

## Introducing The Kia Syros Evolved by the future

First-in-segment  
Luxury Second Row  
with Sliding, Reclining  
& Ventilated Seats

Futuristic Tech  
76.20 cm (30") wide Trinity  
Panoramic Display Panel with Fully  
Automatic Temperature Control

Future-ready  
Kia Connect 2.0  
with 80+ Connected Car features  
& Over-the-Air Software updates

Dual Pane  
Panoramic Sunroof  
for an unobstructed  
view & feeling of space

Future-forward Safety  
with ADAS Level 2.0 Suite  
with 16 smart autonomous &  
20 standard safety features

Pre-book now

Call 1800 108 5000

Visit [www.kia.com/in](http://www.kia.com/in)

Kia Syros



**KIA**  
Movement that inspires

Scan to  
visit website



### Kia Syros Evolved by the future

The new Kia Syros is light years ahead of its contemporary SUVs. Right from an evolved design language with upright squared shoulders, to the future-forward autonomous safety tech and future-ready connected car tech with over-the-air updates, everything about the Kia Syros is a giant leap in automotive thinking. Settle into the first-in-segment 2<sup>nd</sup> row ventilated, reclining & sliding seats, and you'll agree that the future itself has evolved it. Experience the Syros today!

#### Innovative Technology | Future, reimagined



Dual Pane Panoramic Sunroof enhances the cabin's ambience for a seamless sense of spacious freedom



2<sup>nd</sup> Row Seat Reclining & Sliding with Seat Ventilation ensures every journey is in the lap of unparalleled comfort



76.20 cm (30") Trinity Panoramic Display Panel redefines innovation, offering a luxurious experience



Kia Connect 2.0<sup>#</sup> keeps your vehicle advanced and constantly evolving with Over-the-Air (OTA) Software updates and Kia Connect Diagnosis



Streamline Door Handles blend sleek design with innovative functionality



Harman Kardon Premium 8 Speakers Sound System delivers a truly immersive audio experience

#### Innovative Safety | ADAS Level 2 with 16 Autonomous Features<sup>\*\*</sup> + Robust 20 Standard Safety Features

Forward Collision Warning and Avoidance Assist (FCW & FCA)



Parking Collision Avoidance Assist - Reverse (PCA-R)



Lane Keep Assist (LKA)



Smart Cruise Control (SCC) with Stop & Go



High Beam Assist



360 Degree Camera with Blind View Monitor in Cluster



**Robust 20** | **Hi-Safety Package**  
STANDARD ACROSS ALL VARIANTS

Front Dual Airbags | Front Seat Side Airbags | Side Curtain Airbags | Highline Tyre Pressure Monitor | ABS (Anti-lock Brake System) with EBD | BAS (Brakeforce Assist System) | ESC (Electronic Stability Control) | VSM (Vehicle Stability Management) | HAC (Hill-start Assist Control) | ESS (Emergency Stop Signal) | Child Lock | Front Parking Sensors x4 | Rear Parking Sensors x4 | Speed Sensing Auto Door Lock | Impact Sensing Auto Door Unlock | Front & Rear All Seat 3-Point Seat Belts with Reminder | ISOFIX (Rear Anchors) | Front Passenger Airbag On/ Off Switch | Front Passenger Airbag On/ Off Indicator | Rear Occupant Alert

**Host of other innovative features:** Ice Cube MFR LED Headlamps with Starmap LED DRLs | Starmap LED Tail Lamps | Kia Signature Digital Tiger Face | R17 - 43.66 cm (17") Crystal Cut Alloy Wheels | Shark Fin Antenna and Integrated Spoiler | Electric Parking Brake with Auto Hold | 64 Color Ambient Mood Lighting | Wake-up Command | Kia Connect Diagnosis | Multilingual VR Commands | Call Center Assisted Navigation

**Kia Service**  
Connected • Adaptive • Responsive • Engage

3 Years Unlimited  
km Warranty

Extended Warranty\*\*  
Up to 5 Years

My Convenience Plus\*  
Best-in-class Cost of Ownership

Scratch Care  
Program\*

IoT Based  
Smart Services\*\*

24x7 | 3 Years  
Nationwide RSA<sup>†</sup>

Pre-book now

Call 1800 108 5000

Visit [www.kia.com/in](http://www.kia.com/in)

Kia Syros

Look for "Kia India" @

Terms & Conditions Apply. Segment is defined as vehicle with length between 3990 mm - 3999 mm and height - 1680 mm. \*Kia Connect 2.0 comes with 3 years free subscription. Amazon Alexa and any handheld device, mobile phone or/and smartwatch device are not standard car accessory & the customer needs to purchase from a third party. Kia Connect 2.0 features may vary depending on the variant, device compatibility, software and network availability in both vehicle and Alexa device. Kia Connect skill is only available in India and can be interacted with in English and Hindi. \*\*Advanced Driver Assistance System (ADAS) is not a substitute for human eye and driver vigilance. It is an assistance feature that enhances driving experience and safety. Effectiveness of ADAS may vary based on actual situation and all objects around vehicle may not be detected. The driver shall remain responsible for safe, vigilant, and attentive driving. \*\*3 Years standard warranty and 2 years extended warranty. \*\*IoT based workshops for live vehicle tracking for digital experience. \*\*RSA coverage across India except Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. \*Scratch Care Program coverage includes repair of 1 scratch free of cost in an ownership period of 12 months from the date of sale, applicable on the new Syros retailed up to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025. The product & feature images shown in this brochure is for representation purpose only. Features and specifications as shown may not be part of standard fitment and may vary. The colors shown are subject to availability and may not be available across all variants and may differ slightly from those shown in this brochure. The specifications and features may vary depending on models/ variants. Kia India Pvt. Ltd. (Formerly known as Kia Motors India Private Limited) reserves the right to make any changes with respect to the trims, colors, specifications, Kia Connect 2.0 features and other details of any model as mentioned in this brochure or to discontinue any model without prior notice. For more details visit your local Kia dealership. Kia India Pvt. Ltd. urges you to follow traffic rules, these are meant to keep you safe on roads. We do not endorse vandalism or illegal activities related to road safety. Safety is a top priority, and we urge responsible behavior regarding traffic regulations and road safety.

**FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:** BHUBANESHWAR: GUGNANI KIA, PATIA, PH: 9777064777, CENTRAL KIA, PAHAL, PH: 7440002919, TRUPTI KIA, PATRAPADA, PH: 7064414001/ 7064414004/ 7064414005, CUTTACK: CENTRAL KIA, PH: 9237304769, ROURKELA: KRISHNA KIA, PH: 7852941723, BALASORE: BASANTI KIA, PH: 7077732182, BERHAMPUR: CENTRAL KIA, PH: 7440002919, SAMBALPUR: CENTRAL KIA, PH: 7440004263, ANGUL: CENTRAL KIA, PH: 7440002919, JEYPORE: MAJESTY KIA, PH: 9124572378, KEONJHAR: TRUPTI KIA, PH: 7064414005





**MEGHAN CLOCKS ONE MILLION INSTA FOLLOWERS IN 24 HOURS**

Meghan, Duchess of Sussex has gained more than a million followers on Instagram in just 24 hours after she returned to the platform with a new handle to share a new year message and promote her new Netflix show *With Love, Meghan*.

**HOLLAND PLANS TO QUIT ACTING**

British actor Tom Holland, 28, who is in a relationship with his *Spider-Man: No Way Home* co-star Zendaya - has vowed to disappear from the spotlight once he has a family of his own as he'll be content with being around his kids and playing the occasional round of golf.



**FORTUNE FORECAST**

GaneshaSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
If you are a gadget freak, today you will have enough opportunity to flaunt your knowledge and impress everyone else. Students with a scientific bent of mind will excel in studies. Ganesha advises housewives to experiment with their own recipes, and not to worry about the oven - it will not burst.

**TAURUS**  
This day, you need to watch out against your selfish and possessive tendencies. Ganesha advises you not to be too determined or demanding. Try to not to be self centred. Do not impose your need and wishes on anyone. You should act generous and large hearted towards one and all; particularly towards your spouse.

**GEMINI**  
You will be more inclined towards religious teachings and rituals today. You will probably visit a place of worship and spend some time there and this will bring you mental peace and calm. However, you still need to do justice to your duties, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
It is high time you paid attention to your family. You have been so lost in work and in making money that you have almost forgotten the very people you have been slugging for. Your spouse has been trying hard to improve the relationship.

**LEO**  
If you are wondering whether you'll get the carrot or the stick today, then Ganesha has some good news for you: the day promises to bring only rewards for you. This will be especially true for your workplace, where your innate talents get recognised today.

**VIRGO**  
Ganesha feels that today may be an important turning point in your life. You will look to secure the money much required for your bright future. Relationship matters will top your priorities during the afternoon today. You may also feel the need for spirituality, so try your hand at meditation and yoga.

**LIBRA**  
Get a bigger wallet, since it is very likely that today shall prove to be a money-making day for you. It might be through some sort of a partnership deal that this may happen, predicts Ganesha. Destiny lends you a helping hand and guides you in your goals. But it is your sentiments that may darken your thoughts today.

**SCORPIO**  
You are quite vocal about your ambitious plans, says Ganesha. But, being too harsh on yourself or others for that matter may spoil your relationships with many people. Stay away from lengthy discussions to avoid any conflicts.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
You nearly become a superhero in the eyes of your near and dear ones, says Ganesha. And what more? You loving your new avatar. Good news is on its way as promotion or increment is on the cards.

**CAPRICORN**  
Paradise is where patience leads you, success is the other terminus, says Ganesha. Keeping your cool will benefit you in more ways than you would have imagined, so think twice before you unleash your vengeance on your foes. You are also likely to have a heart-to-heart conversation with your beloved and make him/her feel wanted.

**AQUARIUS**  
Today, you will understand the value of your job. You decide to do away with everything that has been hampering your work till now. You realise you need to set some long-term goals in your career. Grab the opportunity while the intention lasts, says Ganesha.

**PISCES**  
Today you will feel generous and calm. You will shower those in the family who are younger than you with this generosity and as a result be the object of their fondness. With a clear perspective you will be able to see things for what they are.

**Why is Kareena feeling hurt?**

**Mumba:** Actress Kareena Kapoor Khan recently shared an emotional post as she bid farewell to Switzerland, where she had been enjoying a memorable holiday with her family.

Accompanied by her husband Saif Ali Khan and their two children, Taimur and Jeh, the actress took to social media to express her feelings about leaving the picturesque destination.

Recently Bebo posted an image of the beautiful snowcapped mountains on her Instagram stories, writing, "Au revoir. Always hurts to leave..."

The Khan family had been vacationing in the scenic Swiss Alps, making the most of their time together and creating lasting memories in the winter wonderland.

The Uda Punjab actress also shared a series of adorable pictures from Taimur and Jeh's skiing session. In one of the photos, Taimur looked adorable in a red and green outfit, fully geared up for skiing as he stood outdoors. Kareena captioned the post, "Mera beta (my son)." In another snapshot, little Taimur was seen looking down at the ground, and Kareena humorously wrote, "Don't ask me if I ski! I take my son's pictures—someone needs to."



**ADAH'S love for quirky things**

**Mumbai:** Adah Sharma's love for all things quirky is for everyone to see on social media. The actress had her pillow cat Radha accompanying her as she tapped into this side of hers at the recently opened Paradox Museum in Mumbai. During an exclusive shoot with us there, she shared her love for things that are whimsical and strange.

With child-like enthusiasm, Adah eagerly experienced the various exhibits at the museum - from illusions like placing your head on a platter, lounging on a sofa with limbs seemingly detached to levitating mid-air. Adah says, "Paradoxes challenge the limits of logic, perception and reality. I can't pick just one favourite. The museum has so many exhibits that confront our assumptions about the nature of truth, where you second guess what's real."

Recalling how her love for quirky things began, Adah says, "My interest in quirky things started off when I realised people are afraid to be anything other than normal. I remember I painted my dogs for a school project using polka dots and florals. I'm fortunate that my parents never curbed my enthusiasm. Now, if things don't make me question reality, I'm just not interested."



**Maddock's big announcement for horror-comedy multiverse**

**Mumbai:** Filmmaker Dinesh Vijan's production banner Maddock has announced a slate of new and returning titles in his ambitious horror-comedy universe including *Stree 3*, *Munjya 2*, *Shakti Shalini*, *Chamunda* and *Pehla Mahayudh*. The announcement comes days after Ayushmann Khurrana began shooting for *Thama*, the latest chapter in Maddock Films' horror comedy universe. The actor will be essaying the role of a vampire in the movie, which also stars Rashmika Mandanna, Paresh Rawal and Nawazuddin Siddiqui.

*Thama* is the first movie to be released in theatres on Diwali 2025 from the production banner's slate, followed by *Shakti Shalini* December 31.

Every year there will be two movie releases. *Bhedhiya 2* and *Chamunda* will arrive in theatres in 2026 August 14 and December 4, respectively.

Fan-favourites *Stree 3* and *Mahamunjya* will release August 13 and December 24 in 2027. The production banner is also coming up with *Doosra Mahayudh*.

Vijan said they aim to churn out grand cinematic stories that are rooted in Indian culture in their horror-comedy multiverse.

"Our mission at Maddock has always been to innovate and entertain. We've crafted compelling characters that resonate with audiences, grounded in India's rich culture and heritage. This deep connection has made our stories not just relatable, but also meaningful."

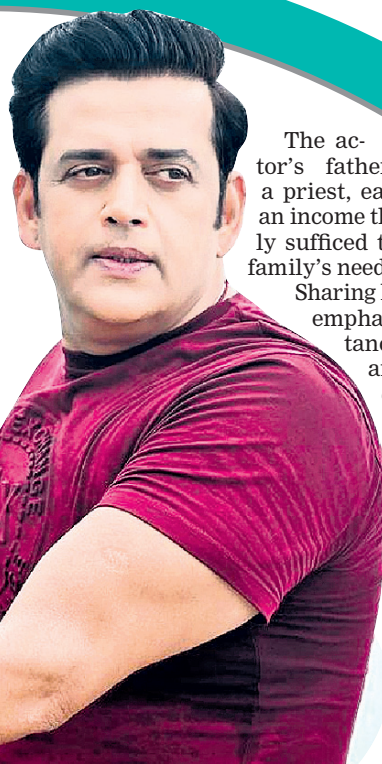
"Also, with a passionate and devoted fanbase, we're now setting the stage for something even bigger: a cinematic universe that brings unforgettable characters and their stories to life like never before. We can't wait to take audiences on this journey through 2028 and beyond - and we are just getting started," the filmmaker said in a statement.



**Ravi Kishan recalls excessive poverty**

**Mumbai:** Ravi Kishan, the actor and politician, recently opened up about his challenging childhood, shedding light on the struggles he and his family faced while growing up in a state of extreme poverty. His revelations have struck a chord with many, offering a glimpse into the resilience and determination that shaped his journey to stardom.

In an interview with a news agency, Kishan reminisced about the days when his family of 12, including his parents and siblings, lived in dire circumstances. The financial strain was so severe that even securing basic meals was a daily challenge. "There were days when all we had was khichdi, and even that had to be watered down to ensure it lasted for everyone," he recalled.



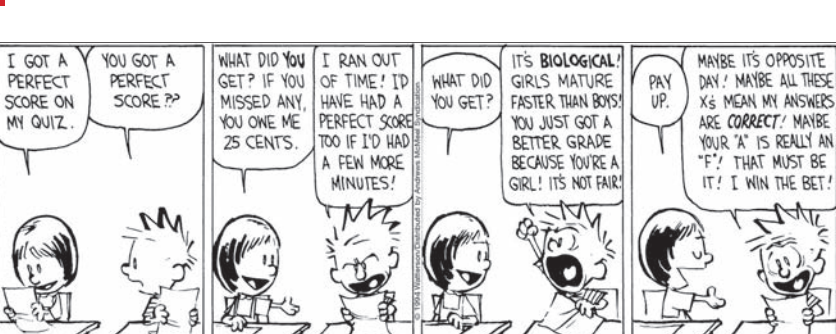
The actor's father, a priest, earned an income that barely sufficed to meet the family's needs.

Sharing his story, Kishan emphasized the importance of perseverance and gratitude. "I never forget where I came from," he said. "Those experiences taught me humility and the value of hard-earned success." Today, Kishan uses his platform to address issues like poverty and education, advocating for a better future for underprivileged children. His personal story serves as a beacon of hope for countless individuals striving to break free from the cycle of poverty.

**PEANUTS**



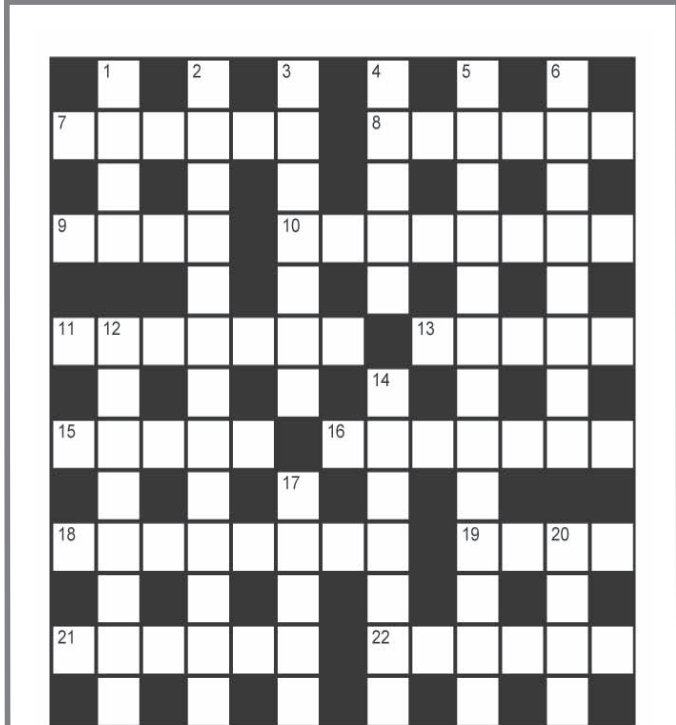
**CALVIN AND HOBBS**



**BREVITY**



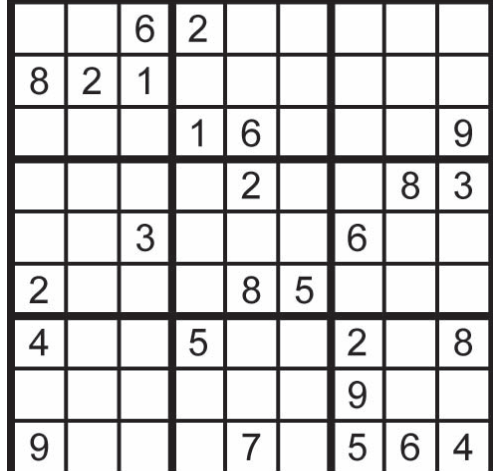
**FUN post CROSSWORD**



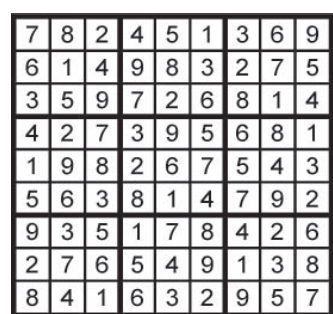
- Across**
- 7 Rough-cut
  - 8 Wyvern, e.g.
  - 9 Oil cartel
  - 10 Washes
  - 11 Leave suddenly
  - 13 Excuse
  - 15 Carpal tunnel site
  - 16 Smooth-haired dog
  - 18 Worked up
  - 19 Cut of meat
  - 21 Nom de guerre
  - 22 Cover completely
- Down**
- 1 Bisque, e.g.
  - 2 Diamond or emerald (8,5)
  - 3 Pablo Casals was one
  - 4 Olfactory sensation
  - 5 Spiderlike arachnid (5,8)
  - 6 Unspeakable
  - 12 Overly self-important
  - 14 Young child
  - 17 Logger's leftover
  - 20 Not in action

**SUDOKU**

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



**SOLUTIONS**



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



## India counters China

India reacts to China's plan to construct a gigantic dam on the Brahmaputra river in Tibet

NATIONAL | P7

## Jill's priciest gift

The \$20,000 diamond US First Lady Jill Biden received from PM Modi in 2023 is the priciest present from any foreign leader

INTERNATIONAL | P8

## Apple's settlement

Apple agrees to pay \$95mn to settle a lawsuit accusing the company of deploying Siri to eavesdrop on people

BUSINESS | P9

## Flop show again

Indian batters surrender meekly for a paltry 185 in the face of some hostile seam bowling from Australia

SPORTS | BACK PAGE

## Guv Kambhampati takes oath

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Hari Babu Kambhampati was sworn in as the 27th Governor of Odisha during a function at the Raj Bhavan here Friday.

Orissa High Court Chief Justice Chakradhari Sharan Singh administered the oath of office to Kambhampati in the presence of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik, state ministers, MLAs, MPs, BJP leaders and other dignitaries.

Kambhampati succeeded Raghubar Das, who resigned from the post recently.

He was accorded a guard of honour immediately after the swearing-in ceremony. Kambhampati arrived here Thursday afternoon. Soon after landing here at the airport, he along with his family members visited the Jagannath Temple in Puri and sought the Lord's blessings for the welfare of the state and its people.

Kambhampati, a PhD in Control Systems, was a member of the Janata Party from 1977 till the formation of the BJP in 1980. He was general secretary of the BJP's Andhra Pradesh unit from 1993 to 2003.



**ON WARPATH:** Anti-Yoon protesters clash with police officers as they march towards impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's official residence, after investigators were unable to execute an arrest warrant Friday for Yoon, according to the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials, in Seoul, South Korea

## Minor siblings shot at in sleep

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boinda, Jan 3: Two minor siblings were critically injured after they were shot at in their sleep by unknown assailants at Bhangamunda village under Kishorenagar police limits in Angul district late Thursday night.

The injured were identified as Prakash Mirdha, 11, and his sister Jagyanseni Mirdha, 15, children of Prafulla Mirdha. They were rescued by villagers and taken to Redhakhole hospital. After receiving first aid, they were shifted to VIMSAR in Burla. Due to the severity of their injuries, they were subsequently shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack for advanced care.

Prafulla, a labourer in a brick kiln, lives with his two daughters and son. On the fateful night, Prafulla was at the brick kiln while his daughters and son were sleeping in the house. Out of nowhere, miscreants fired at the house from outside. The bullets hit Jagyanseni and Prakash. Jagyanseni was shot in the chest, while Prakash was hit on his hand. Angul Superintendent of Police Rahul Jain along with SDPO of Athamallik, Balakrushna Kanar, and Kishorenagar IIC Bibhuti Pradhan visited the crime scene and launched an investigation, while Kishorenagar police registered a case.

## CM declares unseasonal rain as natural calamity

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday declared the unseasonal rain in December last year as a natural calamity to facilitate disbursement of compensation from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) to farmers for crop damage, due to the untimely weather event.

Addressing the 'Krushi Odisha Conclave 2025' here, he said farmers who have lost 33 per cent or more crops due to the unseasonal rain, would be provided assistance as per the provisions in the relief code.

The assistance of around ₹291 crore will be provided from the SDRF, he said.

"Unseasonal rain was not on the list of natural calamities in the state. However, keeping in view the crop damage and plight of farmers, our government today declares the unseasonal rain as a natural calamity to facilitate the disbursement of compensation from the State Disaster Response Fund," the



Chief Minister said.

According to district collectors, 6,66,720 farmers have so far reported 33 per cent or more crop loss due to rain between December 20 and 28, Majhi said. "These cultivators are entitled to get financial assistance of about ₹291.59 crore as compensation," he said.

Crops spread over around 2,26,791 hectares of agricultural land have been damaged by the unseasonal rain, the CM said.

Majhi said the state government would also make provisions for assistance for vegetable growers and farmers cultivating other cash crops like betel leaf and cotton. Steps are being taken to make farmers

self-reliant, he said.

The ruling BJP, during its first Cabinet meeting, had announced its decision to procure paddy at the rate of ₹3,100 per quintal, said the CM.

The Odisha government has also launched the CM Kisan Yojana under which more than ₹925 crore has been provided to about 46 lakh farmers.

"These measures prove our commitment towards the welfare of farmers," he asserted.

Apart from providing more assistance to the rain-affected farmers, the state government will make arrangements for irrigation, cold storage, model markets, godowns and agricultural machinery.

"Farmers are being provided subsidy system and special incentives for purchasing agricultural machinery. This people's government gives importance to the overall development of agriculture and farmers. Our government is committed to accelerating the development of the agriculture sector," Majhi said.

## 2 Subhadra instalments at one go

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: The state Cabinet, led by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Friday announced the release of two Subhadra Yojana instalments of ₹10,000 at one go to beneficiaries who apply for the scheme before March 31.

Addressing a press conference following the meeting, Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja said that nine proposals were approved by the Cabinet.

Ahuja said that the eligible beneficiaries will get the two instalments of Subhadra aid for the year 2024 at one go if they apply before March 31.

The Cabinet also approved the proposal to enhance the pension amount of eligible pensioners aged 80 years and above



or people with 80 per cent and above disabilities under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana and National Social Assistance Programme to ₹3500 per month with effect from March 31.

The Cabinet approved a proposal for the provision of state financial assistance for installation of rooftop solar panels under PMSG-MBY, said the Chief Secretary. "The state government will provide

additional subsidy of ₹25,000 for installation of 1KW rooftop solar panels," he added. The additional subsidy of ₹25,000 will be provided for solar projects with maximum capacity of 2KW. Households installing solar panels of 3KW will get the additional subsidy of ₹10,000 for the third unit, Ahuja said.

The Cabinet gave in-principle approval for repeal of the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993.

The Cabinet also approved a proposal for the comprehensive restructuring of the Odisha Statistics and Economics Service cadre and Odisha Subordinate Statistics and Economics cadre in order to strengthen the state's system.

## Buzz over HMPV outbreak in China

PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi, Jan 3: Reports about the outbreak and rapid spread of the Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) in China are doing the rounds on social media. Posts showing crowds of people in what looked like Chinese hospitals along with statements about China allegedly declaring an emergency over this virus are on various social media platforms.

However, China Friday played down the reports, saying that cases of the respiratory diseases which occur during the winter were less severe this year compared to last year. It is pertinent to note here that the coverage of the news is limited to Indian and Indonesian media outlets most of which have been quoting the viral social media posts, while no international news agencies or publications have reported on the alleged outbreak. Last week, China's diseases control authority had said that it was piloting a monitoring system for pneumonia of unknown origin, with cases of some respiratory diseases expected to rise through the winter, according to news

agency Reuters.

Meanwhile, the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) is closely monitoring respiratory and seasonal influenza cases in the country, and is in touch with international agencies in the wake of the reports on HMPV in China. "We will continue to monitor the situation closely and validate information and developments accordingly," a senior official said, Friday.

Director General of Health Services (DGHS) Dr Atul Goel said the HMPV is like any other respiratory virus which causes common cold, and it could cause flu-like symptoms in the young and the very old.

"There is news doing the rounds about a Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) outbreak in China. However, we have analysed the data of the respiratory outbreaks in the country (India) and there is no substantial increase in the December 2024 data and no cases which have been reported in large numbers from any of our institutions. There is nothing to be alarmed about the present situation," he said.

## Melanistic leopard spotted in Nayagarh



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Jan 3: A rare melanistic leopard with a cub has been spotted in a forest in Nayagarh district, bringing cheer to wildlife lovers, an official said Friday.

The leopard's images were captured with the help of a camera trap installed in the forest.

"A rare melanistic leopard with cub has been sighted in central Odisha, reflecting the region's incredible biodiversity. These elusive 'black panthers' are vital to the ecosystem - protecting their habitat, ensures a thriving wildlife heritage," Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Prem Kumar Jha said in a post on X.

He also attached a video and picture of the leopard in the post.

The All Odisha Leopard Estimation-2024 has revealed that the state has presence of such leopards in three forest divisions, sources said.

## JURASSIC HIGHWAY

## Hundreds of dinosaur footprints in UK quarry

REUTERS

London, Jan 3: Researchers have uncovered hundreds of dinosaur footprints dating back to the middle Jurassic era in a quarry in Oxfordshire, southern England, showing that reptiles such as the nine-metre predator Megalosaurus moved along enormous tracks.

The dig at Dewars Farm Quarry found five extensive trackways, one of which measured more than 150 metres in length, researchers from the Universities of Oxford and Birmingham said Thursday.

Four of the tracks were made by gigantic, long-necked, herbivorous dinosaurs called sauropods, most likely to be Cetiosau-



rus, an up to 18-metre-long cousin of the well-known Diplodocus, they said. The fifth trackway was made by the carnivorous theropod dinosaur Megalosaurus, which had distinctive three-toed feet with claws.

The carnivore and herbivore tracks, which are about 166 million years old, cross over at one point, raising questions about whether and how the two types of dinosaur were interacting, the researchers said.

Megalosaurus was the first dinosaur to be scientifically named and described in 1824, kick-starting the last 200 years of dinosaur science and public interest.

Emma Nicholls, vertebrate palaeontologist at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, said: "Scientists have known about and been studying Megalosaurus for longer than any other dinosaur on Earth, and yet these recent discoveries prove there is still new evidence of these animals out there, waiting to be found."

The buried prints came to light when quarry worker Gary Johnson felt 'unusual bumps' as he was stripping the clay back with his vehicle in order to expose the quarry floor.



# CHILD ANAEMIA, OVERWEIGHT CASES UP

Analysis of NFHS-5 report reveals incidence of stunting and wasting among children under five in the state has decreased

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 3:** Odisha's progress in tackling malnutrition among children is overshadowed by an alarming rise in incidents of anaemia and overweight, an analysis of National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) data by the Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD) revealed.

While reductions have been observed in the prevalence of stunting, wasting, and underweight, the state faces the growing challenge of a dual burden of malnutrition and undernutrition coexisting with overnutrition, it said. According to the CYSD findings (Emergent Odisha: Demography and Development), the prevalence of anaemia has surged to 64 per cent, with districts like Malkangiri, Sundargarh, and Angul reporting rates above 70 per cent.

At the same time, overweight prevalence has increased to 4 per cent, exceeding the national average. The highest incidence

was in Jagatsinghpur (8.3 per cent), up from 5.5 per cent in NFHS-4, followed by Dhenkanal which saw a rise from 1.6 per cent to 6.8 per cent.

However, the good news is stunting among children under five in the state has decreased to 31 per cent, wasting to 18 per cent, severe wasting to 6 per cent, and underweight prevalence to 30 per cent.

"These figures show marked improvement compared to previous NFHS rounds (3 and 4) and are below the national average," the analysis revealed.

A district-wise distribution indicates marked disparities with tribal-dominated districts such as Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, and Rayagada reporting stunting rates exceeding 44 per cent. In contrast, coastal districts like Puri, Jagatsinghpur, and Khurda exhibit significantly lower rates.

Similarly, over 25 per cent of children in Mayurbhanj, Subarnapur, Deogarh, Kandhamal, and Bolangir are wasted, with

Nutritional status in India and Odisha (in %)						
	India			Odisha		
	NFHS 3	NFHS 4	NFHS 5	NFHS 3	NFHS 4	NFHS 5
Anaemia	69.4	58.6	67.1	65	44.6	64.2
Stunting	48	38.4	35.5	45	34.1	31
Wasting	19.8	21	19.3	19.6	20.4	18.1
Severely wasting	6.4	7.5	7.7	5.2	6.4	6.1
Underweight	42.5	35.8	32.1	40.7	34.4	29.7
Overweight	NA	21	3.4	NA	2.6	3.5

Deogarh, Kandhamal, and Bolangir recording the highest severe wasting rates.

Cases of anaemia have risen across most districts with Khurda and Cuttack showing the highest growth in prevalence. Bargarh and Sambalpur have recorded notable declines, the analysis pointed out.

According to the analysis, the coexistence of undernutrition and overnutrition highlights a growing dual burden of malnutrition in the state.

While rural and tribal districts continue to struggle

with stunting and wasting, urbanised regions like Jagatsinghpur and Dhenkanal are experiencing a worrying rise in overweight cases.

The analysis, quoting health experts, warned that the implications of these disparities could widen existing inequities and strain Odisha's healthcare system. The rising prevalence of anaemia, particularly among children, points to gaps in micronutrient supplementation and dietary diversity. Concurrently, the increasing number of

overweight children signals shifts in lifestyle and dietary patterns, potentially leading to a surge in non-communicable diseases, it said.

A multi-sectoral strategy involving strengthening of nutrition programs and community health initiatives, ensuring equitable healthcare access across districts, especially for tribal and rural populations and promoting dietary awareness are crucial to tackle both undernutrition and overnutrition, the analysis suggested.

# Nat'l Chilika Bird Festival from Jan 6

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 3:** The 5th National Chilika Bird Festival will be organised from January 6 to 12, informed Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Ganesh Ram Singkhuntia Friday.

Addressing a press meet here, Singkhuntia said the inaugural function will be held at the Lok Seva Bhawan Convention Centre January 6 where Deputy Chief Minister Pravat Parida will attend as the chief guest. Renowned bird experts Asad Rahmani, Suresh Kumar, and wildlife photographer Dhritiman Mukherjee will also be present at the function, he added.

"Odisha is committed to the conservation of invaluable natural heritage and biodiversity. The National Chilika Bird Festival is an endeavour to further enhance the beauty, biodiversity, security and the glorious heritage of community-led conservation at Chilika Lake," said the minister.

Every year, the bird festival is organised by the Tourism department. However, as the department is engaged in organising

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, the Forest and Wildlife department has been given charge of the event.

Winners of quiz, poster making and painting competitions organised among the students at Chilika and Bhubaneswar earlier will be given away prizes at the inaugural ceremony.

Around 60 photographers who have registered for the festival will get the opportunity to visit Nalbana Bird Sanctuary and Mangalajodi. Key highlights of the seven-day festival include an art exhibition on birds, live art and poster display by students of BK College of Arts and Crafts, Utkal University of Culture and Government College of Art and Crafts, Khallikote.

Screening of documentary films on wildlife, and a photo and art exhibition have also been scheduled for school students at the Regional Science Centre here from January 7 to 12. Bird-watching walks will be organised at Forest Park, Regional Plant Research Centre and Anandabana. Odisha Bird Conclave will also be held at Barkula, Chilika during the festival, a release said.

# Mamata has no 'mamata' for Odisha: Majhi

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 3:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday targeted Mamata Benerjee, his counterpart in neighbouring West Bengal, for the potato crisis in the state, and said, "there is no 'mamata' (affection) in Mamata Didi for Odisha."

**POTATO CRISIS**

Not self-sufficient in potato production, Odisha depends a lot on West Bengal for its requirement for the tuber and faces problems when the neighbouring state stops supplying the produce to cater to its home demand.

While addressing an agricultural event here, Majhi and Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo slammed Benerjee for the potato scarcity in Odisha.

"Facing potato crisis in Odisha, we have talked to Mamata

Didi, but in vain. She settles a score on us at the appropriate time. There is no 'mamata' (affection) in Mamata Didi for Odisha," Majhi said.

The CM, however, did not elaborate on how Benerjee is settling a score.

Majhi also blamed the previous BJD government which he accused of failing to make Odisha self-sufficient in potato and onion production.

During the last six months since the BJP came to power in June last year, Odisha has faced an acute potato crisis allegedly because of West Bengal stopping supply.

In his speech at the 'KRUSHI ODISHA 2025', Singh Deo also targeted Benerjee and accused her TMC government of "blackmailing" Odisha's BJP govern-

ment during the potato crisis.

"West Bengal is blackmailing Odisha by stopping potato-laden trucks. But the state (Odisha) government has devised a plan. We have been encouraging farmers to undertake potato cultivation in a big way from this year," the deputy CM said.

He said that the state government in December 2024 has provided 1.6 lakh kg of potato seeds to 1.80 lakh farmers to undertake cultivation of the tuber.

In 2023, only 45,000 kg of potato seeds were used by the farmers in the state, said Singh Deo who also holds the agriculture portfolio. He said the state government was also making provision of cold storage in 58 sub-divisions of the state.

Majhi criticised the previous BJD government accusing it of failing to increase the state's potatoes and onions.



**SWIFT MOVES:** Artistes perform during Kala Mahotsav 2024-25 organised by Kalinga Bharati Foundation, with support from Ministry of Culture, at Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Odissi Research Centre in Bhubaneswar, Friday

# CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Nirmal Kumar Sen, S/o - Late Satish Chandra Sen, resident of Qrs. No. FRA - 406, NIT Campus, PO : Rourkela - 8, Dist. : Sundargarh, Odisha, PIN - 769008, declare by this affidavit No. -14AA314632, dated 12/12/2024 that now onwards I shall be known as NIRMAL SEN for all future purposes.

Before Executive Magistrate Berhampur Affidavit No.-A-012/02/01/25 I Chandra Sekhar Sahu (46) Wife-Rashmita Sahu, Vill/PO- Indrakhi, PS-Golanthara, Ganjam, Odisha say that my son's actual name is Himanshu Sekhar Sahu as Birth Certificate and Residence Certificate but in Aadhar Card wrongly mentioned as Hruishikesh Sahu, Both Himanshu Sekhar Sahu and Hruishikesh Sahu one and same person. Henceforth my son's name Himanshu Sekhar Sahu for all future purposes.

# Flights to Jaipur, Kochi take off; Lucknow from today

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 3:** Amplifying Odisha's air connectivity to the rest of India, Air India Express flights took off from Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here to Jaipur and Kochi Friday, while flights to Lucknow will commence Saturday, officials said.

According to sources, Air India Express will also launch services to Patna January 15, 2025. With these additions, Air India Express now operates 104 weekly flights from Bhubaneswar, connecting Odisha to major cities including Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kochi, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Patna and Pune.

Addressing the inaugural flight service, Commerce & Transport department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee said, "This strategic expansion, aligned with the vision of Viksit Odisha, is poised to drive growth in the tourism and aviation sectors while boosting economic development and creating stronger ties across the nation." Adding a cultural dimension to the celebration, Air India Express unveiled an aircraft featuring a stunning Ikat livery, honoring Odisha's rich textile heritage and showcasing it to the skies.

This milestone in air connectivity has been achieved under the New Destination Policy (NDP) 2024, introduced under



the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and headed by Minister Commerce & Transport, Steel & Mines, Bibhuti Bhushan Jena. The policy aims to boost emerging air routes through viability gap funding (VGF) and strategic incentives to improve accessibility and enhance the state's aviation infrastructure. Air India Express and Star Air have partnered with state government to operate in these routes, offering passengers greater convenience and amplifying Odisha's connectivity to the rest of India.

Attending the inaugural event, Bhubaneswar-Ekamra MLA Babu Singh said, "The event marks a historic significance for Odisha's progress.

Under the transformative guidance of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, these flights are not merely transportation links, they are rather lifelines of growth, bringing Odisha closer to the nation while empowering its people, culture, and economy."

These flights bring unprecedented convenience for professionals, families, students, and naval personnel, fostering economic and cultural exchanges, Singh asserted. In a symbolic gesture, Singh handed over a ticket to the first passenger.

The event was also graced by several dignitaries including representatives from Air India Express, and other esteemed guests.

# Pannun at it again, targets Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 3:** Fresh trouble mounted for Odisha police for security arrangement of upcoming Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in the Capital city, after Khalistani separatist leader Gurpatwant Singh Pannun Friday sent a threat e-mail, along with a video, to city-based scribe Akshay Kumar Sahoo threatening to disrupt the event. Referring to Bhubaneswar as "Terror City", the e-mail termed the event as 'Pravasi Bharatiya Terror Divas', used as a platform to further India's agenda of espionage and targeted violence against Pro Khalistan Sikhs, said Sahoo.

Interacting with media persons, Sahoo said he received the mail on 7:02 in Friday morning, along with which a 2 minutes 16 seconds video was attached. Sharing the e-mail's content, he claimed, "It criticized Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) for using the event as a recruitment hub for its agents and operatives. Such would normalize India's international campaign of repression against pro-khalistanis, and would threaten the presence of Khalistani referendum activists worldwide."

Further, Sahoo said the mail exhorted to identify key individuals supporting the Khalistani movement across Canada, the UK, Australia, the US, and other regions. Following which, they should carry



assignments and establish international advocacy for Khalistan. Targeting External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, the e-mail said RAW agents are operating under the guise of Indian embassy officials, targeting Sikh leaders and activists.

Besides, the attached video in the e-mail had Pannun saying Narendra Modi- India's face of terror, who would inaugurate the event January 9, has authorized transnational violation against pro-khalistan Sikhs. "Any Khalistani who has registered for the event must disrupt the event, and nip in the bud Raw's efforts to build spy network", it added.

Reportedly, this is the second e-mail by Pannun to Sahoo in the past one month, threatening to disrupt the law and order situation in the City. Earlier, November 28 and December 1, Pannun had called on his supporters to disrupt the All-India DGP/IGP conference in the city. Later, the Crime Branch had traced the sender's location to United States and Canada, and claimed usage of Virtual Private Network to send the e-mail.

# Budget 2025-26: Govt invites suggestions

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 3:** Ahead of the Budget session of the state Assembly in February, the Finance department Friday sought suggestions from general public, civil society organisations and other stakeholders, as part of its participatory approach to Budget making.

The Finance department Friday said that in the previous years, in order to make the budgetary process more open and participative using Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the Finance department has initiated the process of obtaining inputs for Budget preparation through the dedicated Budget web portal, email, WhatsApp and SMS.

Citizens and civil society groups can feed their suggestions for Annual Budget 2025-26 by visiting <https://budget.odisha.gov.in/>. The Budget portal also displays all budget related documents.

Suggestions can also be sent through email [odisha.budget@gov.in](mailto:odisha.budget@gov.in).

Citizens can also send in their suggestions through WhatsApp on mobile number (+91)9438161111, and through social media platforms like X (erstwhile Twitter) (@FdOdisha), Facebook (@FinanceOdisha) and Instagram (@fdodisha).

The last date for sending Budget suggestions is January 31, 2025.

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	26.4°	24.0°
Min Temp	14.0°	12.4°
Humidity	67%	75%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

**FORECAST**  
Fog/mist in the morning and partly cloudy sky later

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX	VARIATION	
SENSEX	79223.11	↓ 720.60
NIFTY	24004.75	↓ 183.90
DOLLAR	85.94	↑ 0.01
EURO	88.57	↓ 0.31
GOLD	₹77,363	↓ ₹354
SILVER	₹89,721	↑ ₹548

**FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS**

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 Centre (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-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolitan 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.



# Change in regime brings Mo Ghara Yojana to halt

Only 26 beneficiaries received loans under the scheme in Nabarangpur district

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, Jan 3: 'Mo Ghara Yojana', a housing scheme introduced during the tenure of the previous BJD government, has reportedly lost its momentum after a change of regime in the state.

The scheme is no longer operational in Nabarangpur district after the BJP government came to power. Out of the 26 beneficiaries approved under the scheme, only 12 have actually received loans from the banks. Furthermore, the government portal for the scheme remains inoperative, raising doubts over the future of the programme.

Launched by the previous BJD government in June 2023, 'Mo Ghara Yojana' aimed at providing pucca houses to beneficiaries deprived of the Centre-sponsored Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). Under this scheme, loans ranging from ₹1 lakh to ₹3 lakh were facilitated, with beneficiaries receiving funds in three instalments. Additionally, concessions based on various categories were available. Beneficiaries were allowed a 10-year period to repay the loans in monthly instalments.

The application process for the scheme commenced in June last year. In Nabarangpur district, 8,953 individuals applied for loans under the scheme to build their houses. Subsequently, an additional 5,974 applications were received, which were scrutinised by the



**Official website remains non-functional while the scheme is yet to open its account in six blocks**

administration. After verification, 3,690 individuals were recommended for loan approval across various banks.

However, only 26 beneficiaries, including 12 from Nabarangpur block, four from Nandahandi block, two from Papadahandi block, three from Raigarh block, one from Tentulikhunti block, and four from Umerkote block, were granted loans. The current state of the scheme has left many in uncertainty with no clarity on its future trajectory.

As of the latest data, banks had provided loans to only 12 individuals - seven from Nabarangpur block, three from Umerkote block, and one each from Tentulikhunti and Nandahandi blocks. However, no accounts could be opened under the scheme in six other blocks.

Notably, Papadahandi block recorded the highest number of applications at 1,164, while Chandahandi had the lowest at 207. One of the major obstacles in approving loans has been land records or record of rights (RoR, patta).

When contacted, former MP and BJD district president Ramesh Chandra Majhi said that portals are deliberately being closed and the names of many schemes are being changed after the new government came into power. Portals are not being opened due to the uncertainty surrounding the future direction of these initiatives, he said.

In 2016-17 and till date, 1,41,191 beneficiaries in Nabarangpur district have received houses under the PMAY, Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana (BPGY), and Nirman Shramik Pucca Ghar Yojana (NSPGY) schemes. Out of them, 1,12,390 houses have been completed. However, many poor families in rural areas still live in temporary structures like kutcha houses. For these families, having a pucca house remains a distant dream.

On the other hand, the financial assistance under the PMAY has been reduced from ₹1,30,000 to ₹1,20,000. Given the rising costs of construction materials over the last decade, beneficiaries are concerned as to how they can complete their houses with such limited funds. There is a growing demand for the state government to prioritise this issue and address these challenges effectively.

# 'Dhanu Yatra' begins; Prez, CM, LoP greet people



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar/Bargarh, Jan 3:** President Droupadi Murmu, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik Friday greeted people as 'Dhanu Yatra' commenced in Bargarh district.

Bargarh MP Pradip Purohit inaugurated the annual festival in the presence of local MLA Ashwini Kumar Sarangi and other dignitaries in the evening. The theatre festival will continue till January 13.

Taking to X, President Murmu said, "I extend my heartfelt greetings to the people of the country, especially the people of Odisha, on the occasion of the famous Dhanu Yatra of Bargarh. This yatra is known

in the country and abroad for its large open-air stage. I hope that the folk drama based on our mythological stories will convey a spiritual feeling to the people of the country. I wish the Dhanu Yatra festival success."

Similarly, Majhi said, "Many greetings and best wishes to everyone on the occasion of the world famous Bargarh Dhanu Yatra, the pride and glory of Odisha. This unique festival is pride of Odia heritage and culture. This has gained fame as the world's largest open-air theatre. This holy festival plays an important role in bringing everyone together and awakening love, devotion and spiritual consciousness in the society. Let us all celebrate this grand

festival with great joy and enthusiasm."

"My greetings to all on the occasion of the world famous Bargarh Dhanu Yatra. It is a symbol of our unique culture and tradition. This festival, which depicts Lord Krishna's victory over Mathura, is the world's largest open-air stage. This has played a significant role in spreading positivity in the society. Let us join this divine festival and make it even bigger," Patnaik said.

The festival is celebrated across an 8-km radius in Bargarh municipality area and adjoining localities. The event is based on Lord Krishna's 'Mathura Vijay' in which the Lord defeats his uncle King Kansa.

As the town celebrates the festival, entire Bargarh gets

decked up as Mathura while nearby Ambapali village turns into mythological Gopapura.

The Jeera river, located close to Bargarh, is considered as Yamuna during Dhanu Yatra.

The people of Bargarh consider themselves as the subjects of demon king Kansa during the festival, which has been held since 1947.

According to locals, Dhanu Yatra was first organised in Bargarh in 1947 to celebrate India's independence.

The state government has sanctioned over ₹1 crore for making the festival a grand success. For the first time, the festival will be live-streamed on LED screens across major cities of Odisha including Bhubaneswar.

# Woman dies, sarpanch hubby critical in LPG cylinder blast

POST NEWS NETWORK

Harbhanga, Jan 3: The sarpanch of Banihushanpur panchayat under this block in Boudh district sustained critical burn injuries in a LPG cylinder explosion which claimed the life of his wife, Thursday night.

The deceased was identified as Bishnupriya Meher, a teacher by profession, and the injured sarpanch as Sribanta Meher.

According to reports, the cooking gas cylinder exploded for an unknown reason while Bishnupriya was cooking Thursday night. Hearing his wife's scream for help, Sribanta, who was also in the house at Charichhaka Bazaar, attempted to save her and was severely burned in the process.

Local villagers rushed the couple to Purunakatak Health Centre for treatment. Bishnupriya succumbed to her injuries while receiving treatment at the hospital. The sarpanch, however, was later transferred to Bhubaneswar for advanced care due to severe burn injuries. His condition remains critical.

Purunakatak PS OIC Sharda Prashanna Das confirmed that a case of unnatural death has been registered and an investigation is underway based on the complaint filed by the deceased's brother.

# 'It's now or never for Rourkela Airport'

RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

**Rourkela, Jan 3:** The Rourkela Airport Action Committee (RAAC) has launched an indefinite 'sit-in' demonstration in front of the airport here demanding four key improvements. The protest, which began January 1, will continue until the committee's demands are addressed.

RAAC's four demands include upgrading the airport to a 4C classification, transferring the airport's land ownership from SAIL to the Airports Authority of India (AAI), and installing both Instrument Landing System (ILS) and Night Landing System (NLS).

Committee members unanimously agree that this is a crucial



moment for Rourkela Airport. "This is a 'now or never' situation. If we miss this opportunity, both the airport and the city's future will be doomed," said Suman Dutta, a former police officer and RAAC member. Another member Pasupati Chatterjee, echoing the same sentiment, said, "If we lose this moment, everything will be lost."

Prabhat Tibrewal, president of the Rourkela Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), added, "We have met with the state Chief Secretary and emphasised the need for a fully functional airstrip for the city's growth." Many RCCI members, including former president Sunil Kayal, agreed, saying, "It is now or never, especially with the current double-engine government."

The main issue preventing the airport's full functionality is the need for ILS, NLS, and 4C licence for larger aircraft. For this to happen, the land needs to be transferred from SAIL to AAI via the state government. Reports indicate that 264 acres of land are required for larger planes to land, but 94 acres are

still owned by the state or private individuals. For the ATR-72, operated by Alliance Air, 172 acres are needed, with 61 acres still under RSP's control.

According to reliable sources, a report from an AAI team that visited Rourkela recently has been submitted to AAI. The report suggests that Rourkela has the potential to become the state's largest airport in terms of runway size, with a 2.7-km-long runway. However, this would require 218 acres of land.

Two possibilities are emerging to manage the airport, an agreement between SAIL, AAI and the state government, where the steel conglomerate will provide or handover completely to AAI an expert said.

# Armed robbers loot 30kg gold, cash in broad daylight

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, Jan 3:** Armed robbers carried out a daylight heist Friday in the busy Budharaja area, stealing nearly 30 kg of gold jewellery and approximately ₹4 lakh in cash from a financial institution in Sambalpur district.

According to police, at around 9:30am, a group of seven masked robbers arrived on three motorcycles at the Manappuram Gold Loan branch. They attacked the security guards and staff, threatened them with firearms, and



locked them in a room. The robbers then accessed staff passwords, opened the lockers, and made off with the gold and cash.

Following the robbery, the branch manager alerted the

Ainthapali police, who quickly arrived at the scene and initiated an investigation. A special police team has been formed to track down the perpetrators. The police have sealed several entry and exit points around Sambalpur and launched searches across the area.

The investigation is being overseen by senior officers, including Himanshu Lal, IG (Northern Range), and the Sadar SDPO. Authorities are also reviewing CCTV footage from cameras along main roads and nearby alleys in a bid to identify the suspects.

# 'JATRA-2025' BEGINS AT SUNDARGARH

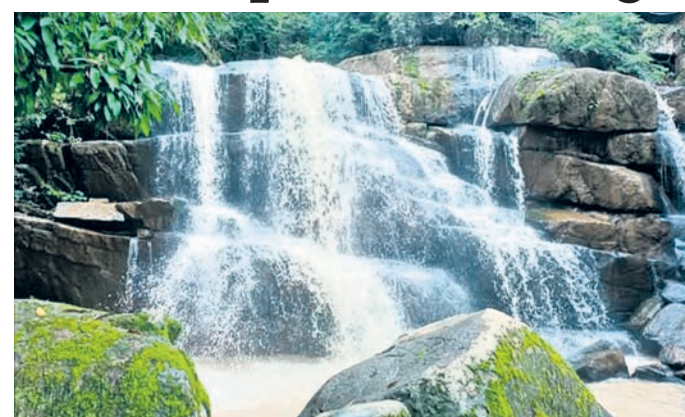
Rourkela: The Sundargarh Zilla Mahotsav 'Jatra-2025' was inaugurated at the Jatra Padia Thursday evening, marking the beginning of a grand five-day celebration. The event featured colourful performances showcasing local tribal culture, among other highlights. Union Minister for Tribal Welfare Jual Oram officially launched the festival, joined by Rabi Narayana Nayak, Minister of Rural Development, Deputy Speaker Bhabani Shankar Bhoi, and other dignitaries. Collector Manoj Mahajan, who coordinated the inauguration, provided a brief overview of Jatra-2025 and the Pallishri Mela, urging everyone to participate and ensure the event's success.

# Jogimath, a hidden spot in Daringbadi, awaits development

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Daringbadi, Jan 3:** Jogimath waterfall, located in Saramuli panchayat of Kandhamal district, is emerging as a popular attraction for tourists seeking natural beauty and spiritual solace. Known in the area for its tranquil environment and scenic backdrop, Jogimath is drawing visitors despite its relatively remote location.

The site is steeped in local folklore. Legends suggest that it was once a centre for Shakti worship, with rituals dedicated to the deity Dalakhai. Ancient temple remnants scattered around the waterfall add to the site's charm, with researchers exploring their historical significance. Professor Akshay Behera, a scholar from the Brahman-



igaon region, believes the area may contain fossils and artifacts, hinting at its ancient past.

Local legends further enhance Jogimath's mystique. Tales of two mythical demons, Atapi and Batapi, who are said to have

terrorised the region, add to the allure of the place. The name 'Jogimath' is also tied to ascetics who are believed to have meditated in the area, adding to the site's spiritual and cultural importance. Visitors often report

a sense of serenity and describe the aroma of incense filling the air, heightening the mystical experience. However, despite its unique appeal, Jogimath remains underdeveloped, with poor infrastructure limiting its potential as a major tourist destination.

In recognition of its growing popularity, both district and local administrations have begun efforts to improve accessibility and amenities. Plans are underway to construct paved roads, culverts, and stairways leading to the site. A grant of ₹9 lakh has been secured for culvert construction, with additional funding sought for other development projects.

Meanwhile, Daringbadi, often referred to as the 'Kashmir of Odisha', continues to attract

hundreds of tourists daily during the winter season. Its diverse attractions including waterfalls, parks, pine forests, and streams offer a blend of natural beauty and adventure. While well-known sites in Daringbadi are frequently visited, hidden gems like Jogimath have the potential to further enrich the region's tourism landscape if properly developed.

As tourists increasingly seek offbeat and tranquil destinations, Jogimath's potential to become a cornerstone of Kandhamal's tourism is clear. Local authorities hope that ongoing efforts will unlock the true potential of this hidden haven, combining its natural splendour and cultural heritage to attract even more visitors in the future.

# Tigress Zeenat re-released into STR

**Baripada:** Tigress Zeenat was reintroduced to the wild at the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Mayurbhanj district Friday. The three-year-old tigress, originally brought to Similipal from the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) in Maharashtra under a translocation project, had strayed out of the reserve. It was tranquillised and rescued from a forest in Bankura district, West Bengal, 21 days after leaving Similipal. After undergoing a health check-up at Alipore Zoo in Kolkata, Zeenat was brought back to Similipal January 1 and is now back in the reserve's core area. "Zeenat was first re-released in the Chahala range and later escorted to the Jenabil range in the southern part of Similipal, within its core area."

**राष्ट्रीय डिजाइन संस्थान**  
National Institute of Design  
ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ • ఆంధ్ర ప్రదేశ్ • Andhra Pradesh  
(An autonomous Institute of National Importance Under DPFIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Govt. of India)  
RECRUITMENT NOTIFICATION NO.ID AP/RECT/2024/R-2 Date:05.12.2024  
The National Institute of Design, Andhra Pradesh is an autonomous multidisciplinary design Institute of National Importance established under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. Online applications are invited from the eligible Indian Nationals to fill-up the following positions.

S. No.	Post Name/No./Reservation	Pay Level	Mode of Recruitment
1	Head Librarian-01 No. (UR)	11	Direct Recruitment Failing which by Deputation
2	Senior Accounts Officer-01 No. (UR)	10	Direct Recruitment Failing which by Deputation

All positions are identified as suitable for Persons with benchmark disabilities. Interested and eligible candidates may apply online only through the link on the institute website. Further details, updates and modifications, if any, shall be available on our website [www.nid.ac.in/careers](http://www.nid.ac.in/careers) only. The online application window will be open for 30 days from the date of publication of this notice in the Employment News. In-Charge Admin Head National Institute of Design, Andhra Pradesh CBC 05218/12/0005/2425

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, DEOGARH**  
E-mail Id- [eerw\\_deogarh@yahoo.co.in](mailto:eerw_deogarh@yahoo.co.in)  
No.O-1051 E-Procurement Notice  
BID IDENTIFICATION NO.SERWDGH-Online-07/2024-25

- No. of Building Works:- (15 Nos.)
- Estimated Cost:- Rs.32.29 Lakhs to Rs.36.86 Lakhs
- Mode of Submission of tender:- Tender shall be submitted online in [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)
- Availability of tender for online bidding:- 06.01.2025, 10.00 A.M. to 17.01.2025 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Date and time of opening of tender:- 18.01.2025, 11.00 A.M.
- Other details can be seen from the website:- [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in).
- Corrigendum/ Addendum if any shall only be published in the above website.

Sd./-  
Additional Chief Engineer  
S.E. (I/C) R.W. Division, Deogarh  
OIPR-25087/11/0007/2425

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, BALLIGUDA**  
Government of Odisha e-Procurement Notice  
Bid Identification No.Online Tender-04/EERWD BLG/2024-25  
No.O-1094 [rw\\_balliguda@yahoo.com](mailto:rw_balliguda@yahoo.com)  
Letter No.4519 //RWDBLG Date:27.12.2024

Sl No	Name of the Work	Building Works
1	Estimated Cost	Rs.23.67 Lakhs to 47.02 Lakhs
2	Period of Completion	As per Annexure
3	Date & Time of availability of Bid documents in the Portal	From 06.01.2025 at 10.00 AM to 18.01.2025 upto 5.00 PM
4	Last Date/Time for receipt of Bids in the Portal	18.01.2025 upto 5.00 PM
5	Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Balliguda

The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be displayed from the e-procurement portal website <http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum/ corrigendum/ cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.  
Sd./-  
Executive Engineer  
Rural Works Division, Balliguda  
OIPR-25164/11/0005/2425



FOCUS INDIAN ECONOMY

HARD QUESTIONS



Good governance is a pre-requisite for good growth. But the Indian economic story has been marked by weak governance and strong signals emanating from the top that all business houses are not created equal

success. Coupled with a pervasive joblessness that shows up in events that are eye-popping, like the stampedes when lakhs queue-up for a limited number of vacancies, it speaks of a nation divided, its businesses subdued, its citizens reduced to searching for non-existent jobs. Communal divides are bad, Economic divides being created can be equally so, with increasing concentration of wealth in the hands of fewer people so that we have a nation split, literally and metaphorically, between the few within gated communities and the majority who cannot step in. In that sense, Mumbai's glittering high rises built by BJP-friendly builders are a symptom of a deeper rot.

newly appointed RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra: "... prospects for the Indian economy are expected to improve after the slowdown in the pace of economic activity in the first half of 2024-25."

it delivery, drive increased investment, see more projects take off and deliver growth - the sign of a nation on the move. Yet, these first principles don't translate to practice when the signals going out are contrary to the idea of growth that is fair, balanced and equitable.

How do you "improve"? Here comes the clamour for a rate cut as a panacea, but since food inflation is alarmingly high, a rate cut must come by ignoring this fact. Yet, food inflation hits the poor the most, so this approach translates to ignoring the poor while keeping the engine going along the lines of failed trickle-down theories.

Regulatory frameworks must work for all sides and all parties. Good governance is a pre-requisite for good growth. But the Indian economic story has been marked by weak governance and strong signals emanating from the top that all business houses are not created equal.

In November, Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal said it was "absolutely flawed theory" to consider food inflation when deciding on bank interest rates. The call for excluding food inflation while working the Central bank's inflation targeting framework rather than expressing alarm at galloping food inflation ignores the simple wisdom that the common man suffers first from food inflation, not from core inflation.

Separating good governance from good economics, almost cutting them into neat exclusive sets and then expecting durable growth is like asking everyone to join in the marathon when the winners are pre-decided. The game will soon be seen as a charade, with longer term implications for investments, reputation and growth numbers.

Keeping to first principles, lower rates should push cred-

Not away from the headlines of laudatory mentions on growth is the story of a per capita income that keeps a majority of Indians away from the benefits of the claimed growth

The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal @THEBILLIONPRESS.ORG

GOOD GROWTH AND PRICE STABILITY ARE THE TWO PILLARS OF A ROBUST ECONOMY. THESE WORK ON THE BACKBONE OF FINANCIAL STABILITY



Jagdish Rattanani

More than half a century after the economist-philosopher E F Schumacher talked of "economics as if people mattered", India is caught in an economic story that is increasingly about numbers bigger than the people they are meant to serve.

As 2023 drew to a close, Prime Minister Narendra Modi reiterated in Parliament that India will soon become the third largest global economy. The Union Minister of State in the PMO Dr Jitendra Singh repeated the promise on Dec. 30, 2024.

The claims of a march to global superstardom come ironically not at a good time, even when looked at from a numbers-only perspective. To begin, in the near term, growth is down and inflation is up.

GDP was 9% in 2022-23 H1, fell to 8.2% in 2023-24 and further slipped to 6% in 2024-25 H1. GVA (Gross Value Added), which is growth on the supply side, was 6.2% in 2024-25 H1, down from the 8% mark in the same period for the previous two years.

Inflation (CPI-Combined) crossed the targeted upper threshold of 6% in October 2024, with food inflation at an alarming 9.69%. Food inflation this close to double digits was at a 14-month high. CPI inflation came down to 5.48% in November 2024, with continued high food inflation at 8.2%.

Largely, inflation has been on a higher trajectory since 2020, above the mandated upper target of 6% for as many as 25 months in the last four years.

It is plain that the Indian economy has had a bumpy ride in the year gone by, with many red and yellow warning lights. The hope being expressed is that the ride will settle and pick up pace, an optimism reflected in the statement of the

Cuting the Clutter

Continuing from where he left off last month, Cabinet Secretary TV Somanathan has called out ministries for ignoring a two-year-old directive to limit decision-making to four layers. In a no-nonsense letter, he pointed out that this non-compliance is causing unnecessary delays, undermining the government's push for reforms. He is clearly a man on a mission.

The directive aims to streamline processes by creating a leaner, flatter structure. Somanathan wants special, additional, and joint secretaries to operate as independent bureau heads, cutting out extra layers that slow things down. His message was clear: "De-layering" isn't just a buzzword; it's about speeding up decisions and improving efficiency.

He also reminded secretaries to personally ensure these changes are implemented, stressing that responsive, transparent governance depends on it.

Adding to this, the Cabinet Secretary chimed in with a reminder to keep communication short and sweet. He asked secretaries to send concise monthly updates—just one or two pages—highlighting key issues and delays. The message? Less bureaucracy, more action.

Decoding IAS reshuffle

The recent secretary-level reshuffle in New Delhi left some scratching their heads yet again. Like an unsolvable jigsaw puzzle, the logic behind these moves remains a closely guarded secret. But, for now, let's try to decode at least a few of these postings.

First up is the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), which handles the government's personnel affairs. For the third time in a year, the DoPT has a new Secretary, with Rachna Shah, a 1991 Kerala cadre officer stepping in after a prolonged vacancy. Notably, the baton remains with a woman officer, continuing a trend. Shah replaces Radha S Chauhan, while Manisha Saxena recently took over as Establishment Officer, and Kavita Singh handles crucial ACC matters in the Cabinet Secretariat. Coincidence? Hardly, say sources. The system seems designed to prevent leaks and surprises. If all goes smoothly, Shah may stay till her retirement in November 2027, promising some much-needed stability at the DoPT.

Over at the Department of Revenue, the reshuffle sparked buzz with 1992 batch IAS officer Arunish Chawla's appointment. Taking over from Sanjay Malhotra, now RBI Governor, Chawla faces the Herculean task of managing key portfolios like CBDT, CBIC, and the Enforcement Directorate (ED). His stint in Pharmaceuticals seems to have been a brief stopover, and he's now moved to the high-stakes North Block while still holding charge of the Ministry of Culture. Speaking of culture, it's been on an upward trajectory, gaining significant prominence. How Chawla balances these dual responsibilities will be worth watching.

As for the Ministry of Culture, the suspense over who will fill Chawla's shoes adds an extra layer of intrigue. With the Prime Minister's Office playing its cards close to the chest, it's a game of wait-and-watch. In the end, these reshuffles are a masterclass in controlled chaos. For us, mere mortals, deciphering the method in this madness remains an engaging, if baffling, pastime.



BABUDOM BYTES Dilip Cherian

What's cooking in Bihar's babu cauldron?

Bureaucracy often thrives on opacity, but every so often, a story comes along that is intriguing enough to make us wonder what's happening behind the scenes. The case of Kamyra Misra, a promising young IPS officer from the 2019 batch, is one such mystery.

Misra, who recently resigned from her post as the Rural Superintendent of Police (SP) in Darbhanga, citing personal reasons, found her resignation unceremoniously rejected by the Bihar government. Instead, she's been granted 180 days of leave starting November 2024 and is currently cooling her heels at the Bihar Police Headquarters, awaiting a fresh posting. Reshuffles are routine in police services, but her case feels anything but ordinary.

Her husband, Avdhesh Saroj Dixit, also from the 2019 batch, is currently the SP of Gopalganj, having previously served as the City SP in Muzaffarpur. The duo, who married in 2021, is highly regarded in bureaucratic circles. So why would an officer like Misra, respected and reportedly effective, tender her resignation? And why would the government so pointedly refuse to let her go?

The timing adds an extra layer of intrigue. Could this be linked to Bihar's political climate, with state elections potentially on the horizon? Misra's tenure in Darbhanga and her decision to step away could have raised eyebrows, but the government's move to sideline her while keeping her within the system only raises more questions. Is there a larger BJP-Nitish Kumar political calculus at play here? Or does this point to internal administrative dynamics that we can only guess at?

Whatever the reason, one thing is clear—as the political temperature in the state rises, stories like this remind us of the fine balance between governance and politics in India's bureaucracy. For now, though, Kamyra Misra's 180-day hiatus leaves us wondering: what's next in this unfolding drama?

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

SPECTRUM US POLICY

MAGA goes to Panama

US President-elect Donald Trump clearly does not intend to pursue a "good neighbor" policy. He has been mocking Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau by calling him 'governor' while proclaiming that a country of 40 million people should become the 51st US state.

Now Trump is seeking to reopen a debate over control of the Panama Canal that was settled five decades ago. But here, Trump's statements resonate with a powerful sentiment that long underpinned previous US policy on the issue. After all, the Panama Canal was an American idea.

Some 5% of all world trade in goods, and 40% of US container traffic, passes through the Panama Canal. Connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans via a 51-mile waterway across the Isthmus of Panama, the canal has become entangled in the intensifying geopolitical and geo-economic rivalry between the United States and China. Trump's statements about the US retaking the canal in the face of alleged increased Chinese influence in Panama have shocked many - not least Panamanians, who see them as an affront to their sovereignty.

But sovereignty has been a pliable concept throughout Panama's history. Contending with the vestiges of the Spanish empire in the Americas, Roosevelt thought it crucial to establish a route for US trade between the Atlantic and the Pacific that avoided the need to circumnavigate South America. There were two options: Nicaragua and Colombia. The latter proved easier but involved some US sleight of hand.

Roosevelt's administration backed a faction that pursued secession from Colombia, which led to the creation of the new state of Panama, where the US could pursue Roosevelt's pet project. In 1903, the US received authority to build a canal and control of the Panama Canal Zone "in perpetuity," in exchange for annual payments to Panama.

More than a strategic trade route was at stake in seizing Panama and building the canal. In a letter to Sir George Otto Trevelyan, Roosevelt wrote: "Wherever I could establish a precedent for strength in the executive, as I did in...taking Panama...I have felt not merely that my action was right in itself, but

that in showing the strength of, or in giving strength to the executive, I was establishing a precedent of value."

In his memoirs, Roosevelt conceded his "regret" for using force in violating Colombia's sovereignty, but the US never issued a formal apology or offered compensation. The 1914 version of the Thomson-Urrutia Treaty between the US and Colombia conveyed the US side's "sincere regret that anything should have occurred to interrupt or to mar relations" with Colombia. But Roosevelt's continued opposition to such official statements, bolstered by US officials like Secretary of State John Hay (who supported the former president's actions in Panama), delayed the treaty's ratification. Only in 1921, when the offending passage was removed, did the Senate ratify the treaty, which offered reparations but no apology or explicit admission of wrongdoing.

Tensions over the Canal Zone continued to simmer for decades. By the 1960s, growing resentment of US power in Latin America culminated in Panama's brief suspension of diplomatic relations in 1964. From that time on, the issue preoccupied more than one

US administration. In 1964, after consulting with former Presidents Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower, President Lyndon Johnson committed to work toward a new arrangement with Panama. It would take 14 years of bipartisan negotiation under two Democratic presidents and two Republican presidents before an agreement was reached. Ultimately, it was Jimmy Carter who decided that it was time to turn over the canal to Panama and correct injustices toward the region.

But there was some important fine print. One of the two treaties that the countries signed specified that the US remained in control of the canal's security and could use military force to defend it against any threat to neutrality.

Seen in the light of this history, Trump's recent statements may be shocking, but they are not surprising. As Trump contemplates his next move on the Panama Canal, the question we should be asking is whether America ever became truly reconciled to giving it up.

The writer is Professor of Comparative Law at New York Law School. @PROJECTSYNDICATE



Ruti Teitel

TRUMP'S STATEMENTS ABOUT THE US RETAKING THE CANAL IN THE FACE OF ALLEGED INCREASED CHINESE INFLUENCE IN PANAMA HAVE SHOCKED MANY

WISDOM CORNER

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

The progress of rivers to the ocean is not so rapid as that of man to error. VOLTAIRE

Without a revolutionary theory there cannot be a revolutionary movement. VLADIMIR LENIN

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1809: French educator Louis Braille, who developed a system of printing and writing that is extensively used by the blind and that was named for him, was born near Paris.

1948: Southeast Asian nation of Burma (Myanmar) formally gained independence, completing the transfer of power negotiated by Burmese leader Aung San and British Prime Minister Clement Attlee in 1947.

1960: French novelist and playwright Albert Camus, who received the 1957 Nobel Prize for Literature, was killed in an automobile accident.

1965: American-English author T.S. Eliot, a leader of the Modernist movement in poetry in such works as The Waste Land (1922), died in London.

Letters TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com



Grim picture

Sir, The 2023-24 report by the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE +) shows a grim picture of India's school education sector. It shows a steep dwindle of 37 lakh students in school enrolment. This situation calls for working out a corrective solution to the problem. It is a matter of concern that there is a sharp decline in the enrolment of girls, minorities, and marginalised communities. Unless we provide good education to these sections, our efforts to empower and uplift them will fall flat. The lowest enrolment in Bihar, UP, and Maharashtra indicates the socio-economic barriers to education. Infrastructure deficiency, lack of technology, inaccessibility, ignorance, and poverty—all these are contributory factors in low enrolment. Measures must be taken to stop dropouts and increase retention. NEP 2020 envisages universal education by 2030. Measures must be taken for the inclusiveness and equality in providing education. VENU GS, KOLLAM

Timing of retirement

Sir, It's a matter of mind and body synchronisation in any game, and cricket is no different. A batter is required to concentrate on each and every ball he faces, and just one mistake can fail him, unlike in the case of a bowler. The latter has got five more chances to correct his mistake and can plan and bowl differently six times in an over. Being a demanding game, both physically and mentally, also involving rigorous travels, it is quite natural for players to feel fatigued and homesick. In the case of Indian cricketers, thanks to the advent of IPL, stiff competition is also to be faced from new finds. These factors play a vital role in the psyche of senior players like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. While both Rohit and Kohli have in the past played commendably well against the world's best teams, which their scores can vouch for, they can opt to retire when they realise they have not been able to contribute and give way for the youngsters, seeking a different role in the sport. Such a decision forthcoming from the players would be in the fitness of things considering their past contribution to the game and would look graceful from the players' point of view as well. Gopalaswamy, CHENNAI



# CM OMAR UNVEILS WINTER CARNIVAL

The Winter Carnival is not only a celebration of the region's natural beauty, but also a vital platform for showcasing the talent of local artists and performers



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, Jan 3:** Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Thursday inaugurated the Winter Carnival at the famous tourist resort of Pahalgam to promote the Union Territory's rich cultural fabric to a wider audience.

In a grand celebration of Jammu and Kashmir's rich cultural heritage, the chief minister inaugurated the Winter Carnival at Pahalgam this evening, an official spokesman said.

The event, which draws attention to the picturesque beauty of the region and its vibrant cultural landscape, was held in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Chowdhary and former chief minister Farooq Abdullah.

The evening's proceedings began with a musical performance by Abha Hanjura, the spokeswoman said.

The Winter Carnival is not only a celebration of the region's natural beauty, but also a vital platform for showcasing

the importance of such events in bolstering the tourism industry in J&K.

"Pahalgam is a treasure trove of natural beauty, and through events like the Winter Carnival, we aim to position it as a key tourist destination that not only attracts visitors for its scenic landscapes but also provides them with an authentic cultural experience," the chief minister said.

The Winter Carnival's timing is perfect for the ongoing winter season, which attracts tourists from across the country and abroad. The event has been designed to enhance the appeal of Pahalgam, showcasing its capabilities as a year-round tourist hub.

As more visitors flock the region, local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and souvenir shops, are likely to experience a boost, contributing to the local economy, the spokesman said.

With its successful inauguration, the Winter Carnival is expected to attract an even larger turnout in the coming days, he said.

In addition to the ongoing musical performances, the event will feature a variety of other attractions, including winter sports activities, food stalls offering traditional Kashmiri cuisine, and craft exhibitions that highlight the region's artisanal excellence, the spokesman added.

WITH ITS SUCCESSFUL INAUGURATION, THE WINTER CARNIVAL IS EXPECTED TO ATTRACT AN EVEN LARGER TURNOUT IN THE COMING DAYS

**Pahalgam is a treasure trove of natural beauty, and through events like the Winter Carnival, we aim to position it as a key tourist destination that not only attracts visitors for its scenic landscapes but also provides them with an authentic cultural experience**

OMAR ABDULLAH | CHIEF MINISTER, JAMMU AND KASHMIR

the talent of local artists and performers, the spokesman said.

This year's edition promises to highlight the region's unique cultural heritage, including traditional music, dance, handicrafts, and culinary delights.

By offering a stage for local talent, the carnival aims to promote Jammu and Kashmir's rich cultural fabric to a wider audience, while also giving local artisans the chance to showcase their work and foster economic growth in the region, he said.

Speaking at the inauguration, Abdullah emphasised



Visitors ride on a 'shikara' on a winter day, at the Dal Lake in Srinagar, Friday

PTI PHOTO

## Telangana to inaugurate new RE policy

The new policy, among other facilities, proposes reimbursement of Net SGST (state GST), stamp duty, transmission & distribution charges, and waivers on Electricity Duty

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



**Hyderabad, Jan 3:** Telangana aims to add 20,000 MW to its existing over 11,000 MW renewable energy generation and storage capacity by 2030, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka said Friday.

In a stakeholders meeting on the proposed Telangana Clean and Green Energy Policy-2024, Bhatti said in order to achieve

the target, the state would focus on Standalone Renewable Energy Projects, Innovative Solutions such as floating solar, Waste to Energy and Green Hydrogen.

"Telangana is targeting to achieve an additional 20,000 MW of renewable energy and storage capacity by 2030," he said. The current renewable energy capacity which stands

at 11,399 MW includes 7,889 MW of solar energy (excluding distributed renewable energy) and 2,518 MW of hydro energy, among others.

The minister said with various mega infra projects such as Future City and Pharma City being taken up, the state is expected to drive an exponential rise in peak electricity demand, from 15,623 MW in FY

24 to 24,215 MW by FY 30 and 31,809 MW by FY35.

It is essential that this demand is met with clean, reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy solutions, he further said.

The new policy, among other facilities, proposes reimbursement of Net SGST (state GST), stamp duty, transmission & distribution charges, and waivers on Electricity Duty.

According to the policy, these incentives will significantly reduce the cost burden on developers, ensuring financial viability and encouraging large-scale investments.

Later, addressing mediapersons, Bhatti said the new policy will be innovative and effective.

He said the proposed policy will be discussed in the state Cabinet and released soon.

## Dense fog engulfs parts of Kashmir



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, Jan 3:** Dense fog engulfed large parts of Kashmir, affecting flight operations at Srinagar airport, as visibility fell to about 300 metres, officials said Friday.

The minimum temperatures rose in most places of the valley, they said.

They said the thick layer of fog that engulfed Kashmir hit air traffic to and from the valley. Several flights were delayed while one was diverted as the visibility fell to about 300 metres.

The visibility required to run flight operations is around 1,100 metres. However, operations resumed around noon after visibility improved at the airport. The morning's first flight landed in Srinagar at 11:48 am, the officials said.

They added that people also faced difficulties while commuting due to the fog.

The Met office said light snow at isolated higher reaches was possible Friday.

In a related development, the night temperature rose at most places in Kashmir.

Gulmarg, a tourist resort town known for skiing activities in north Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 4.5 degrees Celsius, up from the previous night's minus 8.6 degrees, the Met office said.

Pahalgam, one of the base camps for the annual Amarnath Yatra in south Kashmir, registered a minimum temperature of minus 4.6 degrees Celsius.

In Srinagar, the mercury settled at a low of minus 2.2 degrees Celsius against the previous night's minus 2.6 degrees.

Qazigund, the gateway town to Kashmir, logged a minimum temperature of minus 7.3 degrees Celsius and was the coldest place in the valley, while Konibal in Pampore town recorded a low of minus 4.6 degrees.

Kupwara in north Kashmir registered a minimum temperature of minus 1.6 degrees Celsius while Kokernag in south Kashmir recorded minus 5.5 degrees.

## ENHANCING REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

# Modi to launch Jammu Railway Division

The move will end the dependency of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and the Pathankot region of Punjab on the Ferozpur division

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jammu, Jan 3:** As the direct train service from Delhi to Kashmir becomes a reality, the Central government is preparing to establish a new railway division for Jammu. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to virtually inaugurate the office of the Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) January 6, marking a significant milestone.

This move will end the dependency of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and the Pathankot region of Punjab on the Ferozpur division.

Additional Divisional Railway Manager (ADRM) of Jammu, Rajiv Kumar Singh, provided more details, stating that a function would take place outside the platform area of Jam-



mu railway station.

The event will be attended by prominent figures, including Dr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), and Member of Parliament from Jammu, Jugal Kishore Sharma, among others.

Talking to IANS, Rajiv Kumar Singh, ADRM Jammu, further explained, "The Railway Board issued a notification yesterday for the establishment of a new railway division in Jammu."

A final Detailed Project Re-

port (DPR) will be prepared for the new division, which will then be submitted to the Railway Board.

Afterward, a final decision regarding its jurisdiction will be made. In this regard, the virtual inauguration by the Prime Minister is proposed for January 6, which will take place in the circulating area of Jammu railway station.

Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Jammu) President Arun Gupta said, "First of all,

we would like to thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi for fulfilling the long-standing demand of the Chamber of Commerce. Back in 2012, we had our first discussions with the authorities on this matter, and since then, we have continuously worked towards it."

"We also want to thank Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh, who facilitated our meeting with Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. After our discussions with him, we successfully secured the Jammu Railway Division. The establishment of the Jammu Railway Division will provide a significant boost to tourism."

Jammu will become the sixth railway division under the Northern Railways zone, joining Delhi, Ambala, Lucknow, Moradabad, and Ferozpur. Railway divisions operate under the broader railway zones, of which there are 19 across India.

Each division is overseen by a Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), who is responsible for its operations and maintenance, reporting directly to the General Manager of the zone.

## 'RYTHU BHAROSA' FOR ALL FARMERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hyderabad, Jan 3:** Amid allegations that the ruling Congress is attempting to impose "conditions" on the implementation of the 'Rythu Bharosa' scheme for farmers, a Cabinet sub-committee of the Telangana government Thursday decided in principle, to extend the benefit to "every ryot cultivating crops."

The sub-committee on the 'Rythu Bharosa' investment support scheme will present its views to the state Cabinet, which is expected to convene in a couple of days, official sources said.

Headed by Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, the sub-committee held a meeting Thursday. The committee decided to conduct 'Gram Sabhas' for three days starting January 5 to receive applications for the scheme and to extensively promote the programme, sources said.

Speaking to reporters Thursday, BJP floor leader in the Assembly, Alleti Maheshwar Reddy, urged the Cabinet to take a decision on the scheme's launch during its upcoming meeting. BRS MLC K Kavitha accused the Congress government of attempting to impose conditions on extending the benefits of the 'Rythu Bharosa' scheme.

Addressing a gathering of party workers in Bodhan, she accused Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of adopting "anti-farmer policies" and "betraying" the farming community.

She questioned why farmers—the backbone of the country—are "forced to beg for their rightful support" and demanded the unconditional disbursement of 'Rythu Bharosa' funds, "free from bureaucratic hurdles."

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said December 1, 2024, that his government is committed to implementing 'Rythu Bharosa,' one of the Congress party's six poll guarantees, after the three-day Sankranti festival (January 13, 14, 15).



## From seeking alms to managing traffic, journey of 39 transgenders

It all began when CM Reddy asked officials in November to appoint transgender persons as traffic volunteers at high-traffic areas in the city

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hyderabad, Jan 3:** From seeking alms on city roads to managing traffic at the same places, it has been an incredible journey of empowerment for 39 transgenders in Hyderabad who have been inducted as traffic assistants to help the city police.

The transgenders, who have been appointed on a pilot basis, say they now get respect from citizens in contrast to the severe discrimination and insults they faced in the past.

"It is wonderful that we manage traffic at places where we used to beg in the past," Nisha, a transgender traffic assistant, told PTI Friday.

Nisha, who works at Patny

Centre here, thanked Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for the opportunity given to the transgender community.

Nisha, who studied up to Intermediate, recalled facing discrimination from society at large, in college, with friends and even parents.

"My parents did not accept me. But, they accepted me now. My friends used to avoid me. But, now they message me and keep in touch. After I got the job, my relations and others are appreciating. It is a wonder. I cannot describe in words," Nisha said.

Sana, another traffic assistant, said it is a matter of pride for them that they get respect from citizens, while people



earlier used to hesitate to even speak to them.

P Visva Prasad, Additional Commissioner of Police (Traffic), told PTI that the transgender traffic assistants are doing

good and that there are no complaints or there is anything abnormal since they have been inducted about 10 days ago.

It will take some time for them to get professional acu-

THE TRANSGENDERS, WHO HAVE BEEN APPOINTED ON A PILOT BASIS, SAY THEY NOW GET RESPECT FROM CITIZENS IN CONTRAST TO THE SEVERE DISCRIMINATION AND INSULTS THEY FACED IN THE PAST.

men. They want to get integrated with society and do well, he said. It all began when CM Reddy asked officials in November to appoint transgender persons as traffic volunteers at high-traffic areas in the city.

During a meeting with officials, he said the services of transgenders should be utilised like home guards at traffic signals to prevent traffic violations.

He told the officials to finalise a special dress code for trans-

genders and also salary along the lines of home guards.

While the CM December 6, 2024, handed over 'enrolment papers' to the transgender persons who have been selected, they were formally inducted as traffic assistants December 22.

Hyderabad Police Commissioner CV Anand had earlier said transgenders face alienation even within their families and society. The state government had issued an order to inducting the transgenders as traffic assistants, he said.

According to him, about 100 transgenders had applied for the posts and 44 of them were shortlisted after a selection process, including physical tests, while 39 successfully completed training.





The importance of this building becomes evident when you see the smiles on the faces of the children studying here. As we entered the school, we saw students confidently presenting exhibitions, and their enthusiasm reflects how meaningful this new block is for them

ATISHI | DELHI CM

PAKISTAN ISSUES 94 VISAS TO INDIAN HINDU PILGRIMS

Pakistan has issued 94 visas to Indian Hindu pilgrims to visit the neighbouring country for the birth anniversary celebrations of Shiv Avtari Satguru Sant Shadaram Sahib at a shrine in Sindh, the High Commission here said Friday



of the day quote

In 2022, there were an estimated 20 million new cancer cases and 9.7 million deaths globally. In India, the incidence of cancer is approximately 100 cases for every one lakh people



A person who wields the lathi develops 'veer vriththi' (sense of bravery) and he is not afraid. The lathi training teaches steadfastness in crises and inspires one to walk on the path with resolve, patience and unwavering strength



Those who are indulging in politics over my statement are seeking unrest. The opposition has no ideology



UNION CARBIDE WASTE DISPOSAL

Protests rock Pithampur, 2 attempt self-immolation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhar (MP), Jan 3: Protests rocked Pithampur in Madhya Pradesh Friday against the planned disposal of 337 tonnes of toxic waste linked

to the Bhopal gas tragedy, prompting the authorities to clamp prohibitory orders around the premises of the firm where the incineration will be carried out.

Prohibitory orders under section 163 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) banning the assembly of 50 or more persons have been imposed around Ramky Enviro company where the toxic waste will be incinerated.

It will be in force till January 12 and has been invoked to avoid loss of life and property, display of arms, celebratory firing and maintaining peace around the incineration facility, the order issued by district authorities read.

As part of the protests during the day, a mob of 500-600 persons had marched to Ramky Group's Industrial Waste Management Private Limited premises, where the waste is set to be incinerated, but police managed to disperse them in time.

Earlier in the day, two persons attempted self-immolation, while sporadic protests continued in several parts of the town amid a bandh call given by Pithampur Bachao Samiti.

According to eyewitnesses, the two men, who were part of a demonstration organised by 'Pithampur Bachao Samiti', poured flammable liquid on themselves and tried to ignite it, but their actions were swiftly thwarted by fellow protesters who intervened to extinguish the flames.

The quick response of the crowd likely prevented a tragedy, and the men were subse-



PROHIBITORY ORDERS UNDER SECTION 163 OF BHARATIYA NAGARIK SURAKSHA SANHITA BANNING THE ASSEMBLY OF 50 OR MORE PERSONS HAVE BEEN IMPOSED AROUND RAMKY ENVIRO COMPANY WHERE THE TOXIC WASTE WILL BE INCINERATED

quently shifted to a local hospital by public and police officers present at the scene. The protests stem from concerns by persons regarding the safety and environmental implications of relocating hazardous materials to the township, located approximately 30 kilometres from Indore.

The situation is under control but tense, Dhar Superintendent of Police Manoj Singh told PTI over the phone from a protest site near Pithampur bus stand.

The two men who attempted self-immolation were shifted from a local hospital to a private facility in Indore, where doctors confirmed they are out of danger, the SP said.

Pithampur, about 50 kilometres from the Dhar district headquarters, has a population of about 1.75 lakh and its industrial area here has nearly 700 factories in three sectors.

In view of the tense situation in the town, District Collector Priyank Mishra and SP Singh released two separate videos

asking people to maintain calm and to not take law in their hands, adding that the administration was ready to listen to their demands.

Both the top officials said health of the people was paramount for the state government, but asserted those trying to disturb peace would be dealt with strictly.

Shops and markets remained closed as part of the bandh call given by Pithampur Bachao Samiti, which claimed the planned incineration of the waste linked to the Bhopal gas tragedy would harm local residents and the environment of the region.

Dhar Additional Superintendent of Police Indrajeet Bakkarwal said children also took part in the protests.

On the intervening night of December 2-3, 1984, methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas leaked from the Union Carbide pesticide factory in Bhopal, killing at least 5,479 persons and leaving thousands with serious and long-lasting health issues in Bhopal. The authorities have shifted 337 tonnes of waste from the Carbide factory to Pithampur

for scientific disposal, though the move has triggered protests. The material from Bhopal reached an incineration unit in Pithampur Thursday.

Modi likens AAP to 'aapda' for Delhi

The BJP has been targeting Kejriwal for allegedly spending extravagantly on his official residence when he was Chief Minister, describing his erstwhile home as "sheesh mahal"



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday launched a scathing attack on AAP, calling it an "aapda" (disaster) that has gripped Delhi for the past 10 years, prompting its chief Arvind Kejriwal to return the barb by claiming that the BJP is facing the real "aapda" as it "lacks" a CM face and issues for the Assembly polls.

Taking a jibe at Kejriwal after inaugurating several key-development projects for Delhi at an event here, the Prime Minister said he could have also built a "Sheesh Mahal" for himself, but chose to prioritise the people by constructing houses for them.

The BJP has been targeting Kejriwal for allegedly spending extravagantly on his official residence when he was chief minister, describing his erstwhile home as "sheesh mahal".

Hitting back at Prime Minister Modi, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief said that the BJP is faced with "aapda" in the national capital as the saffron party has "no CM face, narrative or issues" for the Delhi Assembly elections due next month.

Responding to PM's "Sheesh Mahal" remark against him, the former Delhi Chief Minister said, "The talk of Sheesh Mahal does not behove a per-

son who built Rs 2,700-crore house for himself, travelling in a Rs 8400-crore plane and wearing a Rs 10-lakh suit."

Kejriwal asserted that Delhi is facing "aapda" of "break-down" in law and order and people are demanding safety and security.

Modi inaugurated several development projects Friday, including 1,675 flats for residents of JJ clusters and the World Trade Centre, in Delhi, just days before the announcement of the Assembly election schedule.

Slamming the AAP government, he said the situation in the national capital would worsen if its reign continued.

On the one hand the Centre is making a lot of efforts, on the other the Union Territory government stands for brazen lies, Modi said, accusing the AAP government of committing corruption in various sectors ranging from school education to fighting pollution and the liquor trade.

With assembly elections due in the city next month, the Prime Minister said Delhi had launched a war on this "aapda (disaster)" and decided to get rid of it.

Giving a call for AAP's defeat, Modi raised the slogan, "Aapda ko nahi sahenge, badal kar rahenge (we will not tolerate 'aapda', we will remove it)."

SHORT TAKES

Court rejects Walmik's plea

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar: A court in Maharashtra's Beed Friday turned down the plea filed by Walmik Karad, arrested and jailed in an extortion case related to sarpanch's murder, seeking a trained person to operate an auto-CPAP machine as he is suffering from sleep apnea.

More than 400 flights delayed

New Delhi: More than 400 flights were delayed at the airport in the national capital Friday morning as low visibility conditions due to dense fog disrupted operations, according to an official. Visibility conditions dropped to zero in some areas of the national capital due to the thick blanket of fog.

J'khand: 3 killed in bus-truck collision

Medinagar: Three persons died and 13 others were injured after a collision between a bus and a truck in Jharkhand's Palamu district Friday morning, police said. The accident occurred on the Kasiadih-Bakorja road in Satbarua area, 30 km from Medinagar, the district headquarters, when the goods vehicle collided with the bus due to dense fog and low visibility, they said.

School job aspirants protest in Kolkata

Kolkata: Hundreds of school job aspirants Friday demonstrated before the West Bengal education department headquarters 'Bikash Bhavan' here, demanding appointment quickly since they did not get it due to legal wrangle despite cracking a recruitment examination in 2016. Over 23 lakh candidates had appeared for the State Level Selection Test (SLST) in that year for over 25,000 vacant posts.

PM Modi meets Koneru Humpy

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday met noted chess player Koneru Humpy, who recently won the Women's World Rapid Chess Championship, and hailed her as a sporting icon. Modi said on X, "Glad to have met Koneru Humpy and her family. She is a sporting icon and a source of inspiration for aspiring players. Her sharp intellect and unwavering determination are clearly visible.

40% girl cadets in NCC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: The strength of girl cadets in the NCC has risen to 40 per cent and a phase-wise expansion has been planned for the Corps in the next few years, senior officials said Friday.

At a press briefing here, NCC Director General Lt Gen Gurbirpal Singh shared details about the ongoing NCC Republic Day Camp at Delhi Cantonment and the future course of the Corps.

A total of 2,361 NCC cadets from across the country are taking part in the month-long camp which began December 30. The annual event will witness the participation of 917 girl

cadets, the largest so far.

Out of 2,361 NCC cadets, 114 are from Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and 178 from the northeast region. Late in a statement issued by the Defence Ministry, the DG was quoted as saying that nearly 135 cadets from 18 friendly countries will also participate in the camp under a Youth Exchange Programme. We began it with a Sarva Dharma Pooja for well-being of all... This year we also have a new category of competition -- ideas and innovation, he said.

Asked about the expansion plan and the strength of girl cadets in the NCC, the top official said, the sanctioned strength of the Corps is 20 lakh, and the current strength at present is 17 lakh. The share of girl cadets in the total strength is 40 per cent, he said. We already had our expansion in Jammu and Kashmir, we had four battalions raised last year.



National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), police and Bomb Disposal Squad members during a joint mock drill on preparedness for a nuclear and radiological emergency, ahead of the 'Maha Kumbh Mela', in Prayagraj

SC calls for introspection over delay in filing pleas

Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna while hearing a plea by the NHA said, "I think everyone is adhering to the time schedule in almost 95 per cent of the cases. Why should the government of India not be able to adhere to it? There is something wrong somewhere... Introspection is necessary"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: The Supreme Court Friday called for an introspection by government authorities, including the National Highways Authority of India, over excessive delays in filing of appeals.

Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna while hearing a plea by the NHA said, "I think everyone is adhering to the time schedule in almost 95 per cent of the cases. Why should the government of India not be able to adhere to it? There is something wrong somewhere...



Introspection is necessary." The NHA challenged an order by the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal

(NCLAT) in an insolvency case which was listed before the bench, also comprising Justice Sanjay Kumar.

The NCLAT had dismissed the NHA's appeal on account of the delay. Expressing disapproval over the 295-day delay, the CJ emphasised on the importance of adhering to procedural timelines and observed solicitor general Tushar Mehta, representing the NHA, had agreed with the court and assured addressing the issue. "I undertake to speak to the chairman. Let him investigate why there was lethargy or otherwise," said Mehta. The case pertained to Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code proceedings where the NHA,

an operational creditor, challenged a resolution plan approved without its consent. The authority was aggrieved by the new terms introduced by a resolution plan involving a new concessionaire, which the NHA alleged disregarded its interests. The law officer informed the bench that the resolution professional had directed the NHA to file a claim under Form F (proof of claim by any other stakeholder). However, the bench declined to examine the merits of the matter and dismissed the plea as time-barred.

Government issues draft digital data protection rules

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: The government has released the long-awaited draft of Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, which do not mention any penal action for violations.

The draft rules have been issued after Parliament approved the Digital Data Protection Bill 2023 about 14 months back.

"Draft of rules proposed to be made by the central government in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-sections (1) and (2) of section 40 of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (22 of 2023), on or after the date of coming into force of the Act, are hereby published for the information of all persons likely to be affected thereby," the draft notification said.

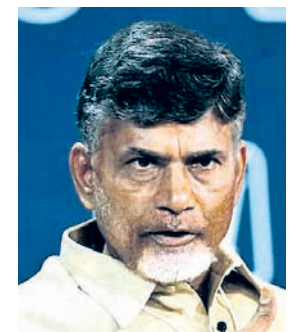
The rules have spelt out a mechanism for obtaining explicit consent from individuals and mandate parental consent for children to use their data in any form.

The Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act 2023 describes entities collecting and using personal data as data fiduciaries.

"A Data Fiduciary shall adopt appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure that verifiable consent of the parent is obtained before the processing of any personal data of a child," the draft rule said.

As per the draft, the data fiduciary will have to carry out due diligence to check that the individual identifying herself as the parent of a child is an adult and identifiable if required in connection with compliance with any law in force in India.





My dream is to make Swarna Andhra Pradesh. When I introduced Vision 2020, many people in the united state criticised it. Place your faith in my governance, and I will take responsibility for leading you towards Swarna Andhra

GRAP 3 CURBS BACK IN DELHI-NCR

The Centre's panel on Delhi-NCR's air quality Friday brought back stage 3 curbs under the Graded Response Action Plan amid a rise in air pollution levels owing to unfavourable meteorological conditions, according to an official order



of the day quote

Projects worth ₹28,000 crore would be proposed in the presentation before the 16th Finance Commission

Help the tribal children become professionals like researchers, doctors, engineers and civil servants

There will be 33 per cent reservation for women in the state and the country. We assure you that we will increase the number of Lakhpati Didis in the state

India counters China's dam plans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: Days after China announced its plan to build a mega dam on the Brahmaputra river in Tibet, India Friday said it will continue to monitor and take necessary measures to protect its interests.

In its first reaction to the proposed dam, New Delhi urged Beijing to ensure that the interests of downstream states of the Brahmaputra are not harmed by activities in upstream areas.

"We will continue to monitor and take necessary measures to protect our interests," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

There have been apprehensions that the dam will have adversely impact the ecological balance of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. The Brahmaputra passes through these two states.

"As a lower riparian state with established user rights to the waters of the river, we have consistently expressed, through expert-level as well as



India has expressed concerns over China's plan to build a mega dam on the Brahmaputra river in Tibet, emphasising the need for transparency and consultation with downstream states

diplomatic channels, our views and concerns to the Chinese side over mega projects on rivers in their territory," Jaiswal said.

"These have been reiterated, along with need for transparency and consultation with downstream countries, following the latest report," he said in a statement.

"The Chinese side has been urged to ensure that the in-

terests of downstream states of the Brahmaputra are not harmed by activities in upstream areas," he added.

China December 25 announced its plan to construct the world's largest dam on the Brahmaputra River in Tibet, close to its border with India.

The project is estimated to cost around \$137 billion. The dam will be located in the ecologically fragile Himalayan

We will continue to monitor and take necessary measures to protect our interests

RANDHIR JAISWAL | EAM SPOKESPERSON

region. According to available details, the dam will be built at a huge gorge in the Himalayan reaches where the Brahmaputra makes a huge U-turn to flow into Arunachal Pradesh and then to Bangladesh.

China's announcement on the dam raised concerns in India as well as Bangladesh.

Last week, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning played down the apprehensions about the project.

"The project will not negatively affect the lower reaches," she said, referring to the concerns in India and Bangladesh.

"China will continue to maintain communication with countries at the lower reaches through existing channels and step up cooperation on disaster prevention and relief for the benefit of the people by the river," she said.

Kasganj violence: 28 get life imprisonment



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 3: A special NIA court here sentenced 28 convicts to life imprisonment on Friday in connection with the Kasganj violence case.

Special judge Vivekanand Sharan Tripathi also imposed a fine of ₹80,000 on each convict.

The special NIA court January 2 here convicted 28 people in connection with the murder of Chandan Gupta, who was shot dead in a communal clash that broke out during a 2018 Tiranga Yatra in Kasganj.

The accused were convicted on charges of murder, attempted murder, rioting and insulting the national flag. The case drew significant attention after Chandan Gupta's death sparked riots in the region.

The court Friday sentenced the convicts to life imprisonment. The court Friday sentenced the convicts to life imprisonment.

Earlier, on the quantum of sentence, the court heard the pleas of the defence as well as the prosecution, which had demanded the severest punishment for all the convicts.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) court acquitted Nasiruddin and Asim Qureshi, citing a lack of sufficient evidence to convict them.

On the morning of January 26, 2018, Chandan Gupta and his brother Vivek Gupta took part in a Tiranga Yatra. When the procession reached the Government Girls Inter College gate on Tehsil Road, a group, including Salim, Wasim and Naseem, allegedly blocked the road and stopped the procession, a government counsel said.

When Chandan objected, the situation escalated and stone-pelting began from the side of the accused, the lawyer said. Salim, one of the main accused, shot Chandan, he said. Despite the grave injury, Vivek and their companions managed to rush Chandan to the Kasganj police station, from where he was immediately transferred to the district hospital where he was declared dead shortly after arrival.

The murder of Chandan led to widespread riots in Kasganj for three days, fuelling communal tensions in the region. Chandan's father Sushil Gupta lodged a murder complaint.

In September 2019, the Kasganj Sessions Court framed charges against 23 individuals. Later, in November 2019, charges were framed against an additional seven persons.

The charges included Sections 147 (rioting), 148 (rioting with deadly weapons), 307/149 (attempted murder), 302/149 (murder), 341 (wrongful restraint), 336 (endangerment), 504 (intentional insult), 506 (criminal intimidation), and Section 124K (insult to national flag) of the Indian Penal Code. Additionally, several of the accused faced charges under the Arms Act for possession of firearms.

The trial was transferred to the Lucknow court after initial proceedings in Kasganj.

STAMPEDE CASE

Actor Allu Arjun granted regular bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, Jan 3: A court Friday granted regular bail to top Telugu actor Allu Arjun, an accused in the case booked over the death of a woman in a stampede here during the premiere of his latest film 'Pushpa-2'.

The II Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge had earlier reserved the order for today after hearing arguments from the lawyers of the actor and the police.

The court directed the actor to furnish two sureties, who shall execute bond for ₹50,000 each, besides his own with the same amount.



NIMISHA PRIYA CASE

Closely following developments: MEA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: India Friday said it is closely following the developments in the case of Indian nurse Nimisha Priya, facing a death sentence in Yemen.

Priya, who hails from Kollengode in Kerala's Palakkad district, has been found guilty of murdering a Yemeni citizen in Yemen.

Priya, who hails from Kollengode in Kerala's Palakkad district, has been found guilty of murdering a Yemeni citizen in Yemen. External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said Friday, "We are closely following the developments around the sentencing of Nimisha Priya. The government is extending all possible help in the matter."

The 37-year-old nurse is presently lodged in a jail in Sana'a, the Yemeni capital city that

is under the control of Iran-backed Houthis.

An Iranian official Thursday said Iran will do whatever it can in the case. The Yemeni national, Talal Abdo Mahdi, reportedly died from an overdose of sedatives allegedly injected by Priya to retrieve her passport from him. According to reports, Priya was handed capital punishment by a trial court in 2020 while Yemen's Supreme Judicial Council upheld the verdict in November 2023.

Yemen's President Rashad al-Alimi approved the death penalty to Priya a few days back. Priya's mother, Prema Kumari, currently in Sana'a, has made an emotional appeal to the Indian government to save her daughter's life.

CBI court sentences 10 to life imprisonment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Jan 3: A CBI court here Friday sentenced 10 persons to life imprisonment, while four others, including a former CPI(M) MLA, received five years in prison for the murder of two Youth Congress workers at Periya in Kasaragod district five years ago.

The court which convicted 14 accused Saturday gave 10 of them life imprisonment under two counts of murder and criminal conspiracy. They will serve the sentences concurrently. These 10 accused were charged with murder and criminal con-

PERIYA TWIN MURDER



120(b) read with 149 of the IPC. "They have been sentenced to life imprisonment on both charges, to run concurrently," the prosecutor said after the court pronounced the verdict.

The accused who were given life imprisonment include former CPI(M) Periya local committee member A Peeth-

ambaran, Saji C George aka Saji, Suresh K M, Anil Kumar K alias Abu, Gijin, Shrirag R aka Kuttu, Aswin A alias Appu Subeesh alias Mani, Ranjith T aka Appu and A Sruendan alias Vishnu Sura.

Meanwhile, former MLA and CPI(M) district leader K V Kunhiraman, Kanhangad block panchayat president K Manikandan, Raghavan Velutholi, and A V Bhaskaran, were sentenced to five years' imprisonment by the court. They were charged under Section 225 (obstructing or resisting the lawful apprehension of another person) of IPC.

SHORT TAKES

Palghar: Man held for raping 16-year-old girl

Palghar: A man was arrested in Maharashtra's Palghar district for allegedly raping his 16-year-old employee, a police official said Friday. The 50-year-old accused, who owns a firm in Sativali, raped the teen girl December 31 and January 1, the Valiv police station official said.

Naxalite killed in encounter

Gariaband: A Naxalite was killed in an encounter with security forces in Gariaband district of Chhattisgarh Friday, police said. The gunfight took place in the forest of Kandeshar village under Indagaon police station limits on the Chhattisgarh-Odisha border when a team of security personnel was out on an anti-Naxal operation, an official said.

Three DRG jawans injured in IED blast

Bijapur: Three jawans of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) were injured when a pressure improvised explosive device (IED) planted by Naxalites exploded in Bijapur district Friday, police said. The explosion occurred near Tokda village under Gangaloor police station limits when a team of security personnel, who were out on an anti-Naxal operation, were returning, an official said.

Crackdown on cyber fraud

New Delhi: Approximately ₹9 crore was frozen in Delhi in connection with cyber frauds, with around ₹2 crore released back to the victims in west district in 2024, an official said Friday. "These efforts are part of an ongoing initiative to protect the public from cyber criminals, who exploit digital platforms for fraudulent activities," Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Vichitra Veer said. The officer further said the West district cyber police station has been operational since December 2021, securing victims' funds.

Caste discrimination in colleges sensitive issue: SC

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan directed the University Grants Commission to notify draft regulations to ensure no caste-based discrimination happened with students in the central, state, private and deemed universities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 3: Terming it as a sensitive issue, the Supreme Court Friday said it will devise an effective mechanism to combat caste-based discrimination in educational institutions in the country.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan directed the University Grants Commission (UGC) to notify draft regulations to ensure no caste-based discrimination happened with students in the central, state, private and deemed universities. It directed the UGC to fur-

nish data on the number of institutions which had established equal opportunity cells in compliance with the UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions Regulations) 2012, popularly called "UGC equity regulations".

"We are equally conscious of this sensitive issue. We will do something. We will have to find out some effective mechanism and modalities to see that the 2012 regulations are translated into reality," the bench said.

It sought Centre's response on the issue and asked the UGC to furnish data within six weeks on the complaints over



such discrimination among students in all universities and higher education institutions besides the consequent action.

Senior advocate Indira Jaising, appearing for the mothers of students Rohith Vemula and Payal Tadvi, who allegedly died

by suicide after facing caste-based discrimination, said from 2004 till now over 50 students (mostly from SC/ST) had killed themselves in IITs and other institutions after facing such discrimination.

While Vemula, a PhD scholar

at Hyderabad Central University died January 17, 2016, Tadvi, a student at TN Topiwala National Medical College, died May 22, 2019, after she was subjected to purported discrimination by three doctors in her college.

The bench said a PIL was filed in 2019 but no substantial hearing had taken place on the issue so far.

The UGC counsel submitted a committee constituted by it gave recommendation and the commission drafted new regulations to stop caste-based discrimination. The bench questioned the UGC over the

delay and said it had been sleeping all this while and not come up with new regulations.

"How much time is needed to notify the new regulations? You do it in one month and place it on record," the bench said and posted the matter after six weeks.

It sought the assistance of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta on the matter along with the response of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, an autonomous institution under the UGC which assesses and accredits higher education institutions.



# international



I believe (Trump) is strong and unpredictable. I would very much like President Trump's unpredictability to be directed primarily toward the Russian Federation  
VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

## AZERBAIJAN PLANE CRASH: BLACK BOX DATA EXTRACTION BEGINS

Several of Brazilian air force investigators are working with colleagues from three other nations to analyse data from the Azerbaijani airliner that crashed in Kazakhstan December 25, killing 38 people. Azerbaijan claims the jet was unintentionally shot down by Russia



## 2 dead, 18 injured in California plane crash

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fullerton (US), Jan 3: Two people died and 18 were injured Thursday when a small plane crashed through the roof of a sprawling furniture manufacturing building in Southern California where at least 200 people were working, police said. The identities of the people who died, and whether they were in the plane or on the ground, was not yet known, said Kristy Wells, a Fullerton police spokesperson. The plane crashed less than two minutes after taking off from the Fullerton Municipal Airport in Orange County, located just six miles (10 kilometers) from Disneyland, according to the flight-tracking website FlightAware. Security camera footage from Rucci Forged, a wheel manufacturer across the street, shows the plane was tilted on its side as it dove into the building, causing a fiery explosion and black plume of smoke. Firefighters and police arrived on scene and battled the blaze and evacuated surrounding businesses, Wells said. Chris Villalobos, an airport operations worker, came to the warehouse to see what had happened after receiving a phone call about a plane going down nearby. He said the owner of the aircraft was a regular at the airport and has frequently taken off from there.

# Yoon defies arrest

## SOUTH KOREA POLITICAL CRISIS

South Korean presidential guards prevent arrest of impeached Yoon after tense stand-off

REUTERS

Seoul, Jan 3: South Korea's presidential guards and military troops prevented authorities from arresting impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol Friday in a tense six-hour stand-off inside Yoon's compound in the heart of Seoul.

Yoon is under criminal investigation for insurrection over his Dec 3 martial law bid that stunned South Korea and led to the first arrest warrant to be issued for a sitting president.

"It was judged that it was virtually impossible to execute the arrest warrant due to the ongoing stand-off," the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials (CIO) said in a statement.

CIO officials and police evaded hundreds of Yoon supporters who gathered in pre-dawn hours near his residence Friday, who adopted the "Stop the Steal" slogans popularised by US President-elect Donald Trump's supporters, to block the arrest.

Officials from the CIO, which is leading a joint team of investigators, arrived at the gates of the presidential compound shortly after 7 am (Thursday) and entered on foot.

Once inside the compound, the CIO and police were out-



numbered by cordons of Presidential Security Service (PSS) personnel, as well as troops seconded to presidential security, a CIO official told reporters.

More than 200 PSS agents and soldiers blocked the CIO officers and police, he added. While there were altercations and PSS agents appeared to be carrying firearms, no weapons were drawn, he said.

Yoon, who has been isolated since he was impeached and suspended from power Dec 14, was not seen during the stand-off, he said. South Korea's defence min-

istry said the troops involved were under the control of the PSS. The CIO called off the effort to arrest Yoon around 1:30 pm due to concerns over the safety of its personnel, and said it "deeply regretted" Yoon's non-compliance.

The CIO said it would consider its next steps. The police, who are part of the joint investigation team, have designated the PSS chief and the deputy as suspects in a criminal case for obstruction of official duty and issued summons for them to appear for questioning Saturday, Yonhap news reported.

- Some 200 presidential guards, troops clash with investigators
- Arrest attempt suspended due to safety concerns - agency
- Hundreds of Yoon supporters gather outside compound
- Yoon's lawyer says arrest unlawful, threatens legal action
- Arrest warrant viable until Jan 6

Insurrection is one of the few criminal charges from which a South Korean president does not have immunity.

The current warrant gives investigators only 48 hours to hold Yoon after he is arrested. Investigators must then decide whether to request a detention warrant or release him.

**SURPRISE MARTIAL LAW** Yoon sent shockwaves through Asia's fourth-largest economy and one of the region's most vibrant democracies with his late-night announcement Dec 3 that he was imposing martial law to overcome political deadlock and root out "anti-state forces".

Within hours, however, 190 lawmakers had defied the cordons of troops and police to vote against Yoon's order. About six hours after his ini-

tial decree, Yoon rescinded it.

He later issued a defiant defence of his decision, saying domestic political opponents were sympathetic to North Korea and citing uncorroborated claims of election tampering.

Two South Korean military officials, including the martial law commander during the short-lived declaration, have been indicted on insurrection charges, Yonhap reported Friday.

Kim Yong-hyun, who resigned as Yoon's defence minister after playing a major role in the martial law decree, has been detained and was indicted last week on charges of insurrection and abuse of power.

Separate from the criminal investigation, Yoon's impeachment case is before the Constitutional Court to decide whether to reinstate or permanently remove him.

A second hearing in that case was held Friday and the court set the first oral arguments for Jan. 14.

Yoon's defence team, in arguing that there was no grounds for impeaching him, in its submission to the court cited a July 2024 US Supreme Court ruling that stated Trump had immunity for actions taken as president, Yonhap news reported.

## of the day quote

I've always felt we have to have the most competent people in our country. We need competent people, we need smart people coming into our country, we need a lot of people coming in. We're going to have jobs like we've never had before  
DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT-ELECT, US

We need major US companies representing the major share of US steelmaking capacity to keep leading the fight on behalf of America's national interests  
JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US

Boeing is working to make progress executing its comprehensive plan in the areas of safety, quality improvement and effective employee engagement and training  
MIKE WHITAKER | CHIEF OF THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

## SHORT TAKES

### German, French mins meet Syria's rulers

Berlin/Paris: The foreign ministers of Germany and France said they wanted to forge a new relationship with Syria and urged a peaceful transition as they met its de facto leader Ahmed al-Sharaa in Damascus Friday on behalf of the European Union. Germany's Annalena Baerbock and France's Jean-Noel Barrot are the first ministers from the EU to visit Syria since rebels seized control of Damascus Dec 8 and forced President Bashar al-Assad to flee after more than 13 years of civil war, ending his family's decades-long rule. Their trip is meant to send a message of cautious optimism to the Islamist rebels led by Sharaa's Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), showing an openness to acknowledging the new rulers while also urging moderation and respect for minorities' rights.

### Austrian liberals quit coalition talks

Vienna: A small liberal party Friday unexpectedly quit coalition talks on forming a new Austrian government, throwing into disarray negotiations that had sidelined the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) even though it won September's national election. The shock move by the Neos party raises serious doubts about the process of forming the next government, and buoyed the eurosceptic, Russia-friendly FPÖ, which has been waiting in the wings since being shut out of the coalition talks. Opinion polls show FPÖ support has grown since it secured roughly 29% of the vote in the Sept 29 election. It has slammed the talks between the second, third and fourth-placed parties as an undemocratic attempt to create a "coalition of losers".

### Greenland's leader pushes for freedom

Copenhagen: Greenland's Prime Minister Mute Egede emphasised his desire to pursue independence from Denmark, its former colonial ruler, during his New Year speech, marking a significant change in the rhetoric surrounding the Arctic island's future. Egede's speech, which comes on the heels of comments by US President-elect Donald Trump expressing his wish for "ownership and control" of Greenland, also expressed a desire to strengthen Greenland's cooperation with other countries. "It is about time that we ourselves take a step and shape our future, also with regard to who we will cooperate closely with, and who our trading partners will be," he said.

# It takes two to tango: Pakistan

Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has emphasised that normalising relations with India requires mutual willingness

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Jan 3: Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has emphasised that normalising relations with India requires mutual willingness.

Speaking with journalists at the Foreign Office here Thursday, Dar highlighted Pakistan's diplomatic efforts since the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government took office last year.

When asked about Pakistan's relations with India, he stressed on the importance of mutual effort, and said, "It takes two to tango."

Dar also announced plans to visit Bangladesh next month and noted that Islamabad and Dhaka are rebuilding ties after the fall of the Hasina government in August last year.

"Bangladesh is like a lost brother. We aim to strengthen economic and trade cooperation," he said and mentioned that he received an invitation



Dar highlighted Pakistan's diplomatic efforts since the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government took office last year

from Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhamad Yunus during a meeting in Cairo recently.

Yunus took charge as Chief Adviser after the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina was ousted from power August 5 last year following a students-led protest.

Earlier, Dar rejected claims of the country's isolation as he said, "When we assumed office, there was a perception

of diplomatic isolation. However, by expanding our diplomatic reach and engaging with regional neighbours, this perception has changed."

Commenting on Afghanistan, Dar expressed Pakistan's desire to strengthen ties with Kabul but admitted that terrorism remained a major challenge.

He revealed that planned visits to Kabul were postponed due to terrorist attacks and also criticised former intelligence chief Gen Faiz Hameed for engaging in talks with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which is a separate group but a close ally of the Afghan Taliban.

Pakistan has been facing a spike in terrorist attacks since the Afghan Taliban came to power in 2021 and has demanded the Kabul regime to control the terrorists using its soil against Pakistan.

Dar also shared that former Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood has been appointed Secretary General of the D-8 Developing Eight Forum, based in Istanbul. Mahmood will serve a four-year term starting January 1, 2026.

Dar highlighted progress in Pakistan's nuclear energy sector, announcing the launch of the Chashma 5 (C-5) nuclear power project, finalised with China in 2023 after completing the K2 and K3 projects.

## SNIPPETS

### Moldova warns of crisis amid Russian gas cut-off

Kyiv: Moldova faces a security crisis after tens of thousands of residents in the breakaway enclave of Transnistria were cut off from Russian gas supply, Prime Minister Dorin Recean said Friday. Flows of Russian gas via Ukraine which supplied central and eastern Europe were halted at the end of 2024 as Kyiv rejected doing further business with Moscow. Recean said Moldova would cover its energy needs with domestic production and imports but noted the separatist Transnistria region had suffered a painful hit despite its ties with Moscow. "By jeopardising the future of the protectorate it has backed for three decades in an effort to destabilise Moldova, Russia is revealing the inevitable outcome for all its allies - betrayal and isolation," Recean said in a statement. "We treat this as a security crisis aimed at enabling the return of pro-Russian forces to power in Moldova and weaponising our territory against Ukraine, with whom we share a 1,200 km border."



### At least 30 killed by Israeli strikes in Gaza

Deir Al-Balah (Gaza Strip): At least 30 people, including children, were killed in Gaza by Israeli strikes overnight and into Friday morning, hospital staff said, as sirens also sounded across Israel and stalled ceasefire talks were set to resume. Staff at the Al Aqsa Martyrs hospital said more than a dozen women and children were killed in strikes that hit various places in Central Gaza, including Nuseirat, Zawaida, Maghazi and Deir al Balah. Dozens of people were also killed across the enclave the previous day, bringing the total of people killed in the past 24 hours to 56. The Israeli army did not comment on the latest strikes. However, in a statement Friday, it said during the past day it had struck dozens of Hamas gathering points and command and control centers throughout Gaza, areas where Hamas had planned and executed attacks. The army said measures were taken to mitigate civilian harm, such as using precise munitions and aerial surveillance. Strikes Thursday hit Hamas security officers and an Israeli-declared humanitarian zone. Among those killed early Friday was Omar al-Derawi, a freelance journalist. As the attacks were underway, efforts at ceasefire negotiations were expected to resume Friday.



### Rana's last stand against extradition

Washington: An attorney for Mumbai-attack convict Tahawwur Rana has urged the US Supreme Court to review the lower court's decision to extradite him to India, citing the principle of double jeopardy which prevents a person from being tried or punished twice for the same offence. India is seeking the extradition of Rana, a Canadian national of Pakistani origin, as he is wanted in the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks case. Having lost the legal battle in lower courts and several federal courts, including the US Court of Appeals for the North Circuit in San Francisco, Rana had filed a "petition for a writ of certiorari" before the US Supreme Court November 13. December 16, US Solicitor General Elizabeth B Prelogar urged the Supreme to reject the petition. Rana's counsel Joshua L Dratel, in his response December 23 challenged the US Government's recommendation and pleaded with the Supreme Court that his writ be accepted. In a long battle, this is Rana's last legal chance not to be extradited to India. "The (Supreme) Court should grant the writ. On the merits, it should hold that the term "offence" in the double jeopardy provision of the United States-India extradition treaty (and many other similar treaties) refers to the conduct underlying the charges in the two countries, rather than the elements of the crimes the respective countries have charged," Dratel argued. The court has scheduled a conference for both parties on this issue January 17.



# Jill Biden receives \$20,000 diamond from PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi gifts a 7.5-carat lab-grown diamond placed in a papier mache box from Kashmir, known as 'kar-e-kalamdani' to US First Lady Jill Biden

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Jan 3: President Joe Biden and his family were given tens of thousands of dollars in gifts from foreign leaders in 2023, with Jill Biden receiving the single most expensive present: a \$20,000 diamond from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The 7.5-carat diamond from Modi was easily the most costly gift presented to any member of the first family in 2023, although she also received a brooch valued at \$14,063 from the Ukrainian ambassador to the United States and a bracelet, brooch and photograph album worth \$4,510 from the president and first lady of Egypt, according to an annual

accounting published by the State Department Thursday.

The \$20,000 diamond was retained for official use in the White House East Wing, according to a State Department document, while the other gifts to the president and first lady were sent to the archives. The first lady's office didn't immediately respond to a request for comment about the diamond's use.

The US president himself received a number of expensive presents, including a commemorative photo album valued at \$7,100 from South Korea's recently impeached President Suk Yeol Yoon, a \$3,495 statue of Mongolian warriors from the Mongolian prime minister, a \$3,300 silver bowl from the sultan of Brunei, a \$3,160 ster-

## PRICIEST GIFT IN 2023



ling silver tray from the president of Israel, and a collage worth \$2,400 from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Federal law requires executive branch officials to declare

The US President himself received a number of expensive presents, including a commemorative photo album valued at \$7,100 from South Korea's recently impeached President Suk Yeol Yoon

The \$20,000 diamond was retained for official use in the White House East Wing, according to a State Department document, while the other gifts to the president and first lady were sent to the archives

cally - but not always - transferred to the National Archives or put on official displays.

Recipients also have the option to purchase the gift from the US government at its market value, although that is rare, particularly with high-end items.

According to the State Department's Office of Protocol, which compiles the list that will be published in Friday's edition of the Federal Register, several employees of the CIA reported receiving lavish gifts of watches, perfume and jewellery, nearly all of which were destroyed. Of the gifts destroyed, they were worth more

than \$132,000 combined.

CIA Director William Burns received \$18,000 astrograph, which is a telescope and astrological camera, from a foreign source whose identity is classified. That is being transferred to the General Services Administration. But Burns reported receiving and destroying an \$11,000 Omega watch, while numerous others did the same with luxury timepieces.

Below the rank of director, the CIA employees who reported gifts are not identified, but one of them logged an Omega Seamaster Aqua Terra watch, a ladies Omega Constellation watch, a diamond necklace, earring bracelet, and a ring that were valued together at \$65,100.

All of those were destroyed, according to the report, as was a \$30,000 women's jewellery set from the Libyan jeweller Al Grew consisting of a necklace, bracelet, ring and earrings received by another CIA employee.





**“**We are looking forward to a very deep and substantive engagement with the new US administration  
**PIYUSH GOYAL | TRADE MINISTER**

## OVER 7L SELLERS, SERVICE PROVIDERS ON ONDC SO FAR

Over seven lakh sellers and service providers have been onboarded on Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) so far, the government said Thursday. A government-backed initiative, ONDC was launched in 2021. It was set up primarily to make digital commerce accessible to smaller players



## of the day quote

**The year 2024 has been a defining year for India's office sector, achieving record-breaking leasing volumes and reaffirming the country's position as the strongest growth market globally for office space demand**



**ANSHUL JAIN | CEO, CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD**

**This platform (Baank-net portal) is expected to enhance the overall economic environment by unlocking the value of distressed assets and boosting investor confidence. With the use of technology, this process will be more transparent, efficient, and accessible**



**M NAGARIA | SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES OF THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE**

**Our planned work with Qualcomm Technologies reflects Tata Elxsi's leadership and investments in SDV technologies and the future of cloud-native automotive software development**



**SHAUJI | VP AND HEAD OF THE TRANSPORTATION BUSINESS UNIT, TATA ELXSI**

## SHORT TAKES

### Govt slashes gas allocation for LPG

**New Delhi:** The government has slashed allocation of natural gas used for LPG production, and diverted the low-priced fuel to city gas retailers like Indraprastha Gas Ltd and Adani-Total Gas Ltd to meet a part of their requirement for CNG/piped cooking gas supplies, according to an official order. The government had in October and November last year cut supplies of low-priced natural gas coming from old fields such as Mumbai High and Bassein fields in the Bay of Bengal, to city gas retailers by as much as 40 per cent in view of limited output.

### Sebi bans Parekh in front-running scheme

**New Delhi:** Markets regulator Sebi Thursday barred three individuals, including Ketan Parekh, from the securities markets with immediate effect for their alleged involvement in a front-running scheme which generated illegal gains of Rs 65.77 crore. Further, Sebi directed 22 entities, including Parekh, to impound unlawful gains worth Rs 65.77 crore earned from the alleged violations, jointly and severally.

## SELL-ON-RALLY SENTIMENT

# INDICES SLIDE NEARLY 1%

### Sensex, Nifty tank on selloff in banking, IT stocks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Jan 3:** Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty buckled under selling pressure to settle nearly 1 per cent lower Friday as investors pared exposure to bank and IT stocks ahead of the earnings season starting next week.

A depreciating rupee against strengthening US dollar overseas further weighed on sentiment, traders said.

Despite a positive start, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 720.60 points or 0.90 per cent to close at 79,223.11. During the day, it slumped 833.98 points or 1.04 per cent to 79,109.73.

The NSE Nifty tanked 183.90 points or 0.76 per cent to 24,004.75. On a weekly basis, the BSE benchmark jumped 524.04 points or 0.66 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 191.35 points or 0.80 per cent.

"A sell-on-rally sentiment prevails in the market due to a strong US dollar, high valuation, and a shift towards a multi-asset investment strategy. Reducing US jobless claims and potential policy shifts in the US indicate that the Fed is not in a hurry to cut interest rates in the near term. Looking ahead, the market is likely to focus on Q3 earnings, with expectations of improvement in earnings on a QoQ basis," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

From the Sensex pack, Zomato, HDFC Bank, Tech Mahindra, Adani Ports, Tata Consul-



- SENSEX TUMBLED 720.60 POINTS OR 0.90% TO CLOSE AT 79,223.11
- NIFTY TANKED 183.90 POINTS OR 0.76% TO END SESSION AT 24,004.75
- ON A WEEKLY BASIS, THE BSE BENCHMARK JUMPED 524.04 POINTS OR 0.66%, AND THE NIFTY CLIMBED 191.35 POINTS OR 0.80%

tancy Services, ICICI Bank, Sun Pharma, Larsen & Toubro, HCL Tech and ITC were the major laggards.

On the other hand, Tata Motors, Nestle, Titan, Hindustan

Unilever and Reliance Industries were among the gainers.

The BSE midcap gauge fell 0.33 per cent, and smallcap index dipped 0.02 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, BSE

## NSE leads global exchanges in IPO fundraising for 2024

**Mumbai:** The Indian stock market witnessed an initial public offering (IPO) boom in 2024 as compared to any other global stock exchange, with the National Stock Exchange's (NSE) Rs 1.67 lakh crore (\$19.5 billion) capital raised through them becoming the highest in the world, according to a report by the exchange Friday. The 268 successful IPOs across mainboard (90) and SME (178) raised Rs 1.67 lakh crore, and were also the highest number of IPOs within Asia. The 268 IPOs are also the highest figure of public issues recorded ever in India, demonstrating the growing confidence of investors in the capital markets. It includes the largest IPO in India and the second largest IPO globally of \$3.3 billion of Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HML). While 90 mainboard companies (excluding REITs, INVITS, and FPOs) raised over Rs 1.59 lakh crore, 178 SMEs collectively raised around Rs 7,349 crore, the report stated. In fact, the data suggests that NSE has alone done more IPOs than other top exchanges in Asia which includes the IPOs Japan's (Japan Exchange Group), Hong Kong's (Hong Kong Stock Exchange), and China's (Shanghai Stock Exchange) have done cumulatively. The capital raised by the companies via the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) was \$15.9 billion and the Shanghai Stock Exchange was \$8.8 billion. China's Shanghai Stock Exchange recorded 101 public issues while Japan and Hong Kong's stock exchanges witnessed 93 and 66 IPOs, respectively. In 2024, there were a total of 1,145 IPOs raised globally compared to 1,271 in the year before.

## Odisha among 'achievers' in logistics performance index

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 3:** Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Delhi are among the 13 states and Union Territories that have been categorised as "achievers" in the logistics index chart 2024, according to a report released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry Friday.

The index is an indicator of the efficiency of logistical services necessary for promoting exports and economic growth.

In 2023 also, 13 states and UTs were in the achievers category. The other states and UTs in the "achievers" category are Chandigarh, Haryana, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Jammu and Kashmir, Lakshadweep, Puducherry, have been categorised as "fast movers" in the report.



Those in the "aspirers" category include Kerala, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Ladakh.

The report ranks states on the basis of four key pillars - Logistics Infrastructure, Logistics Services, Operating and Regulatory Environment, and the newly introduced Sustainable Logistics, according to the sixth LEADS (Logistics Ease Across Different States) 2024 report unveiled by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.

The index aims at enhancing focus on improving logistics performance across states, which is essential for improving the country's trade and reducing transaction costs.

## EPFO rolls out CPPS in all regional offices; 68L pensioners to benefit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 3:** Retirement fund body EPFO has completed the Centralized Pension Payments System (CPPS) rollout in all its regional offices across the country that will benefit over 68 lakh pensioners, the labour ministry said Friday.

The CPPS is a paradigm shift from the existing pension disbursement system that is decentralised, with each zonal/regional office of EPFO maintaining separate agreements with only 3-4 banks, the ministry explained in a statement. Under CPPS, a beneficiary will be able to withdraw pension from any bank and there will be no need for to visit the bank for verification at the time of commencement of pension, and the amount will be immediately credited upon release, it stated.

About Rs 1,570 crore pension was disbursed to more than 68 lakh pensioners pertaining to all 122 pension-disbursing regional offices of the EPFO for December 2024.

## Poverty gap shrinks between rural, urban

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 3:** Rural poverty has declined significantly to 4.86 per cent in the fiscal ending March 2024 from 25.7 per cent in 2011-12 mainly driven by government support programmes, said a SBI research released Friday.

Urban poverty too is estimated at 4.09 per cent, down from 13.7 per cent in 2011-12.

"The sharp decline in rural poverty ratio is on account of higher consumption growth in lowest 0-5 per cent decile with significant government support and such support is important as we also find that change in food prices has a significant impact on not just food expenditures, but overall expenditure in general," said the SBI research on consumption expenditure survey.

The latest Household Consumption Expenditure Survey, released by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, showed that consumption inequality in rural as well as urban areas declined during the August 2023-July 2024 period as compared to a year ago.



**RURAL POVERTY DROPS TO 4.86% IN FY24 FROM 25.7% IN 2011-12**  
**URBAN POVERTY STANDS AT 4.09%, DOWN FROM 13.7% IN 2011-12**

The SBI research said that the Consumption Expenditure Survey reveals a remarkable decline in rural poverty estimated at 4.86 per cent in 2023-24 (7.2 per cent in FY23 and 25.7 per cent in FY12) and urban poverty estimated at 4.09 per cent (4.6 per cent in FY23 and 13.7 per cent in 2011-12).

It is possible that these numbers could undergo minor revisions once the 2021 census is completed and the new rural-urban population share is published, the research report said.

"We believe urban poverty could decline even further. At an aggregate level, we believe

poverty rates in India could now be in the range of 4-4.5 per cent with almost minimal existence of extreme poverty," it said.

"Enhanced physical infrastructure is scripting a new story in rural mobility, it said and added that one of the reasons for the increasingly shrinking horizontal income gap between rural and urban and the vertical income gap within rural income classes," SBI said.

The research estimates that food inflation dampens consumption demand more in lower-income states as compared to higher-income states, reflecting that rural people are comparatively more risk-averse in low-income states than in high-income states.

Most of the high-income states delineate a savings rate greater than the national average (31 per cent). Uttar Pradesh and Bihar show low savings rates possibly due to higher outward migration, the SBI report said.

The new estimated poverty line is Rs 1,632 in rural areas and Rs 1,944 in urban areas in 2023-24.

## Apple to pay \$95mn over Siri eavesdropping claims

The allegations about a snoop Siri contradicted Apple's long-running commitment to protect the privacy of its customers - a crusade that CEO Tim Cook has often framed as a fight to preserve "a fundamental human right"

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**California, Jan 3:** Apple has agreed to pay \$95 million to settle a lawsuit accusing the privacy-minded company of deploying its virtual assistant Siri to eavesdrop on people using its iPhone and other trendy devices.

The proposed settlement filed Tuesday in an Oakland, California, federal court would resolve a 5-year-old lawsuit revolving around allegations that Apple surreptitiously activated Siri to record conversations through iPhones and other devices equipped with the virtual assistant for more than a decade.

The alleged recordings occurred even when people didn't seek to activate the virtual as-



sistant with the trigger words, "Hey, Siri." Some of the recorded conversations were then shared with advertisers in an attempt to sell their products to consumers more likely to be interested in the goods and services, the lawsuit asserted.

Apple isn't acknowledging any wrongdoing in the settlement, which still must be approved by US District Judge

Jeffrey White. Lawyers in the case have proposed scheduling a February 14 court hearing in Oakland to review the terms.

If the settlement is approved, tens of millions of consumers who owned iPhones and other Apple devices from September 17, 2014, through the end of last year could file claims

covered by the settlement, although the payment could be reduced or increased, depending on the volume of claims. Only 3 per cent to 5 per cent of eligible consumers are expected to file claims, according to estimates in court documents.

Eligible consumers will be limited to seeking compensation on a maximum of five devices. The settlement represents a sliver of the \$705 billion in profits that Apple has pocketed

if the settlement is approved, tens of millions of consumers who owned iPhones and other Apple devices from September 17, 2014, through the end of last year could file claims

Only 3% to 5% of eligible consumers are expected to file claims

Each consumer could receive up to \$20 per Siri-equipped device covered by the settlement, although the payment could be reduced or increased, depending on the volume of claims

since September 2014. It's also a fraction of the roughly \$1.5 billion that the lawyers representing consumers had estimated Apple could be required to pay if the company had been found of violating wiretapping and other privacy laws had the case gone to a trial.

The attorneys who filed the lawsuit may seek up to \$29.6 million from the settlement fund to cover their fees and other expenses, according to court documents.

## EV firms agree to end subsidies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 3:** Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal Friday said the electric vehicle (EV) companies present in the meeting have unanimously agreed that they would no longer need subsidies once the existing subsidy regime ends.

Stakeholders from the EV sector held deliberations with the minister here on issues pertaining to development of battery charging and swapping infrastructure.

The minister also said that companies are free to choose their own business models. Whether they prefer to collaborate and share resources for battery swapping or sell vehicles with their own batteries, the decision is entirely up to them, he said.

"Everybody was unanimous in the room that once the existing subsidy regime comes to an



end, none of them requires the subsidy to grow further...Each sector has one or the other model which makes it self-sustaining and does not call for further subsidies," Goyal told reporters when asked about the views of companies on subsidies.

In a bid to woo global EV makers into the country, in March last year the government rolled out an electric vehicle policy, under which duty concessions were offered to companies setting up manufacturing units in the country with a minimum investment of \$500 million.



# New day, same story

TOP ORDER SURRENDERS AGAINST AUSTRALIAN PACERS AGAIN; INDIA COLLAPSE TO 185



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sydney, Jan 3:** Rohit Sharma "opted to rest" in the team's interest but the same old script unfolded on a new day for Indian batters as they surrendered meekly for a paltry 185 in the face of some hostile seam bowling from Australia on the opening day of the fifth and final Test here.

Virat Kohli (17 off 69 balls), whose form and technical weaknesses are also under the scanner, was for the seventh time dismissed in the corridor of uncertainty in the tour, a problem that seems incurable at the moment.

At stumps, Australia were

9 for 1 with stand-in skipper Jasprit Bumrah sending the woefully out-of-form Usman Khawaja (2) back in the hut.

Teenage sensation Sam Konstas was unbeaten at 7 after hitting Bumrah for a first-ball four. The 19-year-old also had an animated exchange with the Indian star.

Bumrah opted to bat under overcast conditions and the ultra-defensive approach by Indian batters only compounded their problems with Scott Boland's (20-8-31-4) immaculate length and tremendous discipline leaving them in a disarray.

Mitchell Starc (18-5-49-3) and Pat Cummins (15.2-4-37-2) were

equally relentless giving the Indians no room for release shots.

Rishabh Pant top-scored for the visitors with a 98-ball 40, going against his grain to battle it out, taking painful blows to his body in the process.

If Rohit's decision to "rest" was a forward thinking move, the persistence with Kohli is proving to be detrimental and the celebrated batter might just have one more Test innings left to save his place in the traditional format.

"I wouldn't say it's a par score but still a competitive score," said Pant, admitting that the pitch is not easy to bat on.

If one takes away the sec-

ond innings hundred at Perth out of his last 20 Test innings, Kohli has managed an average of 17.57.

He could have been out off Boland's first delivery but tried to battle hard. However, it has always been that one moment in which his hands and the willow magnetically follow a delivery in the corridor of uncertainty.

#### PANT CURBS INSTINCTS

Having copped criticism from all quarters for his bizarre shot selection in Melbourne, Pant, for a change, copped body blows, trying to curb his natural game.

The big-hitter in him came

out only on a couple of occasions with one of them fetching him a straight six off Beau Webster.

Pant put his head down and endured nasty blows on his bicep, helmet and twice in the sensitive abdominal area. He and the dogged Ravindra Jadeja (26 off 95 balls) defended dourly as they added 48 off 151 deliveries for the fifth wicket.

Only 50 runs were scored in the second session and trying not to be adventurous proved counter-productive with most batters retreating in a shell letting Boland and company dictate the terms of play.

Finally, Pant's patience ran out and one pull shot too many became his undoing.

India realised they haven't scored enough runs and lost a lot of wickets. The defensive tactic in the second session when the ball got old ended up costing them dearly.

There wasn't much swing on offer despite cloudy conditions but a decent grass cover ensured that Boland's back-of-length deliveries proved enough.

As far as Pant was concerned, the "honest conversations" with head coach Gautam Gambhir seemed to have worked with the southpaw respecting the game situation for most part.

If Pant was disciplined, Shubman Gill's judgement on the last delivery before lunch did cause trouble for India.

Gill (20 off 64 balls) did all the hard work for close to couple of hours before stepping out to Nathan Lyon on the last ball of the session only to be caught at first slip.

In the morning KL Rahul and Yashasvi Jaiswal came in to open the innings but didn't last long and the saga of first innings failures continued.

## ROHIT RETREATS



Sydney absence signals end of road for Rohit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sydney, Jan 3:** In an unprecedented turn of events, India skipper Rohit Sharma "opted to rest" himself from the fifth and final Test against Australia after a series of underwhelming performances, a move that put his future in doubt and evoked emotional responses from his successor Jasprit Bumrah and Rishabh Pant.

Rohit Friday "opted to rest" from the series finale, having scored only 31 runs across five innings in three Tests. He made way for Shubman Gill in the do-or-die game of the series.

Rohit's decision handed his deputy Bumrah the leadership role. Bumrah had captained the side in the series-opener as well when Rohit took a short paternity break. India won that match in Perth by 295 runs, their only victory on the tour so far.

"Our captain has shown

The year 2024 turned out to be the least productive year for Rohit in Test cricket as he collected 619 runs in 26 innings across 14 matches averaging 24.76

leadership, he has opted to rest," said Bumrah at the toss. "It shows the unity we have in the team," he added in front of a packed arena, trying to put an end to talks of dissension in the dressing room.

Pant top-scored with a restrained 98-ball 40 and once he was done talking about how much it took for him to curb his aggressive instincts, the chirpy wicket-keeper-batter was asked about his thoughts on Rohit and his unparalleled decision.

"It was an emotional moment. He is our leader but it's a team management call (of which Rohit is a part). I was not part of the conversations and can't say more," he said.

The 37-year-old white-ball great looked like a pale shadow of himself in those innings, struggling to execute even his bread and butter shots including the trademark front foot pull.

The speculation over his future in the longest format also gained momentum after India lost the fourth Test in Melbourne to trail the five-match series 1-2. Having played his 67th five-day game in Melbourne, Rohit is also being expected to call time on his roller-coaster Test career soon.

Rohit could not replicate his stellar success in white ball cricket over the course of his 11-year Test career.

**Our captain has shown leadership, he has opted to rest. It shows the unity we have in the team**  
JASPRIT BUMRAH | CAPTAIN, INDIA

### SHORT TAKES

#### Karun sets new WR

**Vizianagaram:** Karun Nair Friday rewrote the world record for most List A runs without being dismissed while guiding Vidarbha to an eight-wicket victory over Uttar Pradesh in a Group D match of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here. Karun went past the record set by former New Zealand all-rounder James Franklin in 2010 — 527 runs. The right-hander was eventually dismissed for 112 as his tally got stopped at 542 runs, setting a new mark. Other prominent names in the list are: Joshua van Heerden (512), Fakhar Zaman (455) and Taufeeq Umar (422). It was Karun's fourth hundred, third on the trot, in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, helping Vidarbha overhaul UP's 307 for eight in 47.2 overs.

#### Punjab's 400+ feat

**Ahmedabad:** Punjab became the first team to post two 400-plus totals in a single Vijay Hazare Trophy tournament. Punjab's latest batting blitzkrieg saw them amass a staggering 426/4 against Hyderabad at the Narendra Modi Stadium Ground 'A'. This was the second time in the tournament that Punjab crossed the 400-run mark, following their 424 for five against Saurashtra earlier in the competition. The foundation of Punjab's innings was laid by opener Prabhshimran Singh, whose scintillating century (137) was a masterclass in aggressive batting.

#### Jagbir suffers heart attack, in ICU

**Rourkela:** Former India forward and hockey coach Jagbir Singh Friday complained of chest congestion and was rushed to the hospital, where he suffered a massive heart attack during a procedure. The two-time Olympian is here for the Hockey India League (HIL) with Team Gonasika. Jagbir felt breathing problems during the team's training session Friday afternoon and was immediately taken to Apollo Hospital, where he was diagnosed with a blocked artery. The 59-year-old former Air India employee represented India in the 1988 Olympics in Seoul and the 1992 Games in Barcelona.

## Odisha to sponsor national Kho Kho team for 3 yrs: CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 3:** The Odisha government Friday decided to sponsor the national Kho Kho team for three years as part of its promotion of the game.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said that the state government will spend Rs 5 crore per annum for three years to sponsor the national Kho Kho team, according to a CMO statement.

The period of Odisha's sponsorship will be from January 2025 to December 2027. This amount will be provided by the Odisha Mining Corporation, it said.

The Odisha government in June 2024 had announced the extension of its sponsorship for Hockey India until 2036 — a year that marks the centenary of the state's formation in 1936.

## OFC meet defensively resolute FC Goa

Odisha FC will be eager to break their duck against the Gaurs and register their first victory

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 3:** FC Goa and Odisha FC will look to build on their prolific recent form when they lock horns in their Indian Super League match here Saturday.

FC Goa are enjoying a strong campaign with a solid current unbeaten streak in away games (6), while Odisha FC are seeking their first-ever win against the Gaurs in ISL history.

However, the home team enters this fixture in high spirits, having won thrice and drawn twice in their previous five matches. FC Goa better them in this aspect, since they have emerged victorious in four out of their last five ISL contests.

The Gaurs are placed third in the standings with 22 points from 12 matches and the Jugernauts are positioned sixth



with 20 points from 13 games.

Odisha FC will be eager to break their duck against the Gaurs and register their first victory in this rivalry, which will be a significant feat for their head coach Sergio

Lobera, who previously used to be at the helm of FC Goa.

The two teams present contrasting styles and fortunes. Odisha FC have been accurate in passing, boasting the second-highest pass comple-

tion rate (81.3 per cent) this season, while FC Goa rely on their defensive solidity, especially since Sandesh Jhingan's return since they have conceded only four goals in their last six games.

## Red Devils' \$1.1bn kit deal with Adidas at risk

Manchester United's current position in the Premier League poses a threat to their future relationship with the German sportswear brand

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Manchester, Jan 3:** Placed 14th among 20 teams in the Premier League standings, multiple times winner Manchester United are facing the threat of relegation in the 2024-25 season.

If that happens, it will not only harm the reputation but will also hit the Red Devils financially in more ways than one. Getting relegated to the Championships, the level below the top tier, will not only deprive Manchester United of the Premier League riches but it will also lose many of its



sponsorship deals.

On top of the sponsors that will abandon Manchester United if they get relegated are the German sportswear

giant Adidas.

Manchester United have had a long-standing partnership with Adidas as their primary shirt sponsor. In June 2023,

they signed a 10-year contract extension valued at £900 million (\$1.12 billion) for the duration of the agreement. However, United's current position in the Premier League poses a threat to their future relationship with the German sportswear brand, according to reports.

United are currently just seven points above the relegation zone. There are reports that Adidas has the option to terminate their contract with the club early, with a one-year notice period, if Manchester United is relegated to the Championship next season.

Manchester United's recently-appointed manager Ruben Amorim has admitted that the Red Devils are in a relegation battle after losing 2-0 to Newcastle at Old Trafford Monday night.

The last time United was relegated from the old First Division was in 1974, though they did immediately bounce back. Manchester United have

The team has won only one of their last five matches in the Premier League and has earned 22 points from 19 matches with only six wins

won only one of their last five matches in the Premier League and have earned 22 points from 19 matches with only six wins.

The Red Devils will now face another difficult test when they take on league leaders Liverpool at Anfield Sunday (January 5). United last won at Anfield in January 2017 under Louis van Gaal when Wayne Rooney scored the only goal of the game. A defeat to the Reds Sunday will push them further down the standings as Crystal Palace are just two points behind them and face Chelsea Saturday.

## Ministry pulls up IOA's decision on IGU elections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 3:** The Sports Ministry has pulled up the Indian Olympic Association for recognising the Indian Golf Union elections won by Harish Kumar Shetty-led faction, saying "such actions create avoidable duplication and confusion" which may not withstand legal scrutiny.

The IOA had given recognition to the IGU led by Shetty while declaring the other body, headed by Brijinder Singh, void in a letter issued December 30.

The letter signed by IOA president PT Usha stated that the National Olympic Committee had "reviewed the facts" and "examined the procedural adherence" before recognising the body headed by Shetty.

However, the ministry has advised the IOA to adhere to the Olympic charter, review the matter, and take appropriate measures to ensure the smooth functioning of the governing body.

"It has come to the attention of this Ministry that the President, IOA has issued a letter of recognition on 30/12/2024 to another elected body providing certain reasons to justify the said decision," the ministry said in a letter dated January 2.

"It is not clear whether the Indian Olympic Association Executive Committee and/or the concerned Affiliation Committee of the IOA or any appropriate committee of IOA has examined the matter with due diligence and regard to established legal provisions and norms, including the IGU's constitution and the Sports Code. Such actions by the IOA create avoidable duplication and confusion and may not withstand legal scrutiny."

Two AGMs were held December 15 to elect the new IOA office-bearers — one at the India Habitat Centre (IHC) where Singh was re-elected president with retired Punjab and Haryana High Court judge, Rameshwar Malik, as the Returning Officer, and the other AGM at the Olympic Bhawan, where Shetty was elected with Justice OP Garg (Retd) as the RO.