ₹3,850 crore and approved a one-year extension of two crop insurance schemes, decisions that Prime Minister Narendra Modi said were dedicated to farmers.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA),

chaired by the Prime Minister, extended two crop insurance schemes -- PMFBY and RWBCIS -- for one more year till 2025-26 and created a separate ₹824.77 crore fund for technology infusion in the implementation of flagship schemes. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PM-FBY) and Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS) have been extended

to align it with the 15th Finance

Commission period.

Bhubaneswar: In a significant step towards augmenting state's industrial growth and employment opportunities, the state government Wednesday approved 25 projects with a cumulative investment of ₹4,222.24 crore. The projects were approved during the 133rd State Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA) meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja. These projects, spanning several high-impact sectors, are expected to generate more than 14,497 job opportunities, contributing to the socio-economic development of Odisha, the meeting revealed.

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 1: Minimum temperatures are expected to be higher than normal in most parts of India in January, except in some areas of eastern. northwest, and west-central regions, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Wednesday.

Maximum temperatures are also likely to be above normal for most parts of the country, except in parts of northwest, central and eastern India, and central parts of the southern peninsula, Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, director general of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), said during a virtual press briefing.

Western and northern parts of central India are expected to experience more cold wave days than usual during January, he said.



The IMD said rainfall in Himachal Pradesh, north India during January Jammu and Kashmir, to March is likely to be below Uttarakhand, and normal, with less than 86 per Uttar Pradesh grow cent of the long-period average rabi crops, including (LPA). wheat, peas, gram and barley, in winter (Octo-

The average rainfall for north India during this period, based on 1971-2020 data, is about 184.3 mm.

Northern and northwestern states like Punjab, Haryana,

2024 was the warmest on record in India since 1901, with the average minimum temperature settling 0.90 degrees Celsius above the long-period average.

The annual mean temperature in 2024 was 25.75 degrees Celsius, 0.65 degrees above the long-period average

perature stood at 31.25 de-

mal. The average minimum temperature was 20.24 degrees Celsius, 0.90 degrees above normal.

according to India Meteorological Department (IMD) Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra.

The year 2024 surpassed 2016, which had recorded a mean land surface air temperature 0.54 degrees Celsius above normal, making it the warmest year since 1901.

The average minimum temperature was the highest on record for July, August, September and October, and the second highest for February, the IMD chief said.

According to the European climate agency Copernicus, 2024 likely ended as the warmest year globally and the first with average temperatures 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial (1850-1900) levels.

According to a yearly review by two independent groups of climate scientists -- World Weather Attribution and Climate Central -- the world experienced 41 additional days of dangerous heat in 2024.

Mohapatra said the rise in minimum temperatures in 2024 was "quite high".

"Long-term data shows most parts of the country are witnessing a rising trend in minimum temperatures, particularly in post-monsoon and winter seasons," he said.

The IMD said La Nina conditions. characterised by cooler ocean surface temperatures in the central Pacific Ocean and usually associated with colder winters in north India, were expected to develop in January but would be short-lived.

"It is unlikely to significantly impact the warming trend," an IMD scientist told PTI.

June 2023 marked the first instance of a monthly global temperature crossing the 1.5-degree threshold, a trend that persisted throughout the year, except for July 2024

Under the Paris Agreement, a permanent breach of the 1.5-degree limit refers to sustained warming over 20-30 years.

Driver rams truck into crowd; 10 killed

New Orleans: A driver wrought carnage on New Orleans' famed French Quarter early on New Year's Day, killing 10 people as he rammed a pickup truck into a crowd before being shot to death by police, authorities said. More than 30 people were injured as the attack Wednesday turned festive Bourbon Street into macabre mayhem. The FBI is investigating it as an act of terrorism. The driver was killed in a firefight with police following the attack around 3.15 am in an area teeming with New Year's revellers, the FBI said. Investigators recovered a handgun and an AR-style rifle after the shootout, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press. Investigators were also combing the French Quarter for potential explosive devices, another law enforcement official told the AP.

The average maximum temgrees Celsius, 0.20 de-Experts grees above norwarn that

the world is now entering a phase during which temperatures will consistently exceed this threshold

Warm January likely in most parts of India: IMD











ISUre

BRANGELINA ARRIVES AT DIVORCE SETTLEMENT

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, known as Brangelina to their fans, have reached a settlement in their divorce, eight years after she filed to end their marriage of two years. Angelina claimed Brad was abusive to her and their six children but authorities did not charge him after investigating.

HUGH GRANT RECALLS **GHOSTLY ENCOUNTER**

British actor Hugh Grant believes he had an encounter with a ghost. He recalled seeing a mysterious "shimmering light" in the middle of the night while staying in an English castle, only to be told by the owner the following day that everyone was aware of the supernatural presence.



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At times it is a good thing to be under pressure, be-

cause it brings out your potential to the fullest. You will outsmart all your colleagues in the work you do. However, results may not match your expectations. Ganesha advises patience as results don't come overnight

TAURUS

This is a great day for expressions your ideas and feelings. Ganesha urges you to

open up and share hopes and concerns, dreams and aspirations with your others. Romance is in he air. You could be flying deliriously high on the wings of love, in the company of your sweetheart. You are likely to spend some intimate moments with children and youngsters.

GEMINI

A fantastic day to enter into all kinds of partnerships. A day to bond with your close friends, open joint accounts, strike deals. and make plans for a bright future, says Ganesha. You will be at the top of your game in almost everything you do. Some of you, who want to go for further studies, may take a well-informed decision today.



Today, you may find yourself marooned in a sea of emotions, and the tides of turmoil will keep on getting stronger as the day progresses. However, such dire circumstances bring out the best in you, and you will be able to wade through the storm with nothing but patience on your side.

LEO

Some promises are like whispers in the wind never meant to be realised. Today holds something similar, in that you shall be so close and yet so far from what you desire most. Ganesha advises you to be a generous winner and a grace ul loser. Remember. every day is not Sunday; also, you cannot win each time.

VIRGO Don't dilly-dally when it comes

to matters of health, says Ganesha. You look lean and mean to take on those old wounds today. But peace and prosperity are the flavours of the day. Ganesha advises you to invest time in fun and entertainment today – just to get those batteries charged.

LIBRA

If ever there was a time when that industrious nature of yours was to listen to your conscience, it is today. Call it a positive day to embark upon ventures, particularly for freelancers. It is mighty hard to go wrong when you listen to your inner voice and back it up with zeal. The hard work of the morning and the pressure of the afternoon will give way to pleasure in the evening. Just enjoy what you do, says Ganesha.

FRIPTII'S YEARNIN

Mumbai: This New Year, actress Triptii Dimri is yearning for a clear sky, symbolizing a fresh start and boundless possibilities

As 2025 unfolds, she embraces the hope for peace, clarity, and new beginnings. Taking to her Instagram stories, the Animal actress, who is holidaying in Finland, posted a picture of herself posing against the beautiful backdrop of snow-capped mountains.

Alongside the photo, Dimri wrote, "Drove from Finland, 3 hours into Sweden to get clear skies." She looked stunning in a black outfit. The actress had earlier shared glimpses of her winter getaway, capturing the serene beauty of the snowy surroundings and her peaceful moments with the animals.

Triptii posted a couple of photos and videos from Lapland, Finland, featuring charming snow-covered huts and reindeer peacefully grazing outside her window.

Alongside one of the videos, the actress wrote, "Snowflakes and Smiles... Today feels like one of the happiest chapters of my life.'

The Qala actress embarked on a snowy adventure, sharing glimpses of her scenic holiday on Instagram, Fans have started speculating that she's spending time with her rumoured boyfriend. Sam Merchant. as both have posted similar photos from the trip.

On the professional front, Triptii is preparing for an exciting new project with renowned filmmaker Vishal Bhardwaj and actor Shahid Kapoor.

Mumbai: Shabana Azmi, is one of India's most celebrated actresses, who gave powerful performances by challenging societal norms through her roles for decades. Born September 18, 1950, into a family steeped in cultural ex-

cellence, Shabana is the daughter of renowned poet Kaifi Azmi and celebrated actress Shaukat Azmi. Despite

her privileged background, her early life was marked by emotional challenges and struggles for acceptance. Shabana's personal life has also drawn public

attention, particularly her relationship with lyricist Javed Akhtar.

Their bond began when Javed visited her father to share poetry, and despite initial opposition from Shabana's family due to Javed's previous marriage and children, they married in 1984 after his divorce

Despite all the personal issues she has been through, such as two suicide attempts because of the feeling of inferiority compared to her brother. Shabana has excelled in life.

Her journey in Indian cinema began with

Shabana tried to die by suicide

that show the complexities of women's lives. In Arth twice (1982), she portrayed a woman trapped in a toxic marriage. Her role

in Masoom (1983) as a mother dealing with her past further solidified her reputation as an actress capable of delivering impactful performances

her debut in Ankur (1974),

where she portrayed a

strong, independent wom-

an. Throughout her career,

Shabana has taken on roles

Shabana has multiple awards to her name, including five National Film Awards. Her commitment to portraying strong female characters has left an indelible mark on the industry, making her a true icon of grace and

talent

AGENCIES

All about Aryan's mystery girl

Mumbai: Despite staying away from the limelight, Shah Rukh Khan's eldest son Aryan Khan manages to frequently make headlines. This time the star kid garnered eyeballs due to his rumoured girlfriend Larissa Bonesi.

Recently Aryan was clicked by the paparazzi as he was headed towards a New Year's event. However, he was not alone. Aryan was accompanied by his speculated girlfriend, Larissa Bonesi. The video doing rounds on social media has Aryan entering the venue in his car. While he was seated in the front, Larissa accompanied him in the backseat, along with some of their other friends.

As rumours of Aryan dating Larissa have been doing rounds for some time now, the netizens have been wondering about his mystery girl. For those who do not know, Larissa Bonesi is an actress and



model. Born on 28 March 1990 in Brazil, she has been a part of many Bollywood and Tollywood. She appeared in Raj and DK's 2013 action comedy Go Goa Gone.

Besides this, she has also been a part of the advertising campaigns for some top brands like Olay, Lancôme, and Levi's. While neither

Aryan nor Larissa have commented on their relationship, the two are often seen spending time with each other, adding to the speculations.

As far as Aryan's professional commitments are concerned, he will be stepping into the entertainment industry soon with his initial venture as a director.

Kangana shares key to success

Mumbai: Actress and politician Kangana Ranaut wished her fans and followers Happy New Year with an inspiring Instagram post.

The Queen actress took to the stories section of the photo-sharing app and dropped a few words of wisdom, acquired by her over the years. The diva posted about things like a key to happiness, peace, success, and love according to her.

Kangana shared, "Key to happiness- think more about/ for others than yourself. Key to peace- Better to get manipulated than to manipulate, Key to success- fix yourself don't try to fix the world, Key to love- it's always good to lose in a fight with someone you love, so that the love could win, Key to anxiety free breathing- close your eyes and say Krishna...As the new year be-

gins sharing some of my learnings with vou all.'

The actress added a red heart emoji at the end.

At the moment, Kangana is busy promoting her forthcoming drama, *Emergency*.

She will be seen reprising the role of the former Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi. With her as the lead, the drama will also see Anupam Kher, Shreyas Talpade, Vishak Nair, Mahima Chaudhry, Milind Soman, and Satish Kaushik in pivotal



SCORPIO

Better get down to serious business if you want to reap the benefits of your past actions. You are liable to treat subordinates as equals when deciding the best course of actions to achieve your goals. A golden favourable day for you, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Zoom in on complicated problems and solve them with style, says Ganesha. Don't fret over problems; instead concentrate on ways to solve them. Your day will get even better when perhaps, news from an overseas friend reaches you.

CAPRICORN

Drag yourself out of the house, do some shopping, or better still, appoint an interior designer. You are very likely to move into a new house very soon, foresees Ganesha. This, of course, may also eat into your savings and force you to be thrifty by the end of the day, but you won't regret this once-in-a-while extravagant outing. It's all for a reason, after all.

AQUARIUS

A romantic liaison is headed towards you. Ouite naturally you don't want to be caught dead in a ratty old tee. Today, you want to keep everyone happy and amused. both at home and at work. And you manage wonderfully, says Ganesha.

PISCES

Being a graceful loser is just about as important as being a generous winner, for success does not come by every day. Lowering your expectations will help steel you against disappointments today. There are indications you will embark on a pleasure trip with your soul mate, says Ganesha.

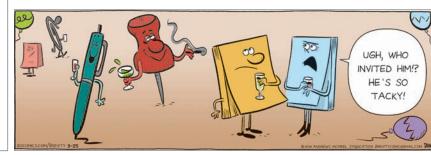
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY





CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SUDOKU

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

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SOLUTIONS

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roles.

3 IPS OFFICERS PROMOTED

Bhubaneswar: Three senior Odisha cadre IPS officers were promoted to the rank of Director General of Police (DGP), the General Administration and Public Grievance (GA&PG) department said Wednesday, "1993-bath IPS officers Vinavtosh Mishra and RP Koche have been promoted to the rank of DGP," said the GA&PG department notification. 1993-bath Odisha cadre IPS officer Susanta Kumar Nath, who is now on Central deputation, is allowed to avail the promotion to the grade of DGP, it added. Mishra is currently working as the Additional Director General (ADG) of Police, CID and Crime Branch in Odisha, while Koche is the Director, Intelligence. Nath is now posted as Inspector General (IG) of Police at the BSF.

LAKHS THRONG PURI ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

AGENCIES

Puri Jan 1: Lakhs of devotees visited Srimandir here to seek blessings of the sibling deities - Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath - on New Year's Day Wednesday, an official said.

OrissaP(

THURSDAY | JANUARY 2, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

More than a kilometre-long queue of devotees was seen on the Grand Road leading to the 12th century temple from Market Chhak to Singhadwar (Lion's Gate) of the temple.

"Puri Police is dedicated to ensure a safe and smooth experience for all devotees, said Puri SP Vineeth Agarwal. The SP said that the temple

has been placed under strict security arrangements. As many as 70 platoons (one platoon comprises of 30 personnel) were deployed for smooth movement of devotees and hassle-free darshan of deities. The police personnel were deployed both outside and on the

temple premises, he said. While devotees were allowed to enter the temple only through the Lion's Gate, they were guided to exit through three other gates, said Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief administrator Arabinda Padhee. He said that keeping in view

wntown

the ever-growing size of the crowd, the temple gate was opened at 1.05am.

Servitors performed the daily rituals of the deities, beginning with Mangal Arati, Mailum, Tadap Lagi, Abakash, Rosa Homa, Surya Puja, and Dwarpal Puja. Pahili Bhog, along with Gopal Bhog, was then offered to the deities.

Servitors dressed the deities in new clothes, and devotees were allowed darshan. However, darshan was briefly paused during the offerings of Sakala Dhupa, Madhyahna Dhupa and Sandhya Dhupa.

Ambulance services were also available to handle any medical emergencies. The entire pilgrim city was under surveillance with CCTV cameras installed at key locations.

The district administration and the SJTA have made elaborate arrangements to manage the crowd and ensure a smooth darshan by the devotees. Apart from tight security measures, the police have made several traffic regulations.





State govt eyes 1.5 lakh **SLSWCA NOD FOR** 'Should take benefit appointments in 5 yrs of PM Modi's all-out **₹4,222CR PROJECTS** support to Odisha' AGENCIES The Chief Minister directed all the departments to submit Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: Chief proposals to the recruitment Specialty Alloys Pvt Ltd to

Minister Mohan Charan Maihi Wednesdav said the state government has set a target for 1.5 lakh appointments in the public sector over the next five years. Of these, 65,000 government posts will be filled up in two years.

"If the government's manpower increases, we can provide better services to the people," Majhi said during a discussion with the chairpersons of various recruitment commissions at Lok Seva Bhawan here.

Majhi emphasised on making the recruitment process in the state flawless, impartial and speedy. He also advised them to fill the posts of essential service delivery departments, such as Health, Housing, Education and Agriculture, without leaving them vacant. Currently, 1,10,557 posts are vacant in various departments in the state, official sources said.

Ration card e-KYC verification by Jan 15

travelled to Goa to facilitate the process after the department received a

has been completed for 85 per cent of ration card holders. "More than 50

lakh individuals are yet come for verification," he said.

call from some labourers there," he said. Patra said that e-KYC verification

commissions for filling the vacant posts by March 31, 2025.

He also asked to conduct special recruitment drives within a specified time frame to fill up the vacant posts of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes in various departments.

The Chief Minister directed that the approval of the empowered committee is not required for filling the posts in Group B category. It has been decided to reconstitute the empowered committee working in the Finance department to check and protect the employment in differently-abled categories.

The Chief Minister proposed to set up an examination centre of the public service commission in Jaipur for the convenience of the candidates of the undivided Koraput district. At present, the public service commission has five examination centres.



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: The State Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA) approved 25 projects across various sectors with a combined investment of Rs 4,222.24 crore,

BHUBANESWAR: The state Wednesday. government has set January 15 Addressing media after deadline for completing Aadhaar-based

chairing the 133rd SLSWCA e-KYC verification of ration cards in meeting here, Chief Secretary circulation, Food Supplies and Consumer Manoj Ahuja said these proj-Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra ects are expected to generate said Wednesday. "Government officials over 14,497 jobs. have been instructed to visit people, These projects are in sectors especially elderly and those keeping unwell, for e-KYC verification within the

such as green energy equipment, pharmaceutical, textile, plastics, food processing, and downstream aluminium, among others.

Eleven districts - Angul, Ganjam, Khurda, Nabarang-

Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja said these projects are expected to generate over 14,497 jobs

pur, Cuttack, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Puri and Kandhamal – will benefit from these projects, strengthening the industrial base and driving sustained economic growth.

The SLSWCA approved the proposal of Shyam Metalics set up a titanium slag unit in Sambalpur. With an investment of Rs 710.50 crore, the facility is expected to generate employment opportunities for 350 people.

Hetro Labs Limited's proposal to set up a pharmaceutical manufacturing facility in Ganjam got a go-ahead from the SLSWCA. The project, with an investment of Rs 700 crore, is expected to create jobs for over 2,600 individuals.

Shalimar Glass Works Private Limited will be establishing a packaging container glass manufacturing unit in Khurda with an initial investment of Rs 530 crore. The unit will create over 400 jobs.

Ganesha Ecopet Private Limited's proposal to set up a manufacturing unit of rPET granules with annual capacity of 45,000MT in Ganjam got the approval. With an initial investment of Rs 520 crore, the unit is expected to generate jobs for over 500 individuals.

The SLSWCA approved the proposal of Swaji Nutritionals Private Limited to set up a food processing unit in Khurda with an investment of Rs 433.41 crore. The facility will create jobs for over 1.030 persons.

Among others, Sova Solar Limited's proposal to set up a solar cell manufacturing unit in Angul also got the Authority's nod. With an initial investment of Rs 380 crore, the facility will generate around 850 jobs.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Wednesday said Odisha should take advantage of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's all-out support to the state.

Presiding over a high-level meeting with the state's top bureaucrats, Majhi said PM Modi has a special focus on the development of Odisha and is scheduled to visit the state twice in January after visiting thrice in the last six months.

"We have many challenges and opportunities. If we can face all the challenges with collective responsibility, all the work can be done successfully," he said.

"The Centre is supporting Odisha in various fields. Therefore, we should utilise this opportunity and move towards achieving the goal of a developed Odisha," he added.

The CM said the state could

successfully conduct mega events like Navy Day, and DGP/IGP conference in 2024 due to collective responsibility.

"All the work can be done successfully and there is a need for everyone to work together. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas programme will establish Odisha's prestige at the international level," he said.

Majhi said the promises made by his party to the people ahead of the elections have mostly been fulfilled.

He urged the bureaucrats to focus on how Odisha can perform better than other states.

Deputy CM Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo and Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling said 2025 will be a year of progress for Odisha.

Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja said the officers of the state were efficient, and all employees of the state were working with commitment to achieve the goals of the government.





state and also those residing elsewhere

in the country. Recently, a team









OrissaPOST

THURSDAY | JANUARY 2, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

downtown



Special trains for Maha Kumbh Mela launched

scheduled to begin January 13.

has arranged for these ser-

vices to run on key routes

from Odisha to Pravagrai.

ensuring that pilgrims have

a hassle-free journey. The

special trains will operate

on three major routes: Bhu-

baneswar - Tundla - Bhu-

baneswar, Puri - Tundla -

Puri, and Titilagarh - Tundla

– Titilagarh, with stops at im-

portant stations along the way.

The Bhubaneswar - Tundla

– Bhubaneswar Special Train

started from the Capital city

at 12:30 pm January 1 and is

scheduled to run on select

dates, including January 8,

22, and February 5, 19, and

26. This train will travel via

Kendujhargarh, Bokaro, and

Gaya and will pass through

Prayagraj Station, allowing

East Coast Railway (ECoR)



ECoR has asked passengers to visit official website for detailed information on train schedules and booking procedures

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: As part of the efforts to facilitate easy travel for the thousands of pilgrims heading to the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, the Indian Railways launched special trains from various cities in Odisha Wednesday.

These trains will provide enhanced connectivity to the holy city of Prayagraj, where the grand religious event is pilgrims to board directly on their way to the Kumbh Mela. Similarly, the Puri - Tundla

Puri Special Train will depart at 12:30 pm January 6, 20, and February 17, while the Titilagarh – Tundla – Titilagarh Special Train will operate January 9, 16, and 23, and again February 6, 20, and 27.

These trains are being operated with the specific purpose of easing the travel burden for pilgrims heading to the Mela, ensuring that they can reach their destination in comfort and safety.

ECoR has assured passengers that all necessary arrangements have been made to provide smooth and safe travel, with ample connectivity, especially during this peak period of travel.

The railway department has emphasised its commitment to offering a seamless travel experience for all passengers. with carefully planned schedules and added facilities.

For those planning to travel, the ECoR encourages them to visit the official website for detailed information on train schedules, booking procedures, and other travel-related queries.

Passengers can also reach out to the enquiry counters at various railway stations for additional assistance.

17 held for flouting

of Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary, on the wee hour of Wednesday, arrested 17 fishermen, and seized a trawler from their possession on the charges of catching fish inside the "No Fishing Zone " of Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary. ACF of Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary Manas Kumar Dash said the forest personnel also seized 5 of VHF sets, 1 and 50 kg of miscellaneous marine fish from the arrested fishermen. All the arrested fishermen were booked under Section 27,29,31 of Wildlife (Protection) Act,1972 and later produced before the JMFC

NO BUSINESS: Flower shops in the Capital city remained quiet on New Year's Day, Wednesday, due to 7-day state mourning in honour of former PM Manmohan Singh

ROAD SAFETY MONTH KICKS OFF IN STATE

Special enforcement teams to monitor picnic spots and tourist locations, while patrols will be intensified in critical areas in the month-long campaign

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: In a bid to curb road accidents and fatalities, Odisha launched a month-long Road Safety Month Wednesday. The campaign, running until January 31, aims to raise awareness about road safety and enforce stricter traf-

In this regard, a preparatory meeting under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary Miohan Ahuja was held where the whole month plan and layout was discussed.

As the Road Safety Week is celebrated every year, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India has requested all the state governments to expand awareness and various programmes related to road safety this year.

Ahuja directed authorities to address road construction errors contributing to accidents. He emphasised identifying and fixing accident-prone areas also known as black spots, and leveraging digital campaigns to increase awareness. NCC cadets, volunteers, and students will participate in spreading road safety messages.

Strict enforcement of traffic

Law min distributes fruits,

blankets at shelter home



laws will be a major focus of the campaign. Joint operations with the police will target violators, including drunk drivers and those parking illegally on highways. Special enforcement teams will monitor picnic spots and tourist locations, while patrols will be intensified in critical areas. Traffic violators will also be counseled by student volunteers and NGOs to en-

courage safer driving practices The campaign will run under slogans like "Road Safety, Family Protection" and "Return Home Safely," with efforts to involve citizens, government agencies, and volunteer organisations.

Odisha has recorded over 47,000 road accident deaths in the past decade, with approximately 5,000 fatalities annually Speeding, drug use, wrong-side driving, and flouting traffic rules are cited as major causes. Globally, road accident deaths surpass fatalities from many natural disasters.

The Road Safety Month initiative seeks to make a significant impact by combining awareness, enforcement, and community involvement to ensure safer roads for everyone.

Min Khuntia visits NZP, stresses conservation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: Forest, Environment, and Climate Change Minister Ganesh Ram Singh Khuntia visited Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) here Wednesday to mark the New Year.

Arriving at 9 am, Khuntia in teracted with visitors, journalists, and forest officials, spread ing a message of environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Highlighting the government's commitment to biodiversity Minister preservation underscores the minister government's emphasised dedication ongoing efforts to comto preserving bat climate biodiversity, change, extackling pand forest climate cover, and change, and promote eco-tourism boosting in Odisha eco-tourism "Nandankanan is not just a zoo but



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra called upon the department's officers and staff to work with dedication and efficiency to make the department a model of excellence.

Speaking at a New Year gathering at Kharavela Bhawan Wednesday. Mahapatra emphasised the department's pivotal role in building a developed state, contributing to the vision of a developed India.

itage and progress on a nation al platform, the minister urged the team to deliver exceptional results, making the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas a benchmark

of success. Principal Secretary Usha Padhee joined the occasion and welcomed the minister.

Padhee provided a detailed overview of the department's achievements and urged the team to work with sincerity, discipline, and a mission-oriented approach to meet the goals. Among others, department's special secretary Rajesh Prabhakar Patil, municipal administration director Debashish Singh and senior officials reaffirmed their commitment to achieving excellence in urban development initiatives

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

in the state in 2024.

rupt activities.

this period.

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: The Odi-

sha Vigilance department ar-

rested 181 government officials

on the allegations of corruption

by the vigilance department in

its annual report card for 2024

highlighting significant actions

taken against government and

private persons engaged in cor-

ruption sleuths arrested 181

corrupt government officials in-

The vigilance department al-

As per the report, the anti-cor-

This was revealed Tuesday

Work with dedication, fishing ban Kendrapara: The forest personnel

GPS set, one fish finder, fishing nets court of Rajnagar which remanded them into jail custody.

TAC rejects tribal land rule change

Bhubaneswar: The newly-constituted Tribal Advisory Council (TAC) rejected a proposal of the previous BJD government to amend the Odisha S

fic regulations.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: On

New Year's Day, Law, Works,

and Excise Minister Prithivi-

rai Harichandan paid a visit

to the Odisha Patita Uddhar

Samiti shelter home here in

Andharua and distributed

fruits and blankets to the res-

During his visit, Harichan

dan also took the time to meet

with the differently-abled in-

dividuals residing at the shel-

ter home, engaging in heart-

felt conversations and offer-

idents of the shelter.

Extending his heartfelt greetings, the minister wished the department's members happiness, peace, and prosperity in 2025.

Stressing the importance of showcasing state's cultural herAreas Transfer of Immovable Property Amendment Regulation for allowing tribals in scheduled areas to sell and mortgage their land to non-tribals. In the first meeting of the TAC chaired by chief minister Mohan Charan Maihi recently, it was resolved to explore an alternative mode to facilitate loans for tribal people for essential purposes such as marriage, higher education and business initiatives, an official statement issued by the CMO said.

ing his support. The minister expressed his best wishes for the well-being and prosperity of all the inmates.

In his address, Harichandan emphasised the importance of respect and dignity for those living in shelter homes. "These individuals are not to be seen as objects

181 govt officials held on corruption charges in 2024



of pity or sympathy but as deserving of respect. If we improve their living conditions. we can move towards building a more developed Odisha and a more prosperous India," he stated.

AS PER THE THE VIGILANCE

REPORT, THE

SLEUTHS

ARRESTED

181 CORRUPT

GOVERNMENT

ANTI-CORRUPTION

DEPARTMENT

200 CASES

PERSONS

36 CLASS-II

OFFICERS.

131 CLASS-III

EMPLOYEES

PERSONS

AND 72 PRIVATE

AGAINST 308

INCLUDING 50

CLASS-I OFFICERS,

ALSO REGISTERED

The minister's visit was accompanied by Abharani Choudhury, the founder of the shelter home, as well as other staff members who were present to assist during the distribution of the gifts

registered in 2024 against 91

persons, including 65 public

servants and 26 private persons,

on the charges of misappropri-

ating public funds amounting to

cerned, we had 105 convictions

in 2024 at 50 per cent conviction

rate. Further, conviction in DA

cases stood at 80 per cent. Of the

105 convictions, 18 were Class-I

officers, 18 Class-II officers, 74

Class-III employees, six Class-

IV employees, 16 other public

servants and 15 private persons.

Thus, altogether 147 accused

persons were convicted during

the period," added the vigilance

various corrupt practices.

"As far as prosecution is con-

about ₹14.87 crore.

department.

a symbol of our dedication to safeguarding nature. On this New Year, let us pledge to work together for a greener and more sustainable Odisha," he said.

Khuntia expressed his de light at the growing interest among citizens, especially children, in wildlife and con servation. During his guided tour of the park, he commended the staff for their efforts in maintaining its world-class standards.

The Minister also unveiled plans for new initiatives aimed at enhancing the visitor experience and improving animal welfare.

As many as 25 government The event concluded with officials were dismissed from Khuntia extending his New services in 2024 after the court Year wishes to all, urging colfound them guilty of engaging in lective efforts toward preserving nature for future genera-IANS tions

WEATHER BBSR СТС Max Temp 26.6° 25.69 Min Temp 16.4° 15.2° Humidity 70% 78% Nil Nil Rainfall FORECAST Fog /mist in the morning

and mainly clear sky

later

MARKET WATCH INDEX VARIATION SENSEX 78507.41 🛉 368.40 g NIFTY 23742.90 98.10 DOLLAR 85.84 0.04 EURO 98.10 + 0.31 S GOLD ₹76.893 ₹54 SILVER ₹**87.550** ₹28 +



officers, 36 Class-II officers, 131 Class-III employees and 72 private persons in 2024.

"Out of 200 cases registered cluding 37 class-I, 27 class-II and 85 class-III employees in 2024. in 2024, 60 cases were institut-As many as 21 private persons ed for the acquisition of disproinvolved in corrupt practices portionate assets against 66 were also apprehended during public servants and 36 private persons. The total disproportionate assets in all the 60 cases so registered 200 cases against crossed over ₹131 crore. 29 DA 308 persons including 50 Class-I cases were registered against

Class-Lofficers and 15 DA cases were registered against Class-II officers," revealed the vigilance department in its report. As many as six Chief Engineer rank officers were booked by Odisha Vigilance for possession of huge disproportionate assets in 2024. The anti-corruption sleuths also unearthed 229 plots and 32 buildings/ flats in Bhubaneswar and district

OFFICIALS INCLUDING 37 CLASS-I, 27 CLASS-II AND 85 CLASS-III EMPLOYEES IN 2024 headquarters and outside Odisha during raids against corrupt government officials during this period.

The vigilance department also registered 96 trap cases against a total of 115 persons including 13 Class-I officers, for accepting bribes amounting to ₹19.25 lakh during 2024.

As many as 44 cases were

SSIFIED TACI OUR FOR AD CON BOOKING ERTISEMENTS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488 Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816 Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347 Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.













state

Youth hacked to death by co-villager

BODY CUT INTO 50 PIECES AND STREWN ON THE VILLAGE ROAD BY ACCUSED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Parjang, Jan 1: A youth was brutally hacked to death by a co-villager over suspected past enmity at Basoi village under this police limits in Dhenkanal district on New Year's Day Wednesday.

The victim was identified as Rakesh Sethi and the accused as Saroj Biswal alias Maku, both residents of the same village.

The incident occurred when Rakesh was walking to a poultry store to buy meat for New Year celebration when Saroj first attacked him from be-



hind with a lathi. As he fell down, Saroj dragged him to a wooden pole of the village deity where offerings are given and hacked him to death.

Seething with revenge, Sa-

roj again dragged the body of Rakesh and chopped it into 50 pieces with an axe and strewed the body parts on the village road.

He also tried to attack the victim's wife Subhadra and his elder son when they tried to intervene. Noticing a furious Saroj, villagers could not gather the courage to come to the rescue of Rakesh and instead rushed into their houses and bolted their doors from

inside. On being informed, SP Abhinav Sonkar, Parjang IIC Priyabrata Das and scientific team rushed to the spot and launched an investigation.

Police said that Saroj and Rakesh had a longstanding dispute over some issue and the former was planning to eliminate him. The accused will be arrested soon, the SP said. Parjang police have registered a case and launched an investigation into the horrific murder.

After committing the crime, Saroj fled the village as police launched a manhunt to nab him. The scientific team collected the blood samples and other vital evidences regarding the murder from the crime scene.



FINISHING TOUCH: A girl paints at an art workshop organised as part of an event for Sambalpur Lok Mahotsav-202 at Samaleswari temple premises in Sambalpur, Wednesday

Zeenat finally brought back to STR

Three weeks after straying out of Similipal, the tigress was brought to the national park from the veterinary hospital of Alipore Zoo in Kolkata in a special vehicle following the intervention of NTCA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baripada/Bhubaneswar, Jan 1: Tigress Zeenat, which terrorised villagers in Jharkhand and West Bengal, was bought back to Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Mayurbhanj district Wednesday, nearly three weeks after it left the national park, an official said.

The animal, which walked into Jharkhand forests December 8 and later entered West Bengal, was brought to STR in the early hours of Wednesday. She was released in an enclosure in the core area of STR in the morning.

'Tigress Zeenat reached Similipal. The animal was soft released into an enclosure at 7.30AM today. It is in good health," STR Field Director Dr Prakash Chand Gogineni told PTI.

Earlier, Odisha's Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) PK Jha had said that the three-year-old animal would be kept in the enclosure for some days and her movement and activities would be monitored before deciding on her release

into the wild. The tigress was brought to Similpal from the veterinary hospital of Alipore Zoo in Kolkata in a special vehicle following the intervention of National **Tiger Conservation Authority** (NTCA), an official said.

The animal was transported to STR through a Green Corridor through the interstate border at Jamshola around 1:25am January 1, 2025, the official said.

A 10-member team of the Odisha Forest department headed by STR field director super-



vised movement of the tigress. Zeenat was brought to Similipal from Maharashtra's

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) in November to strengthen the gene pool of the tiger population in the reserve. crossed over to She

Jharkhand from Similipal in the early hours of December 8, and from there to West Bengal, covering more than 200 km in about three weeks in search of new territory after terrorising villagers and eluding forest guards on its way.

The tigress which was roaming in the wild was tranquilised in West Bengal's Bankura district December 29 and taken to Alipore zoo.

West Bengal's Chief Wildlife Warden Debal Roy Tuesday said that Zeenat was in good health and on a liquid diet.

"She is perfectly in good health but she did not show any interest in buffalo or goat meat and sustained on ORS drips at regular intervals,' he said.

Roy said following discussions with the NTCA and after a three-member team of veterinary doctors gave a fit certificate, the state Forest department arranged a vehicle to send the animal to Similipal, around 350 km away, along with a security escort.

Meanwhile, livid with the West Bengal Forest department for taking Zeenat to Alipore Zoological Garden in Kolkata, the NTCA has sought an official response from the West Bengal Forest department on this matter.

In a letter to the West Ben gal's chief wildlife warden, the NTCA had said, "It is also requested to apprise this Authority for the reason why the said tigress was shifted to Alipore Zoo, instead of translocating it back to the state of Odisha as per the SOP."

The country's apex body on tiger conservation has maintained that a wild tiger or tigress should be kept in captivity for as short a time as possible if diagnosed to be fit. Captivity causes severe mental stress to the big cats that have home ranges stretching over 100 square km.

2 critical in attack during zero night celebrations

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Jan 1: Two youths sustained critical injuries after miscreants assaulted them with swords during zero-night celebrations at Tulasinagarpada in this town, Tuesday night.

Some others were also ren dered hurt after two miscreants tried to run their bike over them before absconding. The injured youths were identified as Madhusudan Bagarti and Agni Kumar Bisi in the locality.

The two injured were admitted to the Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital in the town. Town police launched an investigation after a complaint was lodged at the police station. One of the absconding accused was identified as Bablu Sandha while another is yet to be identified.

The incident occurred when some youths were dancing on the road in Tulasinagarpada as part of zero-night celebrations, Tuesday night. Meanwhile, two

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No. 48-KUR-TRD-OT-2024-25

Name of Work: PROVISION OF

PR-84

EAST COAST RAILWAY Tender Notice No. : 53/ET/SBP/ENGG 2024-25, Dtd. 26.12.2024 (1) e-Tender No. : 38-eT-DENC-SBP-24 Name of the work: PROVISION OF BALLASTLESS TRACK AT R1 (670 MTR) AND R3 (570 MTR) OI SAMBALPUR STATION.

bikers came at a great speed

and rammed their bike into

the group of youths. Some of

the youths were thrown off af-

ter the impact. This led to an

altercation and the local youths

asked the two miscreants not to

ride their bike at high speed in

The two accused fled, but

came back later and suddenly

attacked the crowd with swords

the locality.

before absconding.

Approx. cost of the work: ₹ 9,20,40,810.40, Bid Security: ₹ 6,10,300.00.

(2) e-Tender No. : 48-eT-DENS-SBP-24 Name of the work: EXECUTION OF 1 TTR (FS+TWS+WCMSC) - 25 SETS TTR(FS) - 25 SETS, TTR (FS+CS+CMSC 2 SETS, GJ - 26 NOS., SEJ - 2 SETS UNDER THE JURISDICTION O ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL ENGINEER (ADEN)/TITLAGARH (TIG) IN SAMBALPUR DIVISION, 2. CASUAL RAIL RENEWAL (REMOVAL OF REDUNDANT GLUED JOINT) - 1.391 TKM AMBODAL (AMB) YARD LINDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (SSE)(P)/ AMBODALA (AMB) OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION. 3. CASUAL RAIL RENEWAL (REMOVAL OF REDUNDANT GLUED JOINT) - 1.626 TKN



POST NEWS NETWORK

Loisingha, Jan 1: A moving vehicle caught fire on Padmapur road near the Kandajuri weekly haat under this block in Bolangir district at noon, Wednesday. It is

Greater Berhampur to take shape soon

Moving vehicle catches fire

suspected that the fire scene, but the vehicle was caused by a mechanwas completely engulfed in flames by the time they ical fault in the vehicle. reached. According to lo-With presence of mind, the locals managed to rescal sources, the vehicle. which had come from cue the driver and saved his life. Upon receiving the Chhattisgarh region the news, the local fire was on its way back after unloading goods.

brigade arrived at the

North: Plot No.: 740, South: Plot No.: 742	₹ 50,000/-
Date & Time of E-Auction: 10.02.2025 From 11.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 10 (Ten) minutes each.	1
Last Date & Time for submission of EMD & Documents: 10.02.2025 upto 4.00	P.M.
Inspection will be provided to the prospective bidders on any working day before 07.02 appointment of the authorised officer	.2025 with prior
The sale shall be subject to the terms and conditions and provisions prescribed in the SARFAESI Ad Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.	ct 2002 read with the
This is also a 30 days sale notice to the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) of the aforesaid loan a of their outstanding dues with the Bank and to participate in the public auction on the above m For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://baa	entioned date.
Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 02.01.2025 Authorise	d Officer, Bank of India



Where as the Bank acting through its Authorised Officer in exercise of its powers under-Section 13(4) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (SARFAESI) has decided to put up for E-auction of the following properties "As is where is". "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" basis for realization of the debts due to the Bank

properties "As is where is", "As is what is" and "whatever there is" basis for realization of the debts due to the Bank.					
SI. No.		Description of the Properties	Reserve Price / EMD / Bid Increment Amount		
1.	JAGATSINGHPUR BRANCH, PH.: 9938772882 / Borrower: M/s. Rajnandini Fashions, Prop.: Mr. Keshab Kumar Das, S/o.: Mr. Bishnu Charan Das / Guarantor: Mrs. Manorama Das, W/o.: Mr. Keshab Kumar Das, Both are At/PO.: Jankoti, P.S.: Jagatsinghpur, Dist.: Jagatsinghpur, Odisha, PIN-754103 / Total Dues: ₹10,75,300.43 + interest, costs and expenses, less any part amount repaid. Plot No.: 936, South: Plot No.: 938 (Rev. Road & earthen Ro	by East: Plot No.: 930, West: Plot No.: 935, North:	₹23,11,000/- (excluding GST & other statutory dues) / ₹2,31,100/- / ₹ 50,000/-		
2.	RAGHUNATHPUR BRANCH, PH.: 8984003737 / Borrowers: 1) Mrs. Kusum Joshi, W/o.: Mr. Krushna Kumar Joshi, 2) Mr. Krushna Kumar Joshi, S/o.: Mr. Jamunadhar Joshi, Both are At: Manik Ghose Bazar, Bhandari Sahi, Telenga Bazar, Cuttack, Odisha-753009 / Total Dues: ₹20,01,988.37 + interest,costs and expenses, less any part amount repaid. Mr. Purnachandra Barik, Mr. Ajay Kumar Barik, S/o.: Mr. F Mr. Purnachandra Barik & Mrs. Latika Barik, D/o.: Mr. Purr West: S K Sahoo, North: Road, South: Govt. Land (Vacant)		₹38,12,000/- (excluding GST & other statutory dues) / ₹3,81,200/- / ₹ 50,000/-		
Date & Time of E-Auction: 27.01.2025 From 11.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 10 (Ten) minutes each.					
		ID & Documents: 27.01.2025 upto 4.00 P.M.			
Inspection will be provided to the prospective bidders on any working day before 24.01.2025 with prior appointment of the authorised officer					
The sale shall be subject to the terms and conditions and provisions prescribed in the SARFAESI Act 2002 read with the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. This is also a 15 days sale notice to the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) of the aforesaid loan account for settlement of their outstanding dues with the Bank and to participate in the public auction on the above mentioned date. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://baanknet.com					
	ace: Bhubaneswar te: 02.01.2025		Authorised Officer Bank of India		

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Jan 1: The state government will form Greater Berhampur by extending the territorial limits of the Silk City. This will be done by including the areas on the periphery of the city to the Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC).

The matter came to the light during the 46th general council meeting of the Berhampur Development Authority (BeDA) which was held Monday in the BDA conference hall.

The meeting was attended by state Urban Development Minister Dr Krushna Chandra Mohapatra, alongside other key dignitaries.

In the meeting, the primary agenda revolved around discussions on formation of Greater Berhampur and upgradation of drainage and sewerage system and roads in the city. Discussions were also made to enhance the functionality of the Sapua and Bahana water channels and treatment of wastewater in the city. The minister assured to carry out beautification work on the two nullahs. The council reaffirmed its commitment to executing long-pending projects, addressing urban issues, and elevating the city's infrastructure and amenities.

Moreover, peripheral regions of the city will be integrated into the BeMC to achieve the Greater Berhampur vision. After this integration, comprehensive developmental activities, including roads and sewerage, will be implemented.

Mohapatra informed that no meeting of BeDA had been held for a year and various developmental initiatives will be launched across the city after this meeting.

Similarly, as part of developmental initiatives Ama Hospitals will be established at Kelua Palli and Ganjam haat at Chhatrapur and Mission Shakti hubs at Berhampur, Keluapalli and Khallikote. Moreover, plans are also afoot for construction of Kalyan Mandap, market complex and commercial complex at Ambapua and a commercial complex at Nilakanthanagar.

State Transport, Commerce, Mines, and Steel minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena, Berhampur MP Pradeep Kumar Panigrahi, MLAs K Anil Kumar and Krushnachandra Nayak, BeMC Mayor Sanghamitra Dalei, District Collector Dibya Jyoti Parida, Berhampur Sub-Collector Dina Dastagir, BeDA Secretary Ramesh Hansda, Gopalpur NAC Chairperson A Janaki Ram and all senior officials of BeDA attended the meeting.

CONNECTION WITH EXECUTION OF INDOOR AND OUTDOOR WORK FOR MSDAC TO INCREASE RELIABILITY IN AUTO SECTION FROM MACHAPUR (MZY) TO KHURDA ROAD (KUR) OF KHURDA ROAD (KUR) DIVISION.	(SSE)(P)/AMBODALA (AMB) OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION. Approx.cost of the work: ₹2,19,04,575.74 Bid Security: ₹2,59,600.00. Completion period: 12 (Twelve) Months			
Advertised Value: ₹ 78,30,501.25,	(for all sl. nos.).			
Earnest Money: ₹ 1,56,600.00, Period of Completion: 180 Days.	Tender closing Date & Time: At 1500 hrs. on 20.01.2025 (for all tenders).			
Bidding Start Date: 02.01.2025	No manual offers sent by post/courier/			
Date & time of tender closing: At 1300	Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders.			
hrs. on 16.01.2025.	Complete information including e-tender			
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received	documents of the above e-tender is available in website : www.ireps.gov.in			
shall be ignored.	Note : The prospective tenderers are advised			
Complete information including e-tender documents are available in website : www.ireps.gov.in	to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigendum issued for this tender.			
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD)	Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.)/			
PR-845/P/24-25 Khurda Road	PR-850/P/24-25 Sambalpur			



of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt. website www dersodisha.gov.in Construction of Buildings works as pe Name of the Work DTCN available in the website www tenderodisha.gov.in. 07 Nos. (Range Officer Residence-1 No., Forest Guard Quarters - 3 Nos., Forest 2 No. of Works Quarters - 3 Nos., at different places of City Forest Division 3 No. of Covers Single Cover 4 Estimated Cost Rs.12.342 to Rs.19.067 5 Period of Completion 03 Calendar Months 11.00 Hrs. of 27.12.2024 to 17.00 Hrs. of 6 Date & Time of Bidding 02 01 2025 Class of Contractor "D" & "C" Class Contractor Last date & time for receipt of Bids 17.00 Hrs. of 02.01.2025 in Portal Submission of Original documents (TP Cost, Bid Security Declaration, Affidavit in Scheduled-F), Joint During office horus of 17.00 P.M. of Venture agreement with electrical Dt.02.01.2025. contractor in case of composite and other documents as per DTCN Bids received online shall be 11.00 hrs. of 04.01.2025 10 opened on Divisional Forest Officer, City Forest Name & Address of the Officer Divisional Forest Officer, On, Santa Division, Greenpark Nursery, Sahee Nagar, Bhubaneswar

Further, details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal www.tenderodisha.go in. The Addendum/Corrigendum if any will be hosted in the website only Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer OIPR-08150/11/0001/2425 City Forest Division, Bhubaneswa



बैंक ऑफ इंडिया

Bank of India BOI











power post

ith the rapid ad-

vancement of sci-

ence and technol-

ogy, the modern



SOCIETY FOCUS

THE RUSH HOUR

The first step on this long path is to consecrate all our works as a sacrifice to the Divine in us and in the world



Geopolitical Necessity

SRI AUROBINDO

ven before taking office, Donald Trump has launched a diplomatic effort to end Russia's war against Ukraine, calling for an "immediate ceasefire" after meeting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Paris in early December. Trump is right to seek an end to the war. Despite a recent surge in US military assistance and a greenlight for the Ukrainians to strike targets deep inside Russia, Ukraine continues to lose ground in the east, while suffering withering air attacks across its territory. Even if Russia cannot defeat Ukraine's forces, a war that drags on indefinitely could eventually turn Ukraine into a failed state.

Still, as Trump tries to push Ukraine and Russia toward a ceasefire, he should recognise that it is in his own political interest (as well as America's national interest) to continue providing significant support to the Ukrainians, and only to accept a deal that produces a sovereign, secure Ukraine. He should stop talking about ending assistance, and start making the case to a reluctant but generally obedient Republican Party that continued aid is essential to getting a durable ceasefire and ultimately defeating the Kremlin's effort to subjugate Ukraine. Any other outcome would pose a significant threat to US interests worldwide and to Trump's standing as a world leader.

Securing a durable ceasefire will require pledges of long-term US assistance to Ukraine; if Russian President Vladimir Putin thinks that American support is coming to an end, he will have every reason to keep fighting. If Ukraine's defenses were to collapse, the sight of Russian forces taking ever more territory, with Russian tanks potentially rolling into Kyiv, would dash Trump's hopes of being seen as a great peacemaker. Instead, he would end up with his own version of Afghanistan.

In contrast, if Putin knows that US aid will flow to Ukraine for the indefinite future, he will understand that he can't win, making it much more likely that he will engage in sincere efforts to end the war.

So, too, will the continued flow of US aid be necessary to ensure that a ceasefire leads to an outcome that is in the long-term interests of Ukraine and the West. Trump cannot afford to throw Ukraine under the bus by signing off on a deal that leaves the country permanently subjected to Russian predation and coercion.

A subjugated Ukraine would be a victory not only for Russia, but also for China, Iran, and North Korea. With these countries supporting Russian military aggression, the war represents the first joint venture of an emerging Axis of Autocracies. If Trump loses Ukraine, he will further embolden America's enemies and cast doubt on US strength and the durability of its alliances. A bad deal for Ukraine is a bad deal for Trump.

Instead, Trump should accept only a settlement that ensures that the roughly 80 per cent of Ukraine that is still under the control of the government in Kyiv emerges as a sovereign and secure success story. That outcome will require a commitment to provide

Ukraine, for years to come, with the arms and financial assistance it will need to defend itself and rebuild its economy.

Securing a deal that produces a stable and secure Ukraine could be more difficult than Trump thinks. Dividing up territory is the easy part. Who controls what territory will be determined by the disposition of forces at the time of the ceasefire. The front line on the battlefield is likely to become the new border between a rump Ukraine and the roughly 20 per cent of the country occupied by Russian forces.

Michael Froman & Charles A. Kupchan

A subjugated **Ukraine would** be a victory not only for **Russia**, but also for China, Iran, and North Korea. With these countries supporting Russian military aggression, the war represents the first joint venture of an

emerging Axis

of Autocracies



Dakrushi Sahu

RESEARCH CONSISTENTLY **DEMONSTRATES THAT SHORTER** WORKING **HOURS OR COMPRESSED WORKWEEKS INCREASE THE PRODUCTIVITY OF WORKERS AND HENCE. OVERALL ECONOMIC** one hand, a large set of work opportunities with enhanced dexterity and convenience, while millions of people, on the other hand, are not able to cope up with the tasks to be done in a day/week thereby experiencing "time poverty." Recently, time poverty has emerged as a trending concept - it refers to the scarcity of "free time" or the pervasive feeling of not having enough time for rest and leisure after allocating time to day-to-day work activities. Overtime work and/or

world promises to offer, on the

scarcity of free time leads to increased stress and fatigue, decreased well-being, and diminished quality of life which, in turn, hamper the overall progress of an economy. One of the primary contributors to time poverty is the economic compulsion to work overtime. Workers belonging to poverty-ridden (income/consumption) households struggle to meet the subsistence requirements and are forced to work longer hours. Hence, income/ consumption poverty and time poverty go hand-in-hand. The higher-income households enjoy the option of buying time for home production, through outsourcing for domestic services with the help of time-saving machines or keeping maidservants, thereby relegating time for recreational activities. Therefore, they are less susceptible to experiencing time poverty. Specifically, income/ consumption poverty forces and reinforces the time poverty of the poor.

The poor households spend longer hours daily on critical tasks, often alongside the income-earning tasks, such as accessing safe drinking water or cooking fuels, preparing meals, cleaning the house, caring for children/elderly persons/dis-



With rising competition and relentless pursuits of success, modern economies are giving rise to a work culture where longer durations of work are not only encouraged but also expected

abled or sick household members. The situation worsens due to inadequate infrastructural facilities like lack of transportation, technology, and sanitary conditions. It is worth mentioning here that the above-mentioned activities don't receive any direct remuneration from the market (unpaid) and are assumed to be feminine-associated - girls and women take up a larger share of these activities following stricter social norms. In a rigid patriarchal society like India, women's domestic services are not seen as parallel with jobs done in the market and they are often viewed as economically insignificant. The interaction of marriage and labour market makes them bear quite a higher double burden of work daily. Recent study reveals that married employed women, belonging to the working age cohort, bear the highest burden of total work (paid + unpaid), among other factors, and hence, are left with the least available free time.

With rising competition and relentless pursuits of success, modern economies are giving rise to a work culture where longer durations of work are not only encouraged but also expected. Glorification of business and productivity, in urban industrial workplaces,

pressurises individuals to pursue professional success at the cost of sacrificing a substantial amount of personal and family time. The rapid pace of urbanisation exacerbates the situation in contemporary India. In the bustling streets of metropolitan cities, congested traffic eats away a significant amount of productive time each day. Consequently, commuters put effort into adjusting for income-earning tasks by cutting down their daily required free time. Service workers, from street vendors to domestic helps, work long hours to sustain and maintain their livelihoods. Given the competitive urban landscape, public services, poorly managed, often demand lengthy queues and bureaucratic processes constraining further the time required for rest and leisure. Overtime work and/or scar-

city of free time impede individuals' ability to expand their human and social capital: time required for education and skill development is hindered significantly which limits the economic contributions they would make in the marketplace. Timepoor women are indeed forced not to participate in the wage employment and labour market. Such kind of deprivations can also result in the daughter's education being sacrificed, in the family, since they are expected to carry out domestic duties. Nonetheless, acute time poverty strengthens men's control over women thereby fuelling the oppression of women.

With the increasing incidence of dual-earner families in today's society, the issue of time poverty is poised to escalate in coming years. We acknowledge that addressing this challenge requires a multifaceted approach involving policymakers, development practitioners, employers, and communities alike. Flexible work arrangements like adjustable work hours and telecommuting options can enhance work-life balance and reduce time stress. Research consistently demonstrates that shorter working hours or compressed workweeks increase the productivity of workers and hence, overall economic output. It is time to introduce policy measures like paid parental and sick leave which allow workers to engage in domestic responsibilities without jeopardising their income or job security. Countries like the United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, New Zealand and Germany provide paid parental leave and allowances for caring for sick household members and thus, tend to have lower instances of time poverty. Subsidised childcare and elder care programmes can go a long way in balancing work and care-giving responsibilities. Furthermore, public investments in leisure and recreational activities, for instance through construction of community parks and sports complexes, can foster relaxation and social engagement, counteracting the effects of time pressure on individuals and families.

> The writer is a Senior Research Fellow (Ph.D.), Jawaharlal Nehru University.

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

OUTPUT

Reorienting development strategy

ith the arrival of the New Year, there are obvious challenges considering the not-so-favourable global geopolitical situation as well as problems such as concerns over growing protectionism, subdued investment climate, low consumption and a large public debt. Recently, Prime Minister Modi held a high-level meeting with leading economists and experts to formulate the government's strategy for maintaining the growth momentum. He underscored the need for a fundamental shift in mindset to achieve 'Viksit Bharat', emphasising structural reforms and inclusive growth as essential pillars of this transformation. These are often talked about, and the word structural reforms has become more of a jargon while inclusive growth is often heard being said by political leaders, which may not be anything tangible. Several economists do not trust that the present government has been following a strategy of inclusive growth as policies and programmes are by and large tilted towards the upper echelons of society

ing decided that specific measures to support sectors such as MSMEs, agriculture and manufacturing were discussed with an emphasis on address

ing global challenges and do-

Meanwhile, keeping in view

Donald Trump's rhetoric on

tariffs. India can benefit so long

as it is prepared to play the

game by the American Presi-

dent's terms. This means offer-

ing some trade or political con-

cessions in return for favour-

able policies towards India.

Most expect the Union budget

to follow the same pro-busi-

ness focus with expansion of

physical infrastructure to fa-

vour the industry. Stock mar-

kets will mirror global trends

though there is a possibility of

the Nifty moving up. However,

there is very little possibility of

a shift towards the rural sector

as also the struggling unorgan-

ised working class and this will

result in widening the dispari-

ty. The upper echelons of soci-

ety, including a section of the

middle class may continue to

prosper while the marginalised

sections will struggle for a dig-

mention that the Finance Min-

It is, however, significant to

nified existence.

mestic structural issues.

istry recently told Parliament that the Centre's thrust is on improving the quality of public spending while strengthening

The report rightly expressed concern about the slowdown in government capital expenditure and suggested that fiscal spending, including on capital expenditure, could be hindered by the slowing rate of nominal GDP. It would be better if the government reoriented its development strategy towards the unorganised sector, the small trader and the small farmer and evolve some way of ensuring a regular income for them. The rupee is under great pressure, hitting a record low of over ₹85 per dollar with global economic uncertainties and domestic macro-economic challenges very much evident. In such a situation, investment must be geared up, especially from the private sector. Moreover, with wages not increasing significantly for a major section of middle class, not to speak of low-income groups, compared to inflation, consumption is down as affordable surplus is not available to these sections. These need to be thoroughly examined before presentation of the Budget and remedial action taken by planners and economists, close to the powers that be, to redress the situation from getting worse.

But Russia is unlikely to leave it there. Put in could well demand Ukrainian neutrality and limits on the size of its armed forces - just as he did in 2022. Trump must understand that these conditions are non-starters; they would leave Ukraine intolerably exposed and vulnerable. Whether Ukraine's future lies as a member of NATO or as a party to other security guarantees, Trump cannot give Putin a veto over Ukraine's geopolitical alignment.

Putin also may insist on formal US recognition of the occupied parts of Ukraine as Russian territory, and on the removal of Western sanctions against Russia. Again, Trump cannot afford to acquiesce; doing so would grant legitimacy to Russia's forcible annexation of another country's territory.

As he did just before his invasion, Putin may demand broader revisions to the European security order and a reduction or withdrawal of allied forces from NATO's eastern flank. Here, too, Trump must stand firm. Given the ongoing threat that Russia poses to the West, the US cannot afford to weaken NATO's defenses.

Finally, Trump needs to understand that he cannot strike a deal with Putin without getting America's European allies on board. Whether he likes the European Union or not, he needs a strong, secure, and unified Europe as a capable ally. At a time when many countries are questioning US leadership and flirting with alternative alignments, the US and its European allies must remain in lockstep.

A ceasefire deal in Ukraine that comes at the expense of allied unity would be a grave mistake. A divided Atlantic alliance and a fractured EU would leave the US without the strong European partner it needs not only to counter Russia, but also to promote stability in an increasingly unruly world.

Trump is right to try to end the war and stop the death and destruction. But he should launch that effort with eyes wide open about how challenging it will be to get a deal that leads to a secure and sovereign Ukraine. Anything short of that outcome would embolden adversaries, split the Atlantic alliance, and constitute a grievous failure of US diplomacy. And it would all happen on Trump's watch.

Michael Froman is President of the Council on Foreign Relations. Charles A. Kupchan is Professor of International Affairs at Georgetown University and Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

The world is the great gymnasium where we come to make ourselves strong

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Truth, like gold, is to be obtained not by its growth, but by washing away from it all that is not gold

LEO TOLSTOY

Generosity is giving more than you can, and pride is taking ۶L less than you need

KAHLIL GIBRAN



Dhurjati Mukherjee

INVESTMENT MUST BE GEARED UP. ESPECIALLY FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR

etters

are most welcome to contribute letters

requested to send their contact

address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and

suggestions, preferably by email, to:

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

(0)

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post

(100 words), articles and

words). Contributors are

numbers and full postal

edit@orissapost.com

columns (between 600-1000

It is understood, the meet-

Sir, In the wake of the toppling of the Sheikh Hasina government and worsening relations between India and Bangladesh, a defence agreement between Pakistan and Bangladesh armies on giving Bangladesh army training has caused serious security concern for India. The proposal put forward by Pakistan was accepted by Bangladesh as the latter sees it as an opportunity to improve relations with India's western neighbour. The new deal between the two armies was made against the backdrop of close alignment between the two countries and India's strained relations with Bangladesh. Reliable sources said that top Pakistani army officers will train Bangladeshi army officers. India is worried that the Pakistani officers may instil anti-India ideology in the Bangladeshi soldiers. India has always held the opinion that Pakistan is plotting terrorism against India. On the other hand, China has been building pressure on north-eastern states. So, Pakistan, a major ally of China, may pose security challenge to north-east India..

Venu GS, KOLLAM (KERALA)

the social security net for the poor and the needy. In the statement on deviation from the Fiscal Responsibility & Budget Management Act targets, the ministry also pointed out that the government remained committed to pursue the path for fiscal consolidation and lower fiscal deficit under 4.5% by the next financial year.

If spending is increased. which obviously is a necessity and without higher taxation or a wealth tax of the super-rich, keeping the fiscal deficit below 5% may be rather difficult.

It's worth mentioning here the Reserve Bank of India's 'State of the Economy' report (published in December) stated that the slowdown in domestic economic activity bottomed out in the second quarter and has "since recovered aided by strong festive demand and a pick-up in rural activities." Co-authored by Michael Patra, RBI Deputy Governor, the report urged the need to excoriate inflation and revive investment with bright prospects for private consumption.



Too little, too late Sir, The Manipur Chief Minister's apology to his peo-

ple on New Year's Day is a classic example of too little and too late. Biren Singh ought to have resigned well over a year ago. The apology, coming from an Indian politician, though rare by all means, is akin to locking the stable door after the horse has bolted. Under his watch the state has effectively been divided on ethnic lines, with each group guarding its turf from the other. That one engine of the double-engine government has tendered an apology is of little or no consolation to the two communities who are still suffering as their lives have been torn to shreds. If the Chief Minister is really contrite, he should resign immediately and press upon the Prime Minister to visit the state at least once. The Prime Minister's inexplicable "hands off Manipur" attitude has only added anxiety and uncertainty to the precarious scenario.

Avinash Godboley, DEWAS (MP)















TMC FOUNDATION DAY

Committed to service over power: Mamata after weeklong shutdown

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 1: The TMC Wednesday observed its 28th foundation day, with party supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee asserting that after over two decades of protests, victories, and challenges, the party's core belief remains that politics is not about power, but about service to people.

Banerjee said the party's struggle for the rights of the people of the state is ongoing and will continue in the future.

In her message, Banerjee extended her New Year greetings and highlighted the dual significance of the day - the dawn of the New Year and the 28th anniversary of TMC's formation.

Reflecting on the party's formation January 1, 1998, the TMC supremo emphasised the party's commitment to the welfare of the country's people. "Our struggle for the rights of the people of Bengal is ongoing and will continue in the days ahead," she said.

She also posted a song that she wrote and composed herself, which was sung by renowned artist Indraneel Sen, adding a personal touch to the celebration.

In the afternoon, Banerjee shared a message on X, "Roshni chand se hoti hai, sitaron se nahi, Mohabbat Trinamool Congress se hoti hai, aur kisi se nahi!" (Light comes from the moon, not from stars, love is for



Trinamool Congress and no one else), as she expressed gratitude to every single member of the party and thanked them for their dedication and resilience, highlighting the importance of unity and service.

Reflecting on the party's core principles, Banerjee wrote, "On Trinamool Congress Foundation Day, I wholeheartedly thank every single member of our extended family. Over the course of two decades, every protest, every victory, and even every challenge has reaffirmed our core belief: politics

is not about power but about SERVICE. As we celebrate this milestone, I urge every Trinamool soldier to renew their pledge to fight for the people, and remember that the soul of our party is rooted in the ethos

of 'Maa, Mati, Manush'." TMC's national general secretary and MP Abhishek Banerjee also took to social media to express gratitude toward the party's workers. He emphasised the critical role of TMC workers, calling them "the backbone of our party.

"TMC is dedicated to the wel-

fare of the people of the country and the state. I salute the hard work and sacrifices of all the TMC workers," Abhishek wrote, encouraging them to face the future with renewed vigour as the party prepares for upcoming struggles.

Across the state, the TMC Foundation Day was celebrated with cultural programmes, flag-hoisting ceremonies, and public gatherings.

In Kolkata, the party's headquarters was a hub of activities where senior leaders hoisted the TMC flag, paid tribute to the party's martyrs, and addressed party workers. Youth wings organised rallies, and women supporters showcased Bengal's rich cultural heritage through music and dance performances.

The celebrations in districts like North 24 Parganas, Nadia, and Purulia included traditional dance performances, sweets distribution, and interactive sessions, where party leaders and workers discussed the future course of action.

Streets were adorned with TMC's signature blue and white colours, as party workers took part in these grassroots celebrations, reinforcing the party's message of unity and progress.

Founded January 1, 1998, as a breakaway faction of the Indian National Congress, the TMC gradually gained prominence, particularly after its historic victory in the 2011 West Bengal Legislative Assembly elections.

EIGHTEEN PEOPLE DETAINED BY POLICE DURING THE PROTESTS

ROPEWAY PROJECT STIR

Katra returns to normalcy

RELEASED. SPARKING OVERNIGHT CELEBRATIONS IN THE HOLY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Katra/Jammu, Jan 1: Katra -- the base camp for pilgrims visiting the Mata Vaishno Dev temple in Jammu and Kashmir -- resumed normal business activity Wednesday after a weeklong shutdown protesting a proposed ropeway project in the Trikuta hills of Reasi district.

Eighteen people detained by police during the protests were also released, sparking overnight celebrations in the holy town.

"All shops, restaurants, and business establishments reopened after a week-long closure due to the shutdown, while traffic movement was also restored, bringing much relief to the pilgrims," an official said.

With the return of normalcy. hundreds of pilgrims thronged the holy town on the first day of the year to pay obeisance at the cave shrine, with long serpentine queues seen at the entry points in Katra and Bhawan.

"We are very happy that the bandh has ended. It was causing huge inconvenience to us. We have come here to pay obeisance on the first day of the new year," Suresh Kadam, a resident of Pune, said.

The 'bandh', which began December 25, disrupted normal life in one of the country's busiest pilgrimage towns which



draws thousands of devotees daily.

The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti, which called for the shutdown, had announced that all activities in Katra would remain suspended during this period.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration announced the release of the detainees Tuesday night and constituted a four-member committee to hold talks with the protesting civil society members.

"Eighteen detained individuals, including some leaders, were released at around 1 am from Reasi and Udhampur jails. They arrived in Katra to jubilant celebrations, where hundreds of people welcomed them," a spokesperson for the

Samiti said. The Samiti initially called for the shutdown December 25. It extended the bandh by 72 hours December 27 night to press its demands, including shelving the proposed ropeway project and releasing the detained pro testers.

Eight youths had gone on a hunger strike, demanding the release of the detainees which included two Samiti leaders -- Bhupinder Singh and Sohan Chand.

Last month, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) announced plans to install a ropeway to facilitate access to the temple for senior citizens, children, and others who find it challenging to climb the 13-km-long track to the cave shrine.

The proposed Rs 250-crore ropeway project will connect Tarakote Marg to Sanji Chhat. leading to the cave shrine in Reasi district.

B'desh turmoil gives Bengal BJP's membership drive a fillip position Suvendu Adhikari had

STRUGGLING TO MEET TARGET

Kolkata, Jan 1: The violence against Hindus in Bangladesh has provided a fillip to West Bengal BJP's membership drive, as the party struggles to meet its ambitious one crore target, while campaiging against the atrocities on minorities across the border to consolidate Hindu support in

the state. Attacks on the minority com-



of similar events under TMC's rule, which is known for its minority appeasement," state BJP president Sukanta Majumdar told PTI.

said at rallies.

The BJP has been charging the TMC with overlooking the suffering of persecuted Hindus across the border.

"The attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh directly affect Bengal. The Hindus in Bengal know that as long as BJP is here, they are safe as, left to the TMC, they would meet the same fate like Bangladesh," BJP MP and general secretary Jyotirmay Singh



munity on the other side of the border has provided the party with a rallying point, as it seeks to counter challenges posed by organisational gaps, internal discord, and the ruling Trinamool Congress's (TMC) political dominance.

Both TMC and BJP are leveraging the Bangladesh issue to shape the political narrative ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections

"The Bangladesh turmoil, where Hindu minorities have been at the receiving end, has accelerated the membership drive, as people see the BJP as the only party capable of ensuring stability and are afraid

Top BJP leaders have launched an aggressive campaign across West Bengal for the last one month, focusing on the plight of Hindus in Bangladesh. They have accused the TMC of providing shelter to jihadists and fundamentalists as

part of its vote-bank politics. "West Bengal's future is at stake under TMC rule. If we allow the TMC to continue its appeasement politics, we are inviting the same crisis we see unfolding in Bangladesh. The BJP is the only party capable of providing true security for our people." Leader of the Op-

Mahato said The BJP has linked the cri-

sis to its push for the CAA, which promises citizenship to persecuted minorities from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Union Home Minister Amit

Shah had set a one-crore membership target during his visit to Kolkata October 27, intending to galvanise the BJP's organisational base in Bengal. However, the party is still far from the target, with around 35 lakh members enrolled in the last week of December, days before the drive's deadline was extended to first week of January 2025.



WESTERN DISTURBANCE TO BRING SNOWFALL IN KASHMIR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Jan 1: Cold conditions have tightened their grip on Kashmir, with the valley bracing for fresh spells of snowfall as two back-to-back western disturbances are likely to affect the region starting Wednesday, officials said.

According to the Meteorological Department, a feeble

western disturbance is expected to affect Jammu and Kashmir from January 1-2, with light snow at scattered places from Wednesday evening to Thursday morning.

From January 3-6, a moderate western disturbance is expected to bring light to moderate snow to most places in the state, with peak activity from January 4-6. The MeT

Office added that there is a possibility of heavy snow at a few places in the higher reaches during the second spell.

Meanwhile, the night temperature dropped at most places in Kashmir as cold conditions tightened their grip on the valley. Gulmarg, a tourist resort town known for skiing activities in north Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 8.8 degrees

Celsius, up from the previous night's minus 11.5 degrees Cel sius, the Met Department said Gulmarg was the was the cold est recorded place in the valley

Pahalgam, one of the base camps for the annual Amar nath Yatra in south Kashmir, registered a minimum of mi nus 7.6 degrees Celsius, slight ly up from minus 8.4 degrees Celsius, it said.

Livestock census deadline extended in Bengal

The census is to be conducted at households in the city, all urban areas, and villages, including those inhabited by defence personnel, paramilitary forces, and police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Jan 1: The West Bengal Animal Resources Development department has extended the deadline of the livestock census in the state for some more time, an official said Wednesday.

The country-wide survey was supposed to be concluded December 31, but the deadline was extended in West Bengal for some more time to complete the process, the official of the Animal Resources Develop-

ment department told PTI. "The livestock census deadline was December 31 but it had been extended for some more time. I can speak about Bengal, but to my knowledge, the enumeration drive has been extended elsewhere in the country as well to make it foolproof and successful," the official said.

Additional Chief Secretary, Animal Resources Development department, Vivek Kumar, had said in a notice earlier that the census is to be conducted at households in the city, all urban areas, and villages, including those inhabited by defence personnel, paramilitary forces, and police.

The data from the census will be uploaded on the union government portal by a mobile app. Managing Director of the West Bengal Livestock Development Corporation (WBLDC) Utpal Kumar Karmakar said in West Bengal the exercise will

be over by February.



The data from the census will be uploaded on the union government portal by a mobile app

Another official in the animal resources development said the extension was necessitated due to the reluctance of a large section of owners of domesticated animals - from pet dogs particularly pedigree ones, cats,

buffalo, cow, goats, horses in shed - to help the enumerators list their animals for a database uploaded in the all India portal of the central government.

The reluctance is more prevalent in both cities like Kolkata and Siliguri and district towns including Durgapur, Asansol and Baharampur among others, the official said.

"The owners apprehend their animal will be taken away by the team or they will be heavily fined but we don't go from house to house to conduct raids for confiscating purposes. We just enlist and want to see valid papers from the owners," he said.

The official said municipal corporations, municipalities and panchayats are being involved in the enumeration process to make it more broadbased and effective "as the local councillor or panchayat representative can have better reach to the residents of his area and know about their possession of anv animal.

Already Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation have been approached and the process has begun.

Kolkata Municipal Corporation Mayor-in-Council member Debashis Kumar told PTI, "We have received the communication from the state department. We are activating our local network to reach out to pet owners in our areas. We don't foresee any problem."

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Jan 1: Three decades after it was constructed, one of the oldest security bunkers in Srinagar city has been dismantled -- underlining the improvement in the Kashmir valley's security situation.

3-decade-old security bunker dismantled

The security bunker, constructed by the Border Security Force (BSF) in the early 1990s, at Braripora in the city's Safakadal area is in the process of being removed.

"The CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force), which was occupying the bunker and my property adjacent to it, has left the place. The bunker was built in early 1990s," said Jayiz Ahmad Alaie

Locals also welcomed the decision to remove the bunker.

"While most security bunkers were removed from the city in the previous decade, this continued to remain operational. This was probably the biggest bunker in the city and occupied most of the road," said



Tanveer Ahmad, a local.

Claiming that the bunker's presence used to create frequent traffic jams during peak hours, he said vehicular move ment would become more fluid following its removal.

A senior security official said the process of removal and construction of security bunkers was constantly reviewed.

"If a bunker is needed, we will construct it. If an existing bunker is no longer needed, we will remove it," the official said on the condition of anonymity.







national



Is Priyank Kharge's name mentioned in the suicide note? His name is not mentioned anywhere. The Minister has said that he is ready for any inquiry SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

MAN ATTEMPTS SELF-IMMOLATION

An e-rickshaw owner attempted self-immolation at the office of the senior superintendent of police in Uttar Pradesh's Badaun Wednesday alleging police harassment and threats of false cases, officials said





(Prime Minister) Narendra Modi has gone to Kuwait. He was hugging

the Sheikhs of Kuwait. You call and show the Sheikhs what your government is doing here (in Sambhal)

ASADUDDIN OWAISI AIMIM PRESIDENT

Assam is now an aspiration al state and the media, too, should be aspira-

tional. It should not remain imprisoned in the decades of '70s, '80s and '90s of the last century and reflect the hopes and thoughts of the new generation

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA ASSAM CM

Reality of judicial appointments is much murkier and much much more non objective than

originally conceived. Mutual Back scratching, uncle judges, family lineages etc demoralise others and bring disrepute to institution ABHISHEK SINGHVI CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Bus overturns; student killed

Kannur (Kerala): In a tragic incident, a 10-year-old girl student died and 18 other students were injured when a school bus overturned at Valakkai in Kerala's Kannur district here Wednesday, police sources said. The girl, who was travelling in the bus, was thrown out and was crushed to death as it overturned, they said.

Ex-Punjab BSP chief joins AAP

Chandigarh: Bahujan Samaj Party's former Punjab unit president Jasvir Singh Garhi joined the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) along with his supporters Wednesday. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann

Govt extends DAP fertiliser subsidy

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister, extended two crop insurance schemes -- PMFBY and RWBCIS -- for one more year till 2025-26 and created a separate ₹824.77 crore fund for technology infusion in the implementation of flagship schemes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: The Union Cabinet Wednesday extended a one-time package to subsidise key fertiliser DAP at the cost of up to ₹3,850 crore and approved a one-year extension of two crop insurance schemes, decisions that Prime Minister Narendra Modi said were dedicated to farmers.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by the Prime Minister, extended two crop insurance schemes -- PMFBY and RWBCIS -- for one more year till 2025-26 and created a separate ₹824.77 crore fund for technology infusion in the implementation of

flagship schemes. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS) have been extended to align it with the 15th Finance Commission period.

The total outlay for PMFBY and RWBCI has been enhanced to ₹69.515.71 crore for 2021-22 to 2025-26, higher from ₹66,550 crore for 2020-21 to 2024-25. In another big decision, the Union Cabinet extended an additional subsidy on di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) beyond December 31, 2024, to help maintain retail prices of this key fertiliser at

₹1,350 per bag of 50 kg. Last year, the Centre announced a one-time special package on DAP at ₹3,500 per tonne, valid from April 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, with a financial implication of ₹2,625 crore to keep prices under check. The package was over and above the nutrient-based subsidy (NBS) fixed by the government on non-urea nutrients. The Cabinet also approved the proposal for an extension of a one-time special package on DAP at the rate of ₹3,500 per

rescue operation, dies

Jaipur, Jan 1: A three-year-old

girl, who fell into a 150-foot-deep

borewell in Rajasthan's Kotput-

li-Behror district, was brought

out in an unconscious state

Wednesday after a 10-day rescue

operation carried out by NDRF

and SDRF teams and rushed to

However, the girl, Chetna,

was declared dead by doctors at

the hospital, they said. NDRF

team in-charge Yogesh Meena

said that when the girl was tak-

en out, there was no movement

in her body. Chetna was imme-

diately taken to Kotputli's BDM

hospital by ambulance where

a team of doctors declared her

dead, the officials said. The

child had fallen into the borewell

December 23 while playing in

the agriculture farm of her fa-

ther in Badivali Dhani under

the Sarund police station area.

to pull the girl out of the

borewell with the help of a ring

but all attempts failed. Till

Monday, the rescue teams of

NDRF and SDRF were hopeful

of completing the operation

and reaching the girl, but they

could not succeed in saving the

child as layers of sedimentary

rock compounded the drilling

Initially, efforts were made

hospital, officials said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



tonne for the period from Jan-

uary 1, 2025, till further orders. On social media platform X, the Prime Minister said, "(Govt's) first decision of the New Year is dedicated to crores of farmer brothers and sisters of our country. We have approved increasing the allocation for the crop insurance scheme. This will provide more

security to farmers' crops and will also mitigate their concerns about any damage" The Cabinet's decision to extend the one-time special package on Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) will help farmers

by ensuring the fertiliser at affordable prices, he added. Briefing media, Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw

informed that farmers will continue to get DAP at ₹1,350 per bag and the extra burden will be borne by the central government.

Asked about the ongoing farmer agitation in Punjab and why the government is unable to convince them, Vaishnaw said, "If you would have moved around during Haryana elections, farmers gave great feedback on 'Andolan' versus real welfare versus 'good to farmers', you would have yourself seen". The special package on DAP

will be provided over and above the approved NBS (nutrient-based subsidy) to ensure the smooth availability of DAP fertiliser to the farmers at an affordable price.

The Centre provides 28 grades of P&K (phosphatic and potassic) nutrients to farmers at subsidised prices through fertiliser manufacturers/importers.

April 1, 2010.

In spite of geopolitical constraints and volatility of global market conditions, the government said it has ensured the availability of DAP to farmers at affordable prices for Kharif and Rabi 2024-25.

The Centre has provided Rs 11.9 lakh crore fertiliser subsidy during the 2014-24 period, which is more than double the subsidy of ₹5.5 lakh crore during 2004-14.

Later in a press conference, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the Cabinet also approved the export of 1 million tonnes of non-basmati rice to Indonesia through National Cooperative Export Ltd (NCEL).

For the targeted infusion of technology in the implementation of the crop insurance schemes, the minister said the Cabinet also approved the creation of a separate Fund for Innovation and Technology (FIAT) with a corpus of ₹ 824.77 crore

It will help in the use of technology for faster assessment of crop damage, claim settlement and lesser disputes. It will also help in using digital technologies for easier enrolment and greater coverage, Vaishnaw said.

In terms of policies issued, the PMFBY is the country's largest insurance scheme and third-largest in terms of total premiums. About 23 states and Union territories are im-

plementing it.

Another UP temple reopens after 44 yrs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Moradabad (UP), Jan 1: Decades after it was closed over communal violence in Moradabad, a temple in the Daulata bagh area has been reopened by local administration and authorities, according to officials.

The development comes in light of multiple abandoned or locked temples in various parts of Uttar Pradesh being reopened for prayers. After 44 years, the temple was reopened Monday, officials said.

'On the administration's or ders, a team comprising police and municipal corporation staff began operations to reopen the temple. There has been no opposition or unrest, and the locals are cooperating in the effort,' Nagphani Police Inspector Sunil Kumar said.



After the reopening, it was found that some temple idols were misplaced or missing, Kumar said.

He added that local authorities are now overseeing the restoration work, ensuring the space is cleaned, repaired, and made ready for regular worship once again.

The process has proceeded peacefully, with no reports of hindrance or objection from any group, Kumar added.

Mohan Bhagwat The war of words between the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Delhi has heated up, with prominent leaders

Kejriwal writes to

from both sides trading barbs on various issues



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal has written a letter to RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, alleging distribution of money and deletion of names of Purvanchali and Dalit voters by the BJP ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls.

The BJP has hit back at Kejriwal, saying his letter to Bhagwat is a reflection of his "political frustration" and 'fear of defeat" in the polls due next month.

The war of words between the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Delhi has heated up, with prominent leaders from both sides trading barbs on various issues.

Kejriwal has sought Bhagwa's clarification on reports that the Rashtriya Swayam sevak Sangh (RSS) will campaign for the BJP in the Delhi election.

"There have been media reports suggesting that the RSS will campaign for votes for the BJP in the Delhi elections. Is this true? Before this, people wish to know whether the RSS endorses the recent wrongful actions taken by the BJP," he has written in his let ter to Bhagwat.

The AAP convenor has raised several questions in his letter dated December 30. ask ing if the RSS supports money being "openly distributed" by BJP leaders to "buy" votes and "large-scale" deletion of names

of Purvanchali and Dalit vot ers by the saffron party. This is the second letter written by Kejriwal to Bhag-

wat in recent months.



and assured him of AAP's dedication to social justice and inclusive governance, said an AAP statement here.

4 associates of JeM terrorist outfit held

.

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Police Wednesday arrested four associates of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terrorist outfit from Awantipora area of Pulwama district. "Police in Awantipora along with security forces have arrested four terrorist associates of proscribed terror outfit JeM in Tral area," a police spokesperson said.

Delhi Police books 35 bikers

New Delhi: The Delhi Police have booked 35 motorcycle riders under their 'Operation Bullet Raja," a focused crackdown on bikers creating a nuisance with modified silencers and stunt performances, in the Jamia Nagar area of southeast Delhi, an official said Wednesday. "The operation started on the evening of December 31 and ended in the early hours of January 1," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast) Ravi Kumar Singh said.

Four killed in road mishaps

Bangalore: At least four people were killed and eight others injured in separate road accidents in areas surrounding Bengaluru during New Year celebrations, police said Wednesday.

The subsidy on P&K fertilisers is governed by the NBS Scheme, with effect from

PMFBY and RWBCIS offer financial assistance to farmers suffering from crop loss or damage caused by various unforeseen events. PMFBY covers crop losses based on vield risk, while RWBCIS focuses on weather-related risks

Monkeys, seen atop the North Block building on the first day of new year 2025 in New Delhi

terrorism.

India, Pak exchange list of nuclear installations **3-yr-old girl pulled out** of borewell after 10-day

The exchange of the list took place under the provisions of an agreement on the prohibition of attacks against nuclear installations and facilities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: India and Pakistan Wednesday exchanged a list of their nuclear installations under a bilateral pact that prohibits the two sides from attacking each other's atomic facilities, in continuing an over-three-decade

practice.

The exchange of the list took place under the provisions of an agreement on the prohibi-

tion of attacks against nuclear installations and facilities, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

It was done simultaneously through diplomatic channels in



New Delhi and Islamabad.

"India and Pakistan today exchanged, through diplomatic channels, simultaneously at New Delhi and Islamabad, the list of nuclear installations

and facilities covered under the agreement on the prohibition of attack against nuclear installation and facilities," the MEA said. The exchange of the list came

amid frosty ties between the

two countries over the Kashmir

issue as well as cross-border

December 31, 1988 and entered

into force January 27, 1991.

The agreement was signed

The pact mandates the two

countries to inform each other

of the nuclear installations and

facilities to be covered under the agreement on the first day of January every year. "This is the 34th consecutive ex-

change of such lists between the two countries, the first one having taken place January 1, 1992," the MEA said in a statement.

The ties between the two countries came under severe strain after India's warplanes pounded a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist training camp in Paki stan's Balakot in February 2019 in response to the Pulwama terror attack.

Maha govt to draft its AI policy soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 1: Maharashtra will soon draft its independent Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy to position the state as a major player in the sector and a leader in technological advancements, a minister has said.

State Information and Technology Minister Ashish Shelar gave the direction to authorities during a meeting with IT Department officials at the Sahyadri Guest House Tuesday.

The meeting was attended by IT Department Secretary Parrag Jaiin Nainutia, MahaIT



Managing Director Javshree Bhoj, and senior officials from the departments concerned.

During the meeting, Shelar stressed the importance of leveraging AI to boost industries, attract businesses, cre-

The India AI Mission, launched by the central government earlier this year with a budget of ₹10,372 crore, aims to enhance

ate employment opportunities, and establish Maharashtra as a major player in the AI sector, an official statement said.

He said the AI era has begun and that the state must seize this opportunity.

'By adopting AI, we can drive economic growth, generate jobs for the youth, and strengthen our position in the global AI

AI capabilities across the nation

landscape," he said. The India AI

Mission, launched by the central government earlier this year with a budget of ₹10,372 crore, aims to enhance AI capabilities across the nation. It includes initiatives such as the India AI Datasets Platform, application development programmes, graphic processing units, innovation

centres, skill development and support for startups in the field of AI, the statement said.

Shelar underscored the need for Maharashtra to align its AI ambitions with this national programme to remain competitive. From January 2025 the central government will be gin collecting and aggregating non-personal datasets to build a comprehensive database for the India AI Datasets Platform This will provide seamless access for startups, companies academics, and researchers to develop AI applications and specialised services, it said.

work, the officials said.













It is too cold. Keep yourselves warm but do not make any wild guesses. The new year will see a new harvest (nai fasal) and a new government that will be sensitive to the people's need for health, education and jobs (padhaai, kamaai, dawaai, sunwai aur karvaayi ki sarkaar) TEJASHWI YADAV | RJD LEADER

UNPRECEDENTED RUSH **OF DEVOTEES AT AYODHYA**

The temple towns of Ayodhya and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh Wednesday witnessed an unprecedented rush of devotees on the first day of the New Year. The Ram temple at Ayodhya was consecrated January 22 last year



of the day uote 77

The govern ment spends ₹2,200 crore annually on electricity subsidies and ₹200 crore pe

month on salaries and pensions of electricity board employees. Subsidies should be reserved for the needy, and the well-off individuals must contribute towards building a fairer society

SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU HP CM

The prime minister has consistently extended all reguisite support to the state and the Mahavuti alliance. enabling us to overcome roadblocks and

advance stalled projects EKNATH SHINDE | MAHA DEPUTY CM

The Modi government stands with farmers like a pro tective shield and today, on the very first day of 2025, if

has reiterated this resolve AMIT SHAH UNION HOME MINISTER





handled JMM when her husband served jail One of the biggest reasons why INDIA repeated govt in Jharkhand

@Amockx2022

SHORT TAKES

11 Maoists surrender

Gadchiroli: A total of 11 Naxalites, including senior cadre Vimla Chandra Sidam alias Tarakka, surrendered Wednesday before Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: India's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 fell by 7.93 per cent compared to 2019, while the emission intensity of its GDP declined 36 per cent between 2005 and 2020, according to data submitted to the UN climate change office.

In its fourth Biennial Update Report (BUR-4) submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) December 30. India said its total greenhouse gas emissions (excluding land use,

land-use change, and forestry, or LULUCF) in 2020 were 2.959 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO2e). Including LULUCF, emissions were 2,437 MtCO2e.

Total national emissions (including LULUCF) fell 7.93 per cent compared to 2019 but increased 98.34 per cent since 1994, the report said.

India continues to decouple economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions. Between 2005 and 2020, the emission intensity of India's GDP declined 36 per cent, it said.

Biennial Update Reports



(BURs) are submitted by developing countries to the UNF-CCC every two years, providing updates on emissions, climate action progress, and needs for support in mitigation and ad-

aptation. Emission intensity refers to the amount of greenhouse gases emitted per unit of GDP. The report added that India created an additional carbon sink of

2.29 billion tonnes during 2005 to 2021.

As October 2024, the share non-fossil fuel-based power generation capacity in the country stood at 46.52 per cent. As part of its climate plans or Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to meet the Paris Agreement goals, India aims to reduce GDP emission intensity by 45 per cent by 2030 from 2005 levels.

It also aims to achieve 50 per cent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030.

and robotics.

it was unanimously decided to

observe 2025 as the 'year of re-

The reforms would aim at

transforming the armed forces

into a technologically-advanced

combat-ready force capable of

multi-domain integrated oper-

The Singh-led meeting held

that the reforms should aim to

further bolster jointness and

integration initiatives and fa-

cilitate establishment of the

integrated theatre commands,

it said. During the delibera-

tions, it was decided that the

reforms should focus on new

domains such as cyber and

space, and emerging technolo-

gies like artificial intelligence,

machine learning, hypersonic

and robotics

ations, the ministry added.

forms', it said in a statement.

India has committed to creat ing an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes through forest and tree cover by 2030.

According to the report, India's main sources of green house gas emissions are carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels, methane from livestock and emissions from aluminium and cement production. The LULUCF sector acted as a net carbon sink in 2020.

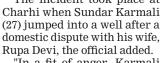
India's net national emis sions in 2020, after accounting for removals, were 2,436,656 gigagrams of carbon dioxide equivalent (GgCO2e).

Bizman dies

Five lives lost in '2025 TO BE YEAR OF DEFENCE REFORMS' rescue attempt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hazaribag, Jan 1: Five persons died in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district, including four who attempted to rescue a man from a well, a police official said. The incident took place at



(SDPO) of Bishnugarh, told PTI. The other victims were identified as Rahul Karmali (26), Vinay Karmali, Pankaj Karmali and Suraj Bhuiyan (24), the official added. On getting information, police went to the spot and recovered the bodies

the SDPO added. The well has been covered and movement has been restricted near it, the officer added

and sent them for post-mortem,

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi. Jan 1: India Wednesday declared 2025 as the year of defence reforms and that the focus will be to roll out integrated theatre commands to boost tri-services synergy and ensure simpler and time-sensitive military procurement with a broader aim to transform the military into a technological-

ly-advanced force. The overall aim of the ninepoint reforms planned by the defence ministry would be to ensure deeper collaboration among key stakeholders, break silos, eliminate inefficiencies and optimise utilisation of resources. The reforms would lay the foundation for "unprecedented" advancements in defence preparedness and ensure India's security and sovereignty amidst challenges of 21st century, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said. The defence ministry's aim on theatre commands assumes significance as it virtually indicated a resolve to unveil the ambitious reform

Under the theaterisation

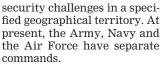
measure in 2025.



The reforms would lay the foundation for unprecedented advancements in defence preparedness and ensure India's security and sovereignty amidst challenges of 21st century RAJNATH SINGH DEFENCE MINISTER

model, the government seeks to integrate the capabilities of the Army, the Air Force and the Navy and optimally utilise their resources for wars and operations.

As per the theaterisation plan, each of the theatre commands will have units of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force and all of them will work as a single entity looking after



The decision on observing 2025 as year of reforms and the broad objectives under it were finalised at a high-level meeting chaired by Singh. It was attended by all the secretaries of the defence ministry.

One of the nine points listed by the ministry following the deliberations was to take initiative to instil a "sense of pride" in Indian culture and ideas, fostering confidence in achieving global standards through indigenous capabilities, while imbibing best practices from

Punjab govt team meets Dallewal PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SC to hear plea today

Chandigarh, Jan New Delhi: The Supreme Court is Punjab government Wednesscheduled to hear January 2 a plea day continued with its efforts

by suicid amid dívorce dispute modern militaries that suit the nation's conditions. PRESS TRUST OF INDIA The defence ministry said

the focus in 2025 will also be on new domains such as cyber New Delhi, Jan 1: A 40-yearand space, emerging technoloold man allegedly died by gies like artificial intelligence, suicide by hanging himself machine learning, hypersonic from a ceiling fan at his res idence in Kalyan Vihar area In order to give impetus to of northwest Delhi, an official the ongoing and future reforms,

said Wednesday. The family members of the deceased identified as Puneet Khurana, a businessman. have levelled allegations of harassment against his wife and in-laws.

"Khurana's father Trilok Nath has produced his mobile phone and other related articles. The mobile phone of the deceased and other related ar ticles were taken in police pos session. The body will be handed over to the family members after post-mortem," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP)

Northwest, Bhisham Singh. The DCP further said that the incident was reported at approximately 4:18 pm December 31.

"Soon after information, a team was immediately rushed to the spot. The team found Khurana unresponsive on his bed with a ligature mark around his neck, indicating death by hanging," he said adding further investigation is underway. The body was transported to the BJRM Hospital and has been preserved for a post-mortem examination police said.

While talking with media persons, Khurana's father levelled allegations against his wife and in-laws. He said they used to threaten him almost every day over financial and property issues. Khurana's sister alleged that her brother committed suicide because of his wife and her parents who mentally pressurised him and harassed him.



"In a fit of anger, Karmali rode his motorcycle into the well. In an effort to save him, four other persons entered the well one after another to save him, but all died," BN Prasad, sub-divisional police officer

in Gadchiroli. These Maoists, carrying a collective bounty of ₹1.03 crore, were involved in launching attacks on security personnel. Most prominent among the surrendered Maoists is Dandkaranya Zonal Committee Member Vimla Chandra Sidam alias Tarakka who had been involved in the Naxalism movement for the last 38 years.

PM Modi meets **Diljit Dosanjh**

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi met singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh Wednesday, and lauded his rise from modest beginnings to make a name for himself internationally. "A very memorable interaction," Modi said on Instagram, sharing a short clip of their interaction. He said in a post on X, "A great interaction with Diljit Dosanjh! He's truly multifaceted, blending talent and tradition. We connected over music, culture and more.'

2 dead, 4 injured in tempo-SUV collision

.

Mumbai: At least two persons were killed and four others seriously injured after a sports utility vehicle (SUV) collided with a tempo in Maharashtra's Solapur district Wednesday, police said. The accident took place in the morning at Manidargi village on the Akkalkot-Gangapur highway, an official said. "The tempo was proceeding from Gangapur to Akkalkot, while the SUV carrying six persons was going from the opposite direction," he said. "The driver of the SUV lost control over the vehicle and collided with the tempo. Two persons died on the spot and four others sustained serious injuries,' the official said.

People take a boat ride on the first day of New Year 2025, at Sangam in Prayagraj

to persuade farmer leader Jag jit Singh Dallewal to take medical aid, with former additional DGP Jaskaran Singh saying discussions in this regard were also held with farmer leaders.

Over the past few days, a state government's team led by Jaskaran Singh has made several attempts to convince Dallewal, whose indefinite hunger strike completed 37 davs today, to take medical help, but so far he has refused.

Earlier, the apex court gave the Punjab government time until December 31 to persuade Dallewal to shift to a hospital, granting the state the liberty to seek logistical support from the Centre, if necessary.

A vacation bench of Justices Surya Kant and Sudhanshu Dhulia Tuesday took note of a plea moved by Punjab govseeking contempt action against Punjab government for not complying with directions to hospitalise farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who has been on an indefinite fast for over a month. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan will hear the plea.

ernment seeking an additional three days to comply with SC's December 20 order. The top court had posted the matter January 2 for the compliance of its order on shifting of Dallewal to a hospital.

The top court December 28 came down heavily on the Punjab government for not moving Dallewal to a hospital even as it doubted the intention of the agitating farmers for resis ting availability of medical aid to their septuagenarian leader.

SARPANCH MURDER CASE

Maha forms SIT for investigation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Jan 1: The Maharashtra government Wednes day formed a 10-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the murder of Massajog sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh. officials said.

The SIT will be headed by Crime Investigation Depart ment's (CID) Deputy Inspector General Basavraj Teli, said an order issued by the state Home department.

Deshmukh, sarpanch of Massajog village in Kej tehsil of Beed district, was abducted and brutally killed on December 9, allegedly for opposing an extortion bid by some per sons who had demanded mon ey from a windmill company

The village residents Wednesday morning staged 'jal samadhi' agitation seek ing the arrest of the three absconding accused in the murder case.

The protest, during which some 40 men and women stood waist-deep in a lake, was called off after two hours as district Superintendent of Police Navneet Kanwat vis ited the village and assured them that police will leave no stone unturned to nab the accused.

Centre amends prison manual rules

In a communication to chief secretaries of all states and Union territories, the Union Home Ministry said to address the issue of any caste-based discrimination of prisoners, 'Model Prison Manual, 2016' and the 'Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023' have been amended

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: The Union Home Ministry has amended the prison manual rules to check discrimination and classification of inmates in jails on the basis of their caste.

In a communication to chief secretaries of all states and Union territories, the Union Home Ministry said to address the issue of any caste-based discrimination of prisoners,

'Model Prison Manual, 2016' and the 'Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023' have been amended

The changes have been made in the wake of the October 3, 2024 order of the Supreme Court on the caste-based discrimination of prisoners.

According to the new addition in the manual, the prison authorities will have to strictly ensure that there is no discrimination, classification, segregation of pris-

oners on the basis of their caste. Changes have also been made in the 'Miscellaneous' of the Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023 with a new heading 'Prohibition of caste-based discrimination in Prisons and Correctional Institutions' as Section 55(A).

The home ministry also said that the provisions of 'The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013' shall have a binding effect even in prisons and correctional institutions. "Manual scavenging or hazardous cleaning of a sewer or a septic tank inside a prison shall not be permitted," it said. In its order, the apex court had also given directions with regards to "habitual offenders"



and observed that the prison manuals and model prison manual shall be in accordance with the definition provided in the Habitual Offenders legisla tion enacted by respective state legislatures, subject to any constitutional challenge against such legislation in the future.

The top court further directed that in case there is no Habitual Offenders legislation in the state, the Union and the state governments will make necessary changes in their manuals and rules in line with their judgement within a period of three months.

The home ministry said since several states and UTs have not enacted the Habitual Offenders Act in their jurisdictions and after examining the definition of the habitual offenders in the available Habitual Offenders Acts of various states, it has been decided to replace the existing definition of 'Habitual Offender' in the Model Prison Manual, 2016 and the Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023.













I ask for a firm commitment to respect the dignity of human life from conception to natural death, so that each person may cherish his or her own life and all may look with hope to the future POPE FRANCIS HEAD OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

gas.

a statement.

PLEDGE TO END CHILD MARRIAGE IN NEPAL

More than 100 people, including child rights activists from Nepal and India, children and civil society members have joined hands to launch 'Child Marriage Free Nepal' campaign amidst Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's pledge to end this crime





I must recognise tonight that the dissolution has, for the moment brought more division in the

(National) Assembly than solutions for the French. I take my full part for that

EMMANUEL MACRON | PRESIDENT, FRANCE

That is what we will be focusing on: a year of rebuilding But also, redis covering the great nation that we are, a nation that gets things done no matter how hard or tough the

circumstances KEIR STARMER | PM, UK

Our country has been plaqued by widespread corruption. malpractice. and inefficien

cv within the state apparatus, political institutions and society as a whole. Corruption has become a malignant cancer spreading throughout our nation. and eliminating it requires a tremendous collective effort

ANURA KUMARA DISSANAYAKE PRESIDENT, SRI LANKAN

SHORT TAKES

📕 Israeli strikes kill 12 in Gaza

Deir al-Balah: Israeli strikes killed at least 12 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, mostly women and children, officials said Wednesday, as the nearly 15-month war ground on into the new year with no end in sight. One strike hit a home in the Jabaliya area of northern Gaza, the most isolated and heavily destroyed part of the territory, where Israel has been waging a major operation since early October. Gaza's Health Ministry said seven people were killed, including a woman and four children, and at least a dozen other people were wounded. Another strike overnight in the built-up Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza killed a woman and a child, according to the Al-Agsa Martyrs Hospital, which received the bodies.

📕 Romania. Bulgaria

Russian gas era in Europe ends UKRAINE REFUSED TO RENEW A TRANSIT AGREEMENT

Moscow/Kyiv, Jan 1: Russian gas exports via Soviet-era pipelines running through Ukraine came to a halt on New Year's Day, marking the end of decades of Moscow's dominance over Europe's energy markets.

REUTERS

The gas had kept flowing despite nearly three years of war, but Russia's gas firm Gazprom said it had stopped at 0500 GMT after Ukraine refused to renew a transit agreement.

The widely expected stoppage will not impact prices for consumers in the European Union - unlike in 2022, when falling supplies from Russia sent prices to record highs, worsened a cost-of-living crisis and hit the bloc's competitiveness

The last remaining EU buvers of Russian gas via Ukraine, such as Slovakia and Austria, have arranged alternative supply, while Hungary will keep receiving Russian gas via the TurkStream pipeline under the Black Sea.

But Transdniestria, a breakaway pro-Russian region of Ukraine's neighbour Moldova also reliant on the transit flows. cut off heating and hot water supplies to households early Wednesday. Local energy com-



WAR ENDS RUSSIA'S DOMINANCE OF GAS SUPPLY TO EUROPE

NORWAY, US, QATAR REPLACE RUSSIAN GAS LOSS OF RUSSIAN GAS UNDERMINED EU'S COMPETITIVENESS SLOVAKIA, AUSTRIA HAVE **ALTERNATIVE SUPPLIES** EATING, HOT WATER CUT OFF IN BREAKAWAY MOLDOVAN REGION

residents to dress warmly, hang blankets or thick curtains over windows and balcony doors, and use electric heaters. The European Commission said the EU had prepared for the cut-off. stopped the Russia and the for-

mer Soviet Union spent half a century building up a major share of the European gas market, which at its peak stood at around 35%. But the EU has slashed

its dependence on Russian energy since the start of the war in Ukraine by buying more piped gas from Norway and LNG from Qatar and the United States.

Ukraine, which refused to extend the transit deal, said Europe had already made the

Relatives take part in a protest demanding the whereabouts of four activists who disappeared during the war

between Opposition groups and former President Bashar Assad's forces, in Douma, Syria, Wednesday PTI PHOTO

SK AIR

CRASH

close to \$5 billion transit of Russian gas. This is a historic in gas sales. event. Russia is losing its markets, it will suffer financial losses (OMVV.VI), opens GERMAN GALUSHCHENKO ENERGY MINISTER. new tab in mid-No-UKRAINE vember over a con-

We

tractual dispute but in recent weeks Russian gas has been reaching Austria via Slovakia at a rate of around 200 gigawatt hours (GWh) per day. For Jan. 1, only about 7 GWh per day is expected to flow from Slovakia to Austria, Austrian energy regulator E-Control said.

decision to abandon Russian

Russian gas. This is a historic

event. Russia is losing its mar-

kets, it will suffer financial loss-

es," Ukraine's Energy Minister

German Galushchenko said in

Ukraine will lose up to \$1

billion a year in transit fees

from Russia. To help offset

the impact, it will quadruple

gas transmission tariffs for

domestic consumers from

Wednesday, which could cost

the country's industry more

than 1.6 billion hryvnias (\$38.2

Gazprom will lose

The company

halted supply to

Austria's OMV

million) a year.

ALTERNATIVE SUPPLIES

"We stopped the transit of

Hasina's extradition, one of several bilateral issues with India, says Touhid



Bangladesh-based International Crimes Tribunal has issued arrest warrants for Hasina and several former Cabinet ministers, advisers, and military and civil officials for 'crimes against humanity and genocide'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Jan 1: Deposed premier Sheikh Hasina's extradition is one of the several issues with India that Bangladesh would pursue while strong bilateral ties with Washington, Delhi and Beijing are priorities of the interim government, Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain said Wednesday.

Hasina, 77, has been living in India since August 5 when she fled the country following a massive student-led protest that toppled her 16-year regime. Bangladesh-based Interna-

tional Crimes Tribunal (ICT) has issued arrest warrants for Hasina and several former Cabinet ministers, advisers, and military and civil officials for "crimes against humanity and genocide'

"This (Hasina's extradition) is one of the issues, but we have other issues of interest as well. We will pursue them simultaneously," Hossain told reporters while responding to a question.

Hossain said Dhaka's efforts to bring Hasina back from Delhi and to uplift ties with India will proceed in parallel. "I believe both will proceed simultaneously".

A former diplomat, Hossain, the de facto foreign minister in Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus' interim government. said that maintaining strong bilateral ties with the US, India, and China alongside address ing the Rohingya crisis would be key priorities for Bangladesh in 2025.

"Our priorities are to resolve the Rohingya crisis, keep good relations with those three countries, and to advance our eco nomic and diplomatic efforts while ensuring stability," he said.

On ties with the US, India and China, Hossain said nei ther of the countries were at the bottom of priority lists when asked whether there was any particular priority for one country over another.

"We place equal priority on maintaining ties with these three countries as our various interests are deeply aligned with them," he said, adding that these countries also have their own interests in maintaining good relations with

Bangladesh. The foreign adviser hoped that Dhaka's relations with these global powers would be strengthened further by the end of this year.

The interim government recently sent a diplomatic note to New Delhi seeking the extradition of Hasina from India.

The foreign ministry offi cials here said they awaited a response from India. Further steps would be taken once a response is received, it added.

Pakistan set to begin 2-year term in UNSC

Islamabad, Jan 1: Pakistan began its two-year tenure as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Wednesday, with Ambassador Munir Akram saying that the Pakistani delegation will play an "active and constructive" role in addressing key challenges facing the world.

"Our presence will be felt in the Security Council," Ambassador Akram, Pakistan's top diplomat at the UN, told staterun APP (Associated Press of Pakistan) news agency.

Pakistan will sit in the Security Council for the 2025-26 term as a non-permanent member — the eighth time that the country has had a seat on the 15-member body's

pany Tirasteploenergo urged

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

horseshoe table.

join Schengen zone

Romania: Romania and Bulgaria scrapped land border controls to become full members of the European Union's Schengen freetravel area Wednesday, joining an expanded bloc of countries whose residents can travel without passport checks. Fireworks lit the sky at a crossing close to the Bulgarian border town of Ruse just after the stroke of midnight as the Bulgarian and Romanian interior ministers symbolically raised a barrier on the Friendship Bridge straddling the Danube River. The crossing is a major transit point for international trade. and bottlenecks are common. "This is a historic moment," said Bulgarian Prime Minister Dimitar Glavchev.

Largest bomb

bust by FBI

Norfolk: Federal agents

found one of the largest

stockpiles of homemade

explosives they have ever

seized when they arrested a

charge last month, according

Virginia man on a firearms

to a court filing by federal

prosecutors. Investigators

seized more than 150 pipe

bombs and other homemade

devices when they searched

the home of Brad Spafford northwest of Norfolk in

December, the prosecutors

said in a motion filed Monday.

is believed to be "the largest

seizure by number of finished

explosive devices in FBI history."

Most of the bombs were found

in a detached garage at the

along with tools and bomb-

making materials including

fuses and pieces of plastic pipe.

home in Isle of Wight County,

The prosecutors wrote that this

In June, Pakistan was elected to the council with a massive majority as a non-permanent member, polling 182 votes in the 193-member General Assembly — far more than the required 124 votes representing a two-thirds majority.

"We enter the council at a time of great geopolitical turbulence, intense competition between the two largest powers, raging wars in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere and a sharply escalating and multi-dimensional arms race," Akram said.

Investigators extract black box data

SEOUL: Grieving relatives of the victims of the South Korea plane crash gathered at the site to pay respects to their loved ones on New Year's Day, as officials said they've extracted data from one of the retrieved black boxes to find the exact cause of the crash. All but two of the 181 passengers and crew on

board the Boeing 737-800 operated by Jeju Air died when it crashed at Muan International Airport, in southern South Korea, Sunday. Video showed the aircraft without its landing gear deployed landing on its belly at high speed and then skidding off the end of the runaway into a concrete fence and bursting into flames. The footage showed the plane was experiencing an apparent engine problem in addition to the landing gear malfunction. Investigators say the pilot received a warning from air traffic controllers of possible bird strikes and the plane issued a distress signal before the crash. The Transport Ministry said in a statement Wednesday that it has completed works to extract data from the cockpit voice recorder - one of the two black boxes recovered from the wreckage. It said the data would be converted into audio files.

NK's Kim Jong Un attends New Year's celebrations

Senior North Korean offi-

cials joined them in watching

the events, state media photos

showed. There was no mention

KCNA also said that Kim re-

ceived New Year's cards from

many heads of state including

the Chinese President, al-

of any speech by Kim

KCNA says that Kim received New Year's cards from many heads of state including the **Chinese President**

REUTERS

Seoul, Jan 1: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and his daughter Ju Ae attended New Year's celebrations including fireworks and an ice dancing display, state media KCNA reported Wednesday.

though it did not mention Xi Jinping by name nor disclose further details.

It also did not mention if Kim sent greetings to Xi.

The terse state media message contrasted with KCNA's description of Kim's exchange with Russian President Vladimir Putin the previous day which said Kim had pledged to solidify the country's comprehensive strategic partnership with Russia in a letter to Putin.

World welcomes 2025 with light shows, embraces and ice plunges

Countries in the South Pacific Ocean were the first to ring in the New Year, with midnight in New Zealand striking 18 hours before the ball dropped in Times Square

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, Jan 1: From Sydney to Mumbai to Paris to Rio de Janeiro, communities around the world welcomed 2025 with spectacular light shows, embraces and ice plunges.

The New Year's Eve ball dropped in soggy Times Square, where thousands of revellers stuck it out in heavy rain to celebrate the start of 2025 in New York City.

Countries in the South Pacific Ocean were the first to ring in the New Year, with midnight in New Zealand striking 18 hours before the ball dropped in Times Square. Auckland was the first major city to celebrate, with thousands thronging downtown or climbing the city's ring of volcanic peaks for a fireworks vantage point.

Conflict muted acknowledgements of the start of 2025 in places like the Middle East, Sudan and Ukraine.

American Samoa will be among the last to welcome 2025, a full 24 hours after New Zealand

Earliest fireworks

A few hours after Auckland, fireworks blasted off Australia's Sydney Harbour Bridge and across the bay. More than a million people gathered at iconic Sydney Harbour for the celebration. British pop star Robbie Williams led a singalong with the crowd.

The celebration also featured Indigenous ceremonies and performances that acknowledged the land's first people American traditions, old and new

In New York City, crowds cheered and couples kissed when the ball weighing almost 6 tons (5.4 metric tons) and featuring 2,688 crystal triangles descended down a pole in Times Square. The celebration included musical performances by TLC and Jonas Brothers.

The revelry culminated with



a dance party and a carpeting of soggy confetti as attendees left singing along to Frank Sinatra's version of "New York, New York.'

Las Vegas' pyrotechnic show will be on the Strip, with 340,000 people anticipated as fireworks are launched from the rooftops of casinos. Nearby, the Sphere

venue will display for the first time countdowns to midnight in different time zones Asia prepares for Year of the Snake

Much of Japan shut down ahead of the nation's biggest holiday, as temples and homes underwent a thorough cleaning. The upcoming Year of the

Snake in the Asian zodiac is

heralded as one of rebirth - alluding to the reptile's shedding skin. Other places in Asia will mark the Year of the Snake later, with the Lunar New Year.

In South Korea, celebrations were cut back or cancelled during a period of national mourning following Sunday's crash of a Jeju Air flight in Muan that killed 179 people.

China and Russia 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 their countries will "always move forward hand in hand," the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Seaside celebrations and beyond

In India, thousands of revellers in the financial hub of Mumbai flocked to the city's bustling promenade facing

the Arabian Sea. In Sri Lanka people gathered at Buddhist temples to light oil lamps and incense sticks and pray.

In Dubai, thousands attend ed a fireworks show at the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest sky scraper. And in Nairobi, Kenya, scattered fireworks were heard

A Holy Year begins

Rome's traditional 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 million pilgrims to the Eternal City in 2025

Paris recaptures the Olympic spirit

Paris capped a momentous 2024 with its traditional count down and fireworks extravaganza on the Champs-Elysées. The city's emblematic Arc de Tri omphe monument was turned into a giant tableau for a light show that celebrated the citv's landmarks and the passage of time, with whirring clocks.









AIR INDIA: FIRST AIRLINE WITH WI-FI

Private carrier Air India Wednesday rolled out Wi-Fi internet connectivity services on board domestic and international flights on its widebody Airbus A350 and Boeing 787-9 fleet as well as on select Airbus A321neo aircraft. This makes Air India the first airline to offer such services on flights within India, the airline said



Business



Globally. the last few years have been full of shocks. changes and uncertainties,

and the year that is drawing to a close has been no exception. We are seeing a shifting world where interdependencies and a flat world may well be things of the past

ANAND MAHINDRA | CHAIRMAN, MAHINDRA GROUP

Air India's global coverage will further increase in the vears ahead. not least

because of the recent addition of 100 aircraft to our order book, augmenting the earlier commitment for 470 made in 2023

CAMPBELL WILSON | CHIEF, AIR INDIA



growth. This momentum will be driven by a stable economic environment and supportive government initiatives

G HARI BABU NATIONAL PRESIDENT, NAREDCO

SHORT TAKES

Fuel sales surge

New Delhi: India's petrol and diesel consumption soared in December 2024 as holiday travel boosted demand, reversing the fall witnessed in previous months, preliminary data of state-owned fuel retailers showed Wednesday. While petrol sales had shown a year-on-year increase in recent months, diesel has been a laggard since monsoon. November was the first month that saw growth in diesel consumption and the trend continued into December. Petrol sales of three stateowned firms, which control 90 per cent of the fuel market, soared 9.8 per cent to 2.99 million tonne in December compared to 2.72 million tonne of consumption in the same month last year. Diesel demand during the month was up 4.9 per cent to 7.07 million tonne. This is the second straight month of auto fuels posting handsome increase in consumption. Petrol demand was up 8.3 per cent year-onvear in November and diesel consumption rose 5.9 per cent.

D-St starts NY on high note

Indices snap two-day decline on buying in blue chips

Mumbai, Jan 1: Benchmark Sensex and Nifty started the New Year on a high note with the key indices closing higher in a see-saw trade Wednesday on buying in blue-chip stocks.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Snapping its two-day falling streak, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 368.40 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at 78,507.41 on the first trading session of 2025. During the day, it surged 617.48 points or 0.79 per cent to 78,756.49.

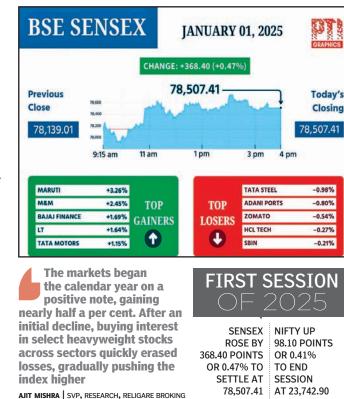
The NSE Nifty climbed 98.10 points or 0.41 per cent to 23,742.90 with 37 of its constituents ending higher and 17 closing lower.

Among Sensex shares, Maruti Suzuki rose the most by 3.26 per cent after the carmaker reported 30 per cent rise in total wholesales at 1.78.248 units in December 2024.

Mahindra & Mahindra spurted 2.45 per cent after the automaker reported a 16 per cent rise in overall auto sales at 69,768 units in December 2024.

Larsen & Toubro, Bajaj Finance, Tata Motors, IndusInd Bank, Asian Paints, Power Grid, HDFC Bank and Axis Bank were also among the gainers.

Tata Steel, Adani Ports, Zo-



mato, HCL Tech, State Bank of India, Hindustan Unilever and Tech Mahindra were among the laggards. The BSE smallcap gauge jumped 1.03 per cent and midcap index climbed 0.50 per

capital goods surged 1.22 per cent, industrials (1.17 per cent), power (0.94 per cent), telecommunication (0.76 per cent), consumer discretionary (0.68 per cent), financial services (0.51 per cent) and healthcare (0.42 per cent). Metal and realty

TIGHTER LENDING RULES WEIGH

cent. Among sectoral indices,

BANKS' LOAN GROWTH **DIPS FOR FIFTH MONTH**

On the flip side, loans to industry grew by 8.1% year-on-year last month, quicker than the 5.5% growth last year

REUTERS

Tuesday.

ago period.



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

were the laggards.

"An uptick in core sector data and prospect of ramp-up in capex spending by the government in the remaining part of the fiscal aided sectors like capital goods, industrials, auto, and power," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

As many as 2,741 stocks advanced while 1,241 declined and 89 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹4.645.22 crore Tuesday. according to exchange data.

Most of the Asian and European markets were closed for New Year holidays. US markets ended lower Tuesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.88 per cent to \$74.64 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark Sensex declined 109.12 points or 0.14 per cent to settle at 78,139.01 Tuesday. The Nifty dipped marginally by 0.10 points to settle at 23,644.80.

Viacom18 becomes direct arm of Reliance

New Delhi: Viacom18 Media, a leading media and entertainment company, has become a direct subsidiary of Reliance Industries following the conversion of over 24.61 crore compulsorily convertible preference shares (CCPS) into an equivalent number of equity shares. Earlier, Viacom18Media was a material subsidiary of Network18 Media & Investments Ltd, a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL). On December 30, billionaire Mukesh Ambani-led RIL converted 24,61,33,682 CCPS into the equivalent of a share, following approval granted by the shareholders of Network18. Earlier, RIL was holding a 70.49 per cent stake in Viacom18 Media on a fully diluted basis. Following

AUTO SECTOR SHINES

PV mkt bids farewell to 2024 with record sales



Almost all the major automobile players witnessed highest-ever sales last year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: Indian passenger vehicles market registered record wholesales of 43 lakh units in 2024, with companies like market leader Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Tata Motors, Toyota Kirloskar Motor, and Kia posting their best-ever annual domestic sales.

The continued growth of SU-Vs, along with rural markets playing a key role in driving up car sales, helped the industry better the previous best of nearly 41.1 lakh units posted in 2023. "Last calendar vear. it was close to 41,09,000 lakh units, while 2024 is around 43 lakh units. So, it is the growth of around 4.5 per cent to 4.7 per cent." Maruti Suzuki India Ltd

(MSIL) Senior Executive Officer, Marketing & Sales, Partho Banerjee told PTI when asked about overall passenger vehicle wholesales in 2024.

Maruti Suzuki itself posted its highest-ever wholesale and retail sales in 2024, he added.

"We have broken the record of highest-ever annual wholesales after six years, with 17,90,977 units in 2024, bettering the previous best of 17,51,919 units registered in 2018," Banerjee said.

In retail also, he said the company posted record sales of 17,88,405 units in 2024, breaking the previous record of 17,26,661 units sold in 2023.

In December 2024, MSIL's total domestic passenger vehicle sales stood at 1.30.117 units compared to 1,04,778 units in the same month a year ago, up 24.18 per cent.

Its rival Hyundai Motor India Ltd also recorded its Mahindra & Mahindra rehighest-ever vearly domestic ported passenger vehicle sales sales of 6,05,433 units in 2024. up marginally from 6,02,111 units in 2023. It achieved the

highest-ever yearly domestic SUV contribution of 67.6 per cent, the company said in a statement.

The company's December domestic sales were 42,208 units compared to 42,750 units in December 2023, down 1.3 per cent.

"The PV industry posted moderate growth in CY24 and is expected to touch a sales volume of 4.3 million units with strong growth in the SUV segment and sustained traction for emission-friendly powertrains," Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd and Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd Managing Director Shailesh Chandra said.

Last calendar year, it (automobile wholesales) was close to 41,09,000 lakh units, while 2024 is around 43 lakh units. So, it is the growth of around 4.5 per cent to 4.7 per cent PARTHO BANERJE | SENIOR EXECUTIVE

OFFICER (MARKETING & SALES), MSIL

For Tata Motors, 2024 was the fourth consecutive year of highest-ever annual sales with 5.65 lakh units sold, he said, adding that the company remained "optimistic about the outlook of the PV industry".

In December 2024, the company posted a 1 per cent growth in total PV sales at 44,289 units compared to 43,675 units in the year-ago month.

Another automaker, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) also recorded its best-ever calendar year sales of 3,26,329 units in 2024. This was higher by 40 per cent against 2,33,346 units sold in 2023.

Similarly, Kia India reported a 6 per cent rise in total sales at 2,55,038 units in 2024, recording its highest-ever annual sales. It sold 2,40,919 units in 2023.

ATF price slashed

New Delhi: The price of Jet fuel. or ATF, Wednesday was reduced by 1.5 per cent and rates of commercial LPG that is used in hotels and restaurants was cut by ₹14.5 per 19-kg cylinder in the monthly revision done in line with benchmark international prices. The aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was reduced by ₹1.401.37 per kilolitre, or 1.52 per cent, to ₹90,455.47 per kl in the national capital - home to one of the busiest airports in the country, according to state-owned fuel retailers. The rate cut follows two rounds of monthly increases. Prices were increased by ₹2,941.5 per kl (3.3 per cent) November 1, and by ₹1.318.12 per kl (1.45 per cent) December 1, 2024.

. Power usage rises

New Delhi: India's power consumption rose nearly 6 per cent to 130.40 billion units (BU) in December as compared to the year-ago month. In December 2023, power consumption was 123.17 BU, as per government data. The highest supply in a day (peak power demand met) also rose to 224.16 GW in December 2024 from 213.62 GW in the year-ago period. The peak power demand touched an all-time high of about 250 GW in May 2024.

Mumbai. Jan 1: Indian banks' loan growth moderated for a fifth straight month in November, central bank data showed, as lenders continued to rein in unsecured and personal loans after the Reserve Bank of India's crackdown on

"exuberant" lending. Banks' credit increased by 11.8% year-on-year last month, slower than the 16.5% rise in November 2023, excluding the impact of HDFC Bank's merger with its parent Housing Development Finance Corp, accord-

ing to RBI data released late

Including the impact of the

merger, banks' loans grew

with nearly 21% in the year-

to 12.8% in October, excluding the merger, and to 11.5% including the merger. Loan growth had also moderated in July, August and September.

Indian banks have consistently reported double-digit loan growth for a while, helped by healthy retail demand and urban consumption.

However, in late 2023, the RBI, worried about the risk of bad loans, imposed higher capital requirements on personal loans and credit cards, which is now translating into slower growth in these segments.

10.6% last month, compared Banks' personal loan growth slowed to 12.2% in November The growth rate had slowed from 22.4% a year ago, excluding the HDFC Bank merger impact, while growth in outstanding credit card debt dropped to 18.1% from 34.2% a year ago, the data showed.

The RBI has also warned the financial sector against "all forms of exuberance", asked lenders to be watchful of a build-up in stress due to new lending models and flagged concerns about the interconnectedness between banks and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs).

Credit growth to the services sector decelerated to 14.4% in November from 22.2% a year ago, primarily due to lower growth in credit to NBFCs.

this conversion. Network18 ceases to exercise control over Viacom18, said RIL.

of 41,424 units in December 2024 against 35,174 units in the yearago period, up 18 per cent.

₹2000 BANKNOTES WITHDRAWAL ₹6,691cr worth notes still with public

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Jan 1: The Reserve Bank Wednesday said 98.12 per cent of the ₹2000 banknotes have been returned to the banking system, and only ₹6,691 crore worth such notes are still with the public. On May 19, 2023, the

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the withdrawal of ₹2000 denomination banknotes from circulation.

The total value of ₹2000 banknotes in circulation. which was ₹3.56 lakh crore at the close of business May 19, 2023, declined to ₹6,691 crore at the close of business December 31, 2024, RBI said.

"Thus, 98.12 per cent of the ₹2000 banknotes in circulation as on May 19, 2023, has since been returned," it said in a statement.

The ₹2000 banknotes continue to be legal tender.

GST kitty zooms 7.3% to ₹1.77L-cr in December PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 1: The gross

GST collection rose 7.3 per cent year-on-year to ₹1.77 lakh crore in December.

The Central GST collection stood at ₹32,836 crore, State GST at ₹40,499 crore, Integrated IGST at ₹47,783 crore and Cess at ₹11,471 crore, according to government data released Wednesday.

The total gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue grew 7.3 per In Nov, GST cent to ₹1.77 lakh crore mop-up was ₹1.82L-cr with in December 8.5% annual as compared growth to ₹1.65 lakh crore in the Highest-ever same month collection was a vear ago, it

in April 2024 at over ₹2.10L-cr

During the month under

said.

review, GST from domestic transactions grew 8.4 per cent to ₹1.32 lakh crore, while revenues from tax on imports rose about 4 per cent to ₹44,268 crore.

In November, GST mop-up was ₹1.82 lakh crore with 8.5 per cent annual growth. The high est-ever collection was in April 2024 at over ₹2.10 lakh crore.

During the month, refunds worth ₹22,490 crore were is sued, registering 31 per cent increase over the year-ago pe riod. After adjusting refunds net GST collection increased by 3.3 per cent to ₹1.54 lakh crore.

Foreign flows into bonds to come off record highs in 2025 Currency weakness can temper the momentum of bond inflows, especially in case of persistent depreciation pressure. Inflows will continue but at an erratic and less

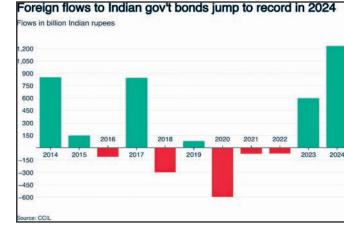
Interest rate trajectories in India and US and moves in the rupee will influence the pace of flows

REUTERS

Mumbai, Jan 1: Foreign flows into Indian government bonds are set to decline in 2025, after spiking to a record high in 2024 as the debt got added to JPMorgan's emerging market debt index, investors said.

"For 2025, foreign inflows into the Indian government bond market are expected to remain strong but may not match the record levels of 2024," said Wei showed. Li. head of multi-asset investments at BNP Paribas SA.

Overseas investors net



bought ₹1.24 trillion (\$14.5 bilgan's index.

lion) of Indian bonds under the Despite the optimistic outlook, so-called fully accessible route inflation expectations and policy adjustments as well in 2024, clearing house data as global market fluctuations Most bonds under the route, could affect capital flows. BNF which allows unfettered foreign Paribas' Li said.

"Therefore, investors should

enthusiastic pace" as the bonds are still relatively attractive HIRAJ NIM | ECONOMIST AND FX RATES STRATEGIST, ANZ

Overseas investors net bought ₹1.24tn of Indian bonds in 2024

Rupee dropped 2.8% in 2024, and hit a record low of 85.8075 Dec 27, while India's benchmark bond yield fell 42bps

remain cautious and closely monitor market dynamics."

Investors expect rate cuts in India to kick off from February but worry that the easing cycle could be a shallow one. The Federal Reserve has already projected fewer cuts for 2025.

How the rupee moves will also sway foreign investors,

with the dollar set to rise more as Donald Trump takes charge as the US president.

The rupee dropped 2.8% in 2024, and hit a record low of 85.8075 Dec 27, while India's benchmark bond yield fell 42 basis points

Radhika Rao, executive director and senior economist at DBS Bank, sees a gradual pickup in passive monthly inflows as Indian bonds get added by two more index providers this year. She expects the local central bank to cut rates by 25 basis points in February, and by a total of 75 basis points in the cycle.



















investment, are part of JPMor-



SPORTS

VAISHALI BAGS BLITZ WORLDS BRONZE

A new era in chess history as Indians continue to shine at different arenas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, Jan 1: India's R Vaishali clinched a bronze in the women's section of the World Blitz Championship, capping another strong performance by the country's chess players after stalwart Koneru Humpy's title-winning show in the rapid event here.

Vaishali defeated China's Zhu Jiner 2.5-1.5 in the quarter-finals before losing to another Chinese opponent Ju Wenjun 0.5-2.5 in the semi-final.

In an event completely dominated by the Chinese, Ju Wenjun went on to snare the world title defeating compatriot Lei Tingjie 3.5-2.5



SHORT TAKES

Olmo's Barcelona

future uncertain

We are so happy to be supporting her and her chess. What a way to wrap up 2024. In 2021, we thought we would get stronger chess players but here we have it a World Champi on (Humpy) and a Bronze medallist (Vaishali)! VISWANATHAN ANAND VICE PRESIDENT, FIDE

Five-time world champion In the 'Open' section. and International Chess Federation (FIDE) vice president Viswanathan Anand congratulated Vaishali for her efforts, saying it was a great way to end the year.

"Congratulations to Vaishali for taking bronze. Her qualification was truly a power packed performance. Our Waca Chess mentee (WestBridge Anand Chess Academy) has done us proud," Anand wrote on 'X'.

"We are so happy to be supporting her and her chess. What a way to wrap up 2024. In 2021, we thought we would get stronger chess players but here we have it a World Champion (Humpy) and a Bronze medal-

world number one Magnus Carlsen and Russia's lan Nepomniachtchi shared the Blitz title after three sudden-death games

failed to produce a winner. This was the first time that the title was awarded to two players after Carlsen asked whether it could be

shared given the deadlock

list (Vaishali)!" he wrote. In the 'Open' section, world number one Magnus Carlsen and Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi shared the Blitz title after three sudden-death games failed to produce a winner. This was the first time that the title was awarded to two players

it could be shared given the deadlock.

"We were both tired, some will like it some will not," Carlsen said during a media interaction.

"We reached a point where it had been a long day. We played many games, we had three draws and I felt that I could keep playing. But it was a nice solution to share the win, it was a good way to end it," said Carlsen.

This was Carlsen's second big win this week as the world body was forced to bring him back after his withdrawal from the Rapid championship just a couple of days back due to dress code violation.

Carlsen came wearing jeans for the Rapid event and refused to wear formal trousers. prompting FIDE to disqualify him. However, the world governing body allowed him to wear jeans in the Blitz event.

Gambhir gambit: Coach's handling of India's transition raises eyebrows

It is learnt that Gambhir is not on the same page with most of the players in the team and the communication isn't as good as it used to be during the time of Ravi Shastri and Řahul Dravid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, Jan 1: As Indian cricket deals with the fading form of its two stalwarts in captain Rohit Sharma and senior batter Virat Kohli, head coach Gautam Gambhir and his support staff's role in handling a team in transition has also come into focus.

The ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy has been a difficult ride for the side as they have struggled to get the right combination in the face of an aggres sive and highly-driven Australian team. The visitors will be playing the must-win fifth and final Test here from Friday.

The on-field roller-coaster is causing some off-field issues as well with murmurs of unrest in the dressing room beginning to grow

It is learnt that Gambhir is not on the same page with most of the players in the team and the communication isn't as good as it used to be during the time of Ravi Shastri and Rahul Dravid.

Skipper Rohit Sharma has maintained that he speaks individually to the players about selection issues. But after Gambhir took charge in July, Rohit, it is said, hasn't actually given clarity to some of the not-sojunior players about why they were being excluded at times from the side.

His own poor form hasn't helped Rohit's cause. But it is also reliably learnt that Gam-



bhir, who is considered a more assertive person, hasn't earned a lot of confidence from the group of players, who aren't as old as Kohli or Rohit but are also not rookies like Harshit Rana or Nitish Reddy

"There is a Test match to be played and then there is Champions Trophy. If the performance doesn't improve, even Gautam Gambhir's position wouldn't be safe," a senior BCCI official told PTI on condi-

tions of anonymity. Gambhir's equation with the selection committee is also not particularly clear at this point.

There are players in the team, who are feeling insecure because of his proclivity to experiment with the playing eleven. In the ongoing BGT, a punt like Nitish Reddy has worked out brilliantly but the handling of Shubman Gill is still being debated.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah has now been elevated to the ICC chief's position and the Board will have his full-time successor only after January 12. Once that administrative stability is in place, the BCCI brass will have some thinking to do.

Till Shah was in-charge of BCCI, he called the shots. For mer India seamer Roger Binny, who is the current president of the Board, hasn't been seen taking any policy related calls

But if India's performance is not drastically better in the Champions Trophy in Febru ary-March, Gambhir will cer tainly have his wings clipped.

"He was never BCCI's firs choice (it was VVS Laxman) and some of the well-known overseas names didn't want to coach all three formats, so he was a compromise. Obviously some other compulsions were also there," the official said.

Gambhir has already been asked a few tough questions after the 0-3 defeat at home to New Zealand and if the Border-Gavaskar Trophy is also lost, it can all go downhill for the feisty former opener from Delhi's Old Rajinder Nagar.

Already there is a school of thought that Gambhir should only be given charge of the T20 team, a format in which he has been a successful captain and then mentor for both Kolkata Knight Riders and Lucknow SuperGiants.

Vedanta Sports Program's Sanjay Majhi bags bronze at NTPC Archery C'ship



HIL great initiative for global hockey, says FIH president

Barcelona: The Spanish league said Tuesday that Barcelona has failed to meet Financial Fair Play rules in the latest blow to the club's hopes of keeping playmaker Dani Olmo. The league said Barcelona "did not present any alternative" on adhering to the regulations. which was required for the club to "register any player beginning



and receive the recognition they deserve. The Hockey India League has a unique organisation and timing. scheduled within a window specially sanctioned by the FIH, which enables top athletes to come together and compete, making it much more than just a hockey competition. I believe this initiative is a great initiative not just for Indian hockey, but also for global hockey. Significant participation from players along with the involvement of domestic talent will have a profound impact on the sport's growth and development,' said Ikram at a press conference on the sidelines of the HIL in Rourkela. With the men's competition being played at the world's most iconic hockey stadium in the world. Ikram highlighted, "One of the best hockey venues in the world, is in the limelight alongside some incredible hockey action, thanks to the league's global broadcast and coverage. The response from Rourkela is no surprisethey are an integral part of the process to understand and recognise what Hockey India

League truly is.'

HIGHEST-RANKED INDIAN BOWLER IN TEST HISTORY Bumrah eclipses Ashwin's record in Test rankings



crucial runs during Australia's stellar win in Melbourne. South African pacer Marco Jansen continued his rise in the Test arena, moving up six places to claim the fifth spot. His seven-wicket haul against Pakistan in the Centurion Boxing Day Test pushed him past the 800-point mark for the first time. In the batting rankings. several players made notable strides. South Africa's Aiden Markram climbed back into the top 20, thanks to his resilient knocks of 89 and 37 in the Centurion Test. His efforts were key to South Africa's victory over Pakistan, which secured their spot in the ICC Test Championship final. India's Yashasvi Jaiswal continued his meteoric rise, moving up one spot to a career-best fourth position. Pakistan's Saud Shakeel also reached a personal milestone, jumping three places to a career-best sixth, while Australia's Steve Smith climbed to seventh after his gritty innings

in the Boxing Day Test.

after Carlsen asked whether

on January 2." Barcelona needed to have another financial lever approved by the league in order to register Olmo after a judge ruled against the club Monday in the second consecutive court setback ahead of the end-ofvear deadline. Without the court's backing or the league's approval, Olmo's contract can't be registered beyond the end of 2024. The Spain international moved from Leipzig to Barcelona in August. Spanish media said Barcelona was still hopeful of reaching a deal with the league to have Olmo registered even if it misses the end-of-year deadline.

US, Kazakh in United Cup tennis semis

Perth: Coco Gauff and Taylor Fritz powered the US, tournament winner two years ago, into the semifinals of the United Cup mixed teams tennis event Wednesday. In the first singles match in Perth, Gauff got the ball rolling for her team with a gritty 7-6 (4), 6-2 win over Zhang Shuai. Fritz then made sure of victory by edging a tight contest with Zhang Zhizhen 6-4 6-4. World No 3-ranked Gauff said: "Shuai was playing amazing tennis out there. I was literally on the ground for most of the match. The harder I hit, the harder she was hitting." Kazakhstan also advanced to the semifinals with a 2-1 win over a Germany team playing without the injured world No 2-ranked Alexander Zverev. In Sydney, Iga Swiatek and Hubert Hurcacz won their deciding mixed doubles match over the Czech Republic to qualify Poland for the quarterfinals. Also in Sydney, Katie Boulter's 6-2, 6-1 win over Olivia Gadecki of Australia helped Britain clinch a quarterfinal place.



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Rourkela, Jan 1: After a grand opening on December 28, the Hockey India League (HIL) 2024-25 is in full swing, with eight men's teams delivering spectacular performances at the iconic Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela, Odisha. International Hockey Federation (FIH) President Dato Tayyab Ikram believes the tournament is a great initiative for global hockey

"Hockey India League is very close to my heart. It's an athlete-centric initiative. Globally, we need more platforms that provide athletes with opportunities to perform

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Dubai, Jan 1: Jasprit Bumrah's scintillating performance in the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia has elevated him to the highest rating points ever achieved by an Indian bowler in Test cricket as he consolidated his lead as the No 1 bowler in the recent rankings update.

With rating points of 907, Bumrah moved past Ravichandran Ashwin's 904 rating points, achieved in December 2016, and

makes him the highest-ever ranked Indian Test bowler in ICC rankings history

The 907 points placed the pacer as joint-17th in the all-time list - with Derek Underwood of England. Australian skipper Pat Cummins also benefitted from his Boxing Day heroics and jumped 15 rating points and went up by a place to sit at No 3 in the bowling rankings.

Cummins also secures a third place in the Test All-Rounder Rankings, on the back of the above bowling exploits and 90

POST NEWS NETWORK

Lanjigarh, Jan 1: Sanjay Majhi, a promising young archer from Vedanta Sports Program, has won a bronze medal in the Indian Round category at the prestigious NTPC (National Thermal Power Cor poration) Senior National Archery Championship 2024.

Supported by Vedanta Lanjigarh, India's premier producer of smelter-grade alumina and a unit of Vedanta Aluminium, Sanjay Majhi's achievement concludes Odisha's 21-year quest for a senior category national medal in archery and making it a mo ment of pride for the state and Vedanta's Sports Program.

Since its inception in 2018 Vedanta Sports Program has been a beacon of hope for young athletes in Odisha's tribal-dominated Kalahandi district.



a four-time NB/ MVP, also ho the record as the NBA's all-time leading score

Printed and published by Adyasha Satpathy on behalf of Navajat Printers and Media Pvt. Ltd. and printed at Navajat Printers, B-15 Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar -751010, Odisha; Phone: 7894447142 (Marketing). Editor: Tathagata Satpathy, RNI No. ORIENG/2011/37159





