

DADLS-76

विकसित भारत की संकल्पना में प्रवासी भारतीयों का योगदान
DIASPORA'S CONTRIBUTION TO A VIKSIT BHARAT

18th PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS
8th-10th January 2025

Ministry of External Affairs
Government of India



ODISHA GEARS UP TO HOST THE WORLD!



PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS CONVENTION

8th - 10th January, 2025 | Bhubaneswar

- The flagship event commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India in 1915 on 9th January
 - Indian Diaspora is of 35.4 million, comprising 19.5 million PIOs and 15.8 million NRIs
- The Nation lauds the contribution of the Indian Diaspora in various fields to both India and their host countries
 - More than 7500 delegates to attend the grand event
 - 27 Diaspora members will be honoured with the prestigious "Pravasi Bharatiya Samman" award

Join us in applauding the Indian Diaspora's Legacy and Contribution for a Viksit Bharat

Visit us at



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leisure



SELENA, BLANCO SIGN PRENUP TO PROTECT THEIR ASSETS

Selena Gomez and her fiancé, Benny Blanco, have reportedly decided to sign a prenuptial agreement to ensure financial security. Selena, who has a successful cosmetics brand, has taken a practical approach to ensure her financial security remains intact.

FILMMAKER JEFF BAENA PASSES AWAY

Jeff Baena, a filmmaker celebrated for his unique storytelling and collaborative work with his wife Aubrey Plaza, has died at 47. His films, including *Life After Beth* and *Horse Girl*, often combined dark humour and existential themes.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You may be alone, but not necessarily lonely. You may want to listen to your inner voice, and express your true self creatively. Spend the evening with a loved one who can hear the music in your silence too, suggests Ganesha.

TAURUS
Fortune favours the brave and you will wake up feeling gutsy. Your performance will peak today and you will reap the benefits of real estate and construction business. Your peers and boss will extend all the support you need. All in all, a day to bask in the glory of advantages and awards.

GEMINI
You need to bear in mind that you need to concentrate on your own image and standing in society rather than worry about the actions of others. Those in the retail business will see an unprecedented spurt in their profits today, says Ganesha.

CANCER
You will try to improve ties with beloved ones. Your devotion and dedication will reap benefits for the future. You will have physical and mental happiness. You will keep your future in mind. This will boost your self-confidence. Ganesha's blessings are with you.

LEO
You will be confused with issues relating to the workplace today. You need to accept your present circumstances for what they are, and work towards resolving your immediate concerns to find your way ahead in life. This period of doubt will pass very soon, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Your beloved will not only give you a surprise today but also demand one, says Ganesha. There may be some good news on the business front. Ganesha says own up to your old mistakes so that you don't repeat them, and chalk out the plans for the future.

LIBRA
Ganesha says you will get the answers to all your questions. You will tend to worry about small things and issues. You will be able to earn from different sources today. Ganesha assures that if you keep your mind balanced you will achieve amazing results in your work.

SCORPIO
You may bump into people with different tastes and temperaments, says Ganesha. Some may surprise you, while some may just shock you. Sometimes, it is difficult to understand when people react indifferently to your success. Handle it with smartness and diplomacy.

SAGITTARIUS
Today will be a day for introspection, says Ganesha, as you try and find the root causes of your problems. But the job is only half-done: the rest will depend on the initiatives you may take to implement possible solutions to your problems.

CAPRICORN
Today, you'll like to hold a cup of hot coffee in one hand, relax and go down the memory lane to cherish some golden moments. You may want to give another chance to your romantic relationship as you develop likings for your ex-boyfriend/girlfriend. Ganesha finds you to be busy in a lot social gatherings today.

AQUARIUS
You speed up your pace and try to do everything in order to complete your targets, but you won't be able to complete the tasks on time. Don't lose hope as tomorrow will be a different day, says Ganesha. Give yourself some time to relax and unwind.

PISCES
You need to concentrate more on your personal life, and seriously think about the changes you need to make. You are guided more by your heart in these matters. However, there is nothing to worry about, as this is a golden period for you. Today should be a progressive day that will bring a lot of positive changes in your life, says Ganesha.

Junaid reflects on dyslexia

Mumbai: Junaid Khan, who made his debut in 2024 with the Netflix film *Maharaj*, recently shared his experience of being diagnosed with dyslexia at the age of six or seven. Speaking on a YouTube channel, Junaid revealed that his parents recognised his condition while hearing the script of *Taare Zameen Par*.

Reflecting on this pivotal moment, Junaid said, "When Papa and Maa heard the script, they immediately thought, 'Wait a second! We've seen this in our lives.'" The parallels between the character in the film and Junaid's own challenges prompted Aamir and Reena to seek professional advice. Following consultations with a specialist, Junaid was diagnosed with dyslexia.

Junaid emphasised the role his parents played in creating a supportive and nurturing environment during his formative years. "Neither of my parents placed undue pressure on me to excel academically," he shared. Instead, Aamir and Reena encouraged him to focus on doing his best, offering unwavering support. "Mom and Dad were like, 'Make sure you do your best,'" Junaid added, expressing gratitude for their understanding approach.

The actor credited his parents for fostering a balanced and compassionate upbringing, which allowed him to navigate his condition with confidence and resilience.

AGENCIES

Isha's guide to ageless beauty

Mumbai: Actress Isha Koppikar recently took to social media to share her secret to fresh, glow-timeliness. In an Instagram post, she humorously responded to the common question, "Do I live in a refrigerator?" as people often wonder how she manages to maintain her evergreen beauty. Isha posted a video of her revealing that her flawless appearance is not just a result of water intake, but a combination of mindful self-care, hard work and the right approach to health. In the clip, the *Krishna Cottage* actress could be heard saying, "It's not only about having water. It's a lot of hard work. You have to be very mindful about your thoughts. It's also about genetics to some extent."

Isha emphasised the importance of a balanced diet, sharing that she enjoys a variety of fruits, including papaya, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and citrus fruits like oranges. She also makes it a point to consume at least one raw vegetable juice daily to keep her body nourished and energised.

"I take lot of fruits, at least 4, 5 different types of fruit. Papaya strawberry, blueberries, raspberries, citrus fruits, oranges. I at least have a one raw vegetable juice in a day. I listen to my body," Koppikar added.

IAN S



TRIPTII'S emotional struggles

Mumbai: Triptii Dimri, who rose to fame after her brief but impactful role in Sandeep Reddy Vanga's *Animal*, has become one of the most promising actors in Bollywood. However, her journey wasn't easy. Reflecting on her debut in Sajid Ali's *Laila Majnu*, Triptii revealed the challenges she faced as a newcomer without formal acting training.

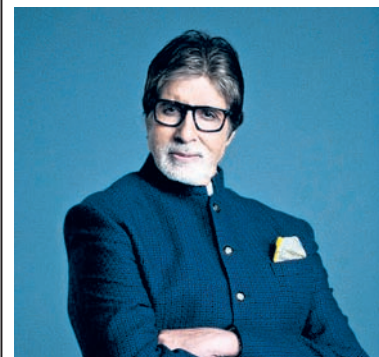
In a recent interview, Triptii shared how she attended workshops with Mukesh Chhabra to prepare for the role. "I hadn't studied acting back then. I was clueless about technical terms like DOP and POV, which are common in filmmaking. I kept wondering, 'What are they even talking about? I was constantly confused,'" she said. The lack of experience left her doubting herself. "During workshops, they talked about character depth and pain, and I didn't understand anything. I'd go home and cry, wondering if I had made the wrong decision," Triptii shared.

The role of Laila required immense emotional depth, something Triptii found intimidating. She said, "You can't be yourself on set. You have to fully embody the character. It wasn't easy because I thought acting was just performing in front of the camera, but I quickly realised it's so much more."

Despite the struggles, Triptii's dedication shone through, marking *Laila Majnu* as the beginning of a stellar career.

AGENCIES

Big B's witty comment on Bipasha



Mumbai: An old video featuring Amitabh Bachchan has resurfaced on social media, where the actor humorously made a playful remark about actress Bipasha Basu.

The behind-the-scenes footage is from Simi Garewal's renowned chat show, *Rendezvous with Simi Garewal*, and shows Bachchan alongside

his family members—son Abhishek, daughter Shweta and wife Jaya Bachchan.

This particular segment dates back to the filming of the 2004 thriller *Aetbaar*, in which Amitabh starred alongside John Abraham and Bipasha Basu. At the time, John and Bipasha were reportedly in a relationship, and Big B played the role of Bipasha's father in the movie.

In the viral footage, the *Sholay* actor humorously recounted an incident from the set when John had contracted conjunctivitis.

While sharing this story with Simi, she teasingly warned the team to avoid touching anything Amitabh had touched, fearing they might catch the infection. Without missing a beat, Bachchan responded, saying, "Maine toh kiya hi nahi kuch" ("I didn't do anything"). He then added with a playful smile, "Sari touching toh Bipasha karti hai, main thode na karta hun" ("It's Bipasha who does all the touching, not me").

Last year, Simi Garewal shared this throwback video on her Instagram handle with the caption, "What's a little gossip among friends?! Rendezvous gems."

IAN S

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

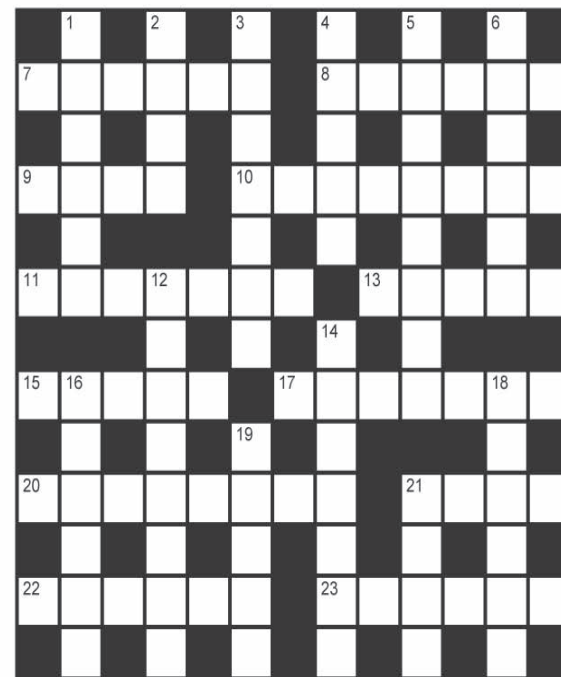


BREVITY



FUN POST

CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Bowl out
 - 8 Baseball stat
 - 9 Molokai meal
 - 10 Breed of dairy cattle
 - 11 Snake in the grass?
 - 13 Living quarters
 - 15 Kind of board
 - 17 Riptide
 - 20 Type of engagement
 - 21 Lopes
 - 22 Showy
 - 23 Assemble
 - 5 Cowpuncher
 - 6 Clergyman
 - 12 Agra's mausoleum (3,5)
 - 14 Redcap's charge
 - 16 Some false teeth
 - 18 Prospector's wish
 - 19 Female fox
 - 21 Burlap fibre
- Down**
- 1 Chickpea, e.g.
 - 2 Know-it-all
 - 3 Arbour
 - 4 Ruckus

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.

		3					2	
8			2	5				
				7		4		
5	4							
					9		3	2
		2	5					
9							8	1
	3			9				6
		5	1		8			

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

Y	H	I	P	D	P
R	O	B	O	T	S
G	T	B	A	L	A
H	A	N	D	B	A
O	N	M	O	L	L
T	R	A	G	E	D
A	S	S	A	R	T
S	I	G	M	A	
N	I	A	O	S	
S	C	A	N		
O	U	C	K	U	A
T	A	T	T	O	
T	E	T	R	E	A

SUDOKU

8	4	6	1	9	5	2	7	3
1	7	5	2	8	3	4	6	9
2	3	9	6	7	4	5	1	8
9	8	7	4	3	2	6	5	1
5	6	4	8	1	9	7	3	2
3	1	2	5	6	7	9	8	4
4	2	8	3	5	6	1	9	7
6	9	3	7	2	1	8	4	5
7	5	1	9	4	8	3	2	6

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



Boost to irrigation
State government plans to bring 1.42,000 hectares of cropland under irrigation, Chief Minister says
DOWNTOWN | P2



Yoon arrest delayed
Chief of security for South Korean President Yoon says he could not cooperate with efforts to arrest the impeached leader
INTERNATIONAL | P8



Couple unfriendly
Unmarried couples will no longer be welcome to check in, as per OYO guidelines effective this year
BUSINESS | P9



India lose BGT
A listless India get knocked out of the World Test Championship final as Oz cruise to a 6-wicket victory in the fifth Test
SPORTS | BACK PAGE

2 BJP leaders 'killed' as dumper hits car

SURVIVOR, EX-MLA ALLEGE DELIBERATE COLLISION, MURDER



Sambalpur, Jan 5: Two BJP leaders were killed after a dumper hit their car in Sambalpur district in the early hours of Sunday, police said.

The deceased were identified as Debendra Nayak and Muralidhar Chhuria. Nayak was BJP's Goshala mandal president, while Chhuria is a former sarpanch. Both of them were close to senior BJP leader Nauri Naik.

The incident happened around 1.30am on NH-53 in the Burla police station area. There were six people in the car, including the driver, and they were returning home in Kardola from Bhubaneswar, police said.

All six persons were taken

to a nearby hospital where doctors declared two of them dead. The injured were undergoing treatment there.

Suresh Chhanda, who was injured in the accident, alleged, "The vehicle hit our car from behind twice. Suspecting someone trying to hit our vehicle intentionally, the driver turned the car towards a rural road from the highway near Kantapalli Square. Still, the dumper chased our vehicle and hit it badly. As a result, the car overturned."

Chhanda said he was conscious till the dumper hit their car twice on the highway, but lost sense when it hit the third time.

"I am sure that someone intentionally caused the accident. By mistake, one can hit a vehicle once. Why would someone be hit thrice from behind," asked the injured BJP worker.

After visiting the injured persons, Naik, a former MLA of Rengali, alleged that it was not an accident but a deliberate collision. Someone has deliberately hit their vehicle thrice, he claimed.

Meanwhile, a case has been registered at Burla police station based on a complaint filed by the son of one of the deceased. The investigation is underway, with rumours swirling about a possible political motive behind the killings.

SP Mukesh Kumar Bhamoo said, "We have seized the dumper and detained its driver. As the family members of the deceased persons alleged that it was done intentionally, we will investigate that angle."

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Sambalpur MLA Jayanarayan Mishra have expressed deep condolences and met the families of the deceased and the injured. The incident has sent shockwaves through the BJP community, with many demanding justice for the victims.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Sir, if a scam of a couple of crores can kill a journalist, will money like electoral bonds kill journalism?

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	27.2°	25.5°
Min Temp	14.5°	12.5°
Humidity	92%	80%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

FORECAST
Fog/mist in the morning and mainly clear sky later

Drone over Srimandir triggers security scare

Bhubaneswar, Jan 5: An investigation was started after a drone was spotted over the revered Srimandir in Puri in the early hours of Sunday, police said.

The drone was spotted over the temple around 4.10am and it kept hovering for nearly half an hour, raising security concerns as the area is a no-flying zone.

Different teams have been formed to investigate the incident, a police officer said.

Expressing concern, Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan said, "Flying a drone over the temple is illegal and not acceptable. Strong legal action would be taken against the person who breached the security."

"The Puri SP has formed teams and started an investigation into the incident. I hope that the person concerned will be identified and the drone will be seized," he added. Harichandan said to ensure that such an incident does not happen in the future,

Drone falls close to CM in Jharsuguda

In a major security lapse, a drone deployed by the administration to take photographs of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi accidentally crashed on the ground close to him during his visit to Jharsuguda, an official said Sunday. The incident which occurred January 2 came to light during the day after a video clip of the incident was circulated on social media platforms.

"As per preliminary investigation, the drone was deployed by the district administration to take photographs and record video of the chief minister and other dignitaries during the visit. Due to some technical glitches, it accidentally fell near to the CM," said the police officer of Jharsuguda district.

The government is planning to deploy police personnel round the clock at the four watchtowers around the temple complex.

It was suspected that some vlogger may have flown the drone above the temple. However, ill intention behind it cannot be ruled out, he said.



REVELLERS ON ROAD: Children perform martial arts during Patha Utsav at Ram Mandir Square in Bhubaneswar, Sunday (PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK)

3 die in ICG chopper crash

Porbandar (Gujarat), Jan 5: Three crew members were killed after a helicopter of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) crashed and caught fire at an airport on the outskirts of Gujarat's Porbandar city, police said.

The incident took place at 12.10pm when the ICG's Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH), which was returning from a routine sortie, crashed while trying to land on the runway of the Coast Guard airport, Porbandar Superintendent of Police Bhagirathsinh Jadeja said.

The chopper crashed near the runway and caught fire.

The blaze was later brought under control with the help of a fire tender, he said.

The three crew members on-board were brought out of the chopper and rushed to a hospital in Porbandar in a severely burnt condition, he said.

While two of them were declared brought dead, one was alive when brought to the hospital and died later, he said.

The incident comes four months after the ICG's ALH MK-III helicopter crashed into the Arabian Sea off Porbandar September 2 last year, killing three crew members.

Trump miffed as US flags will be half-staff Jan 20

Washington, Jan 5: President-elect Donald Trump has complained that American flags would still be lowered to half-staff in honour of the late President Jimmy Carter during Trump's January 20 inauguration.

President Joe Biden ordered flags lowered to half-staff for 30 days from the day of Carter's death December 29, as is custom when a US president dies.

Trump, who has announced plans to attend Carter's memorial service in Washington January 9, took issue in a Truth Social post Friday with the flags remaining in the mourning position during his swearing-in ceremony.

"The Democrats are all 'giddy' about our magnificent American Flag potentially being at 'half mast' during my Inauguration," Trump said, employing a term frequently used for the lowered position when the flag is on a ship.

"They think it's so great, and are so happy about it because, in actuality, they don't love our Country, they only think about themselves," Trump said.

Trump said that due to Carter's death last week "the American flag would for the first time ever during an Inauguration of a future President, be at half mast". "Nobody wants to see this, and no American can be happy about it. Let's see how it plays out," he said.

White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said the White House had no plans to reconsider the decision.

Iconic 'Breaking Bad' house up for sale at \$4 million

Albuquerque (New Mexico), Jan 5: The house made famous by the 'Breaking Bad' TV series is up for sale, and the owners of the otherwise unassuming home in one of Albuquerque's older neighbourhoods are hoping the property's role in the long-running series will help them fetch a pretty penny.

Centred on mythical methamphetamine cookers Walter White and Jesse Pinkman, the series wrapped up more than a decade ago, but its legacy continues to draw looky-loos to the home and other associated filming spots around town.

New Mexico's governor also recently tapped the Walter White character, played by Bryan Cranston, to star in a campaign against littering in New Mexico.

While 'Breaking Bad' certainly has left its mark on New Mexico and this quiet block in Albuquerque, the listing is sure to reignite interest.

Time to move on

Fans often flock to the home, sometimes with hundreds of cars driving by in a single day, Joanne Quintana told Albuquerque television station KOB-TV.

Quintana said her parents purchased the home in the 1970s and that she and her siblings grew up there. As her parents got older and the show's popularity skyrocketed, it became harder to protect them. The family was forced to put up a metal fence and install security



cameras to keep fans at bay. Now that her parents are gone, it's time to sell.

"This was our family home from 1973, almost 52 years," she told the station. "So we're going to walk away with just our memories. It's time to move on. We're done. There's no reason to fight anymore."

Hollywood magic

It was 2006 when a film scout first approached Quintana's mother about shooting a pilot episode at the home. Within months, the equipment was set up and filming began.

The family got to meet Cranston and the other stars and watched from behind the scenes as crew members worked their magic. Quintana's mother was always sure to have cookies for the cast and crew.

The inside of the home was used to prep, while interior scenes were shot in a studio.

For the famous pizza scene, Quintana remembers boxes of pizza lining the sidewalk. Plenty of unsliced cheese and pepperoni props were at the ready in case Cranston didn't nail it first try. He did — landing the pizza face-up on the roof after his character's wife shut the door in his face.

The homeowners had a hard time keeping fans from attempting their own pizza tosses or trying to sneak dips in the iconic backyard pool.

Some online real estate calculators put the estimated market value of the four-bedroom ranch-style home at just over \$340,000. But with the star power of 'Breaking Bad' behind it, the global luxury realty service that is listing the home for Quintana and her family has it priced at just under \$4 million.

18th PBD CONVENTION

DIASPORA'S FEATS TO BE KEY FOCUS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ing one titled 'Vishwaroop Ram - The Universal Legacy of Ramayana'. This exhibition would present the timeless epic of Ramayana through a curated juxtaposition of traditional and contemporary art forms, the MEA said Sunday.

The second exhibition will be on the diaspora's contribution to technology and Viksit Bharat. It will acknowledge the contributions of the Indian diaspora to the development of technology in the world.

Another exhibition would be on the spread and evolution of the Indian diaspora in the world. It will showcase rare documents of people who migrated from Mandvi in Gujarat

New Delhi, Jan 5: The Indian diaspora's achievements and contributions across the world and ways to further deepen their engagement with India are set to be the key focus at the three-day Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention to be held in Bhubaneswar from January 8.

India's economic growth, policy reforms and developmental trajectory in several key sectors are also likely to be showcased to woo overseas Indian investors at the convention.

A large number of overseas Indians, including top businessmen, entrepreneurs and economists, from over 50 countries are expected to participate in the 18th PBD convention.

The PBD is celebrated January 9 to mark Mahatma Gandhi's return to India on that day in 1915. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will formally inaugurate the high-profile event January 9. It will feature a virtual address by chief guest Christine Carla Kangaloo, President of Trinidad and Tobago, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

The theme of the convention is 'Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat'.

President Droupadi Murmu will deliver the valedictory address January 10. She will confer the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards 2025 on select members of the Indian diaspora to recognise their achievements.

India's economic growth,

PM to arrive Jan 8, Prez Murmu Jan 9

Bhubaneswar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Droupadi Murmu are scheduled to arrive here January 8 and January 9, respectively, to attend the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, being held in Odisha for the first time.

Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja Saturday reviewed the state's preparedness for the event and issued directions to all departments concerned to ensure flawless arrangements for dignitaries.

According to the official schedule, "The PM will reach Bhubaneswar airport by a special IAF aircraft at 8pm January 8 from Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. He will spend the night at Raj Bhavan."

It added, "PM Modi will attend the event's inaugural meet at 10am January 9 at Janata Maidan here. He is scheduled to leave the city around 11:55am."

President Murmu's flight is scheduled to arrive around 4:35pm, the statement said.

"President Murmu is scheduled to reach the event's convention venue at 11:40am Friday. She will meet Trinidad and Tobago President Christine Carla Kangaloo at the venue," the statement added.

She will also confer the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman during the valedictory session of the event before returning to New Delhi at 5:25pm, according to the official programme.

policy reforms and the country's developmental trajectory in several key sectors will be showcased at the convention with an aim to strengthen the country's connect with its diaspora, people familiar with the preparation for the event said.

The country will also be showcased as an attractive investment destination, they said.

This year, the PBD convention is being organised by the MEA in partnership with the Odisha government.

Prime Minister Modi will also inaugurate four exhibitions at the PBD convention, includ-

to Muscat in Oman.

The PBD convention will have five thematic plenary sessions including one on 'Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers: Stories of Migrant Skills' and another titled 'Beyond Borders: Diaspora Youth Leadership in a Globalised World'.

The third plenary will be 'Green Connections: Diaspora's Contributions to Sustainable Development'. Another will be 'Diaspora Divas: Celebrating Women's Leadership and Influence - Nari Shakti'.

The MEA said the Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas will also be held January 8.



NOBLE GESTURE: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi being welcomed on the inaugural occasion of 'Adivasi Mela 2025' at Idco Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

Govt to bring 1.42L-ha under irrigation: CM

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Jan 5: The state government has decided to construct 2,400km-long new field channels and concreteise 1,860km-long old dilapidated channels by 2028-29 in order to bring 1,42,000 hectares of cropland under irrigation, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said, Sunday.

Speaking during the concluding day of 'State-level Pani Panchayat Fortnight' celebration at Baramunda Ground here, Majhi said, "Today, Odisha can feed 140 crore people and export food grains to foreign countries, thanks to the research of scientists and hard work of farmers. For this, water supply to agricultural land is very necessary. Therefore, instructions have been given to complete all irrigation projects on a war footing basis."

The Chief Minister directed officials to conduct Pani Panchayat elections and audits of papers as per the rules of panchayats. He also suggested strengthening the panchayats

and developing them as agricultural marketing centres.

"In a bid to bring 1,42,000 hectares of cropland under irrigation, a decision has been taken to construct 2,400km-long new field channels and concreteise 1,860km-long old dilapidated channels by 2028-29," Majhi said.

"Our priority is to ensure adequate supply of water and maintain equity in the distribution of water to cropland," he said.

Stating that Pani Panchayats have a big role to play in this regard, he said currently, more than 39,000 Pani Panchayats are taking the lead in water management in the state.

The Chief Minister said more than ₹13,223 crore has been provided in this year's Budget for the development of water resources in the state.

"The process for starting Panchayat Irrigation Project in Nayagarh district, Pipalpak Project in Ganjam district, Upper Lanth Irrigation Project in Bolangir district and Samakoi Barrage Project in Angul dis-

The Chief Minister said more than ₹13,223 crore has been provided in this year's Budget for the development of water resources in the state

trict and 11,886 deep tube well projects have been expedited," Majhi said.

He further said that to bring about a paradigm shift in agriculture, the government has taken steps for extensive use of technology in the field of water management.

The Indian Institute of Water Management and Xavier University have been approached for the development of soil moisture measurement systems and skill development of Pani Panchayats, respectively.

He said both the Central and state governments are implementing many schemes for the welfare of farmers. "This year, ₹33,919 crore has been provided

in the state Agriculture Budget for the development of agriculture," the Chief Minister said.

Declaring the unseasonal rains as a disaster, the state government has decided to provide more than ₹291 crore in assistance to the affected farmers. 6.66 lakh farmers will get this assistance, he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo said, "The state government is with the farmers, and making adequate arrangements for their growth. Arrangements are also being made to provide market linkages for the farmers' production."

Development Commissioner Anu Garg said since many women are now taking the lead in Pani Panchayats and doing very good work, the focus of the government now is to include as many women as possible in Pani Panchayats.

The Chief Minister released a coffee table book 'Irrigation Partnership 3.0'. A short film on irrigation partnership was screened on the occasion.

Over 500 women to learn parliamentary procedures

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 5: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will Monday inaugurate "Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0" which seeks to give insight on Constitution and parliamentary procedures to over 500 women representatives from Panchayati Raj institutions from across the country.

Organised to commemorate 150th birth anniversary of tribal icon Birsa Munda, the programme will have workshop and sessions, a guided tour of the new Parliament House, Samvidhan Sadan, Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya and Rashtrapati Bhawan for the participants offering them a deeper understanding of India's legislative process and the functioning of democratic institutions.

The programme will bring together 502 elected women representatives from Scheduled Tribes from 22 states and UTs, ensuring a diverse and inclusive group, the Lok Sabha secretariat said Sunday.

It is aimed at empowering elected women representatives from Scheduled Tribes from Panchayati Raj institutions and to enhance their knowledge of constitutional provisions, parliamentary procedures, and governance to foster effective leadership.

Fishing communities pledge to curb bird poaching



POST NEWS NETWORK

Astaranga, Jan 5: National Bird Day was marked at the Devi river mouth in Astaranga, Puri district, with an awareness programme jointly organised by the Odisha Paryavaran Sanrakshan Abhiyan Trust, Govind Tripathy Smruti Parishad, and the All Odisha OSWAN Engineering

Association, Puri branch. The event, held in Jhadalanga village, involved local fishing communities and emphasised bird conservation. Pintu Patra, OPSSA's mangrove coordinator, educated over 20 fishing families on the region's avi-fauna diversity, urging them to report bird hunting in wetlands like Nagar, Patsundarpur, Talda, and Nuagada.

Gopal Behera of OSWAN highlighted birds' role in climate resilience and wetland preservation, advocating for community-led conservation efforts. The event concluded with an oath by fishing communities to curb bird hunting. Representatives from local blocks and trust members participated, underscoring collective efforts to protect biodiversity.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I Sk. Zahid Quadri alias Md. Jahid (27yrs), S/o - Md. Manga, At - Erein, PO - Charampa, PS - Bhadrak (R), Dist - Bhadrak, declare that I have changed my name in my Lic policy bearing no. 585388077 from Sk. Zahid Quadri to Md. Jahid. From now I shall be known as Md. Jahid for all purposes.

LOST

Before Notary Public, Digapahandi affidavit No.- A/25, 04.01.2025, I, Sailedu Soudamini Dora (37), D/o S. Bipra Dora, Vill.- Patanda, P.O.- Kusapada, P.S.- Digapahandi, Ganjam say that my original ROR, Khata No.-644/134 of Mouza under Digapahandi Tahasil is lost any where could not trace out till date, any body found may contact the above address.

UDISE+ report: Over 2K schools powerless

The latest UDISE+ report paints a grim picture of Odisha's education sector, stating that over 600 girls' schools lack toilets while only 6% have functional smart classrooms

DEBADURLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, Jan 5: Despite being a power-surplus state for the past four years, a total of 2,182 schools, including 1,672 government schools, in the state reeled under darkness in 2023-24, according to Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE+) Survey report 2023-24 released by the Ministry of Education (MoE) last week. The report, however, suggests private schools in the state fared better, with just 90 schools functioning without electricity.

The report has flagged serious concerns about the dismal state of infrastructure in schools across Odisha, pertaining to pre-primary till secondary level of education. It stated 611 girls' schools, including 308 government schools and 47 private schools, in the state were lacking toilets, marking a rise from 514 such schools in 2022-23. The situation is even worse

when it comes to male students' hygiene, as 1,159 boys' schools in the state were lacking toilets on the school premises.

Stressing further, the UDISE+ report stated that students of 23,387 (38 per cent) schools in Odisha, including 20,257 government schools, consume water from unhygienic sources as there was no access to tap water facility.

The situation of virtual (online) education in state is also not encouraging as only 24.9 per cent (15,389) schools have personal computers (PCs) and desktops. The figure is far behind from the national average of 32.4 per cent in 2023-24. Only 16.1 per cent (7,843) government schools have access to desktops and PCs in 2023-24 while in case of private schools, it stands at 67.7 per cent.

Similarly, there also persists a gap when it comes to smart classrooms, as only 17,008 schools (27.6 per cent) in the state have access to functional smart classrooms.

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5TH NATIONAL CHILIKA BIRD FESTIVAL

6 - 12 January 2025

Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

Shri Mohan Charan Majhi
Chief Minister, Odisha

Venue

Convention Centre, Lokseva Bhawan

Key Highlights

Inauguration on 6 January 2025

Guided Bird Watching Tours

Expert Talk & Workshops

Conservation Initiatives

Events

Bird Watching
Chilika & Mangalajodi
7 - 8 January 2025

Odisha Birder's Conclave
Barkul
11 January 2025

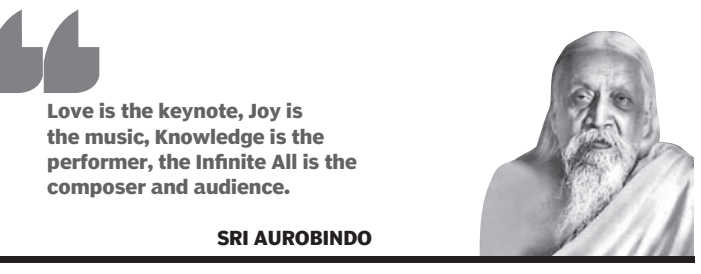
Bird Walk
Nandankanan
12 January 2025

Wildlife Documentary Screening
Regional Museum of Natural History
7 - 12 January 2025



State Wildlife Organization
Forest, Environment & Climate Change Department, Govt. of Odisha

OIPR-08006/13/0001/2425



The 'X' Factor

Elon Musk's takeover of social media platform Twitter at a cost of \$44bn in 2022 has yielded him rich political dividends. The world's richest man is today at his most powerful position having become a part of US President-elect Donald Trump's inner circle. He also is involved in running a string of companies that include Tesla, Space X, Starlink, The Boring Company, Neuralink and OpenAI.

Musk is South African born, of English and Dutch heritage. He emigrated to Canada and took Canadian citizenship before becoming a US citizen in 2002. As Trump has pointed out, 'Elon' is a natural born foreigner and so barred by the Constitution from becoming the actual US President. Therefore, for the next 4 years he will be as close to becoming the PoTUS as is possible.

Armed with the algorithms of his social media platform X on which he has over 210 million followers, Musk has now become a source of concern for progressive thinkers the world over, especially in Europe. From advocating for fresh elections in Britain to supporting Germany's Far-Right and criticising the European Commission, Musk is amplifying extremist ideologies in Europe, where numerous governments are already contending with the surge of populism and Far-Right movements. Each week, the platform appears to intensify a topic that dominates conservative discussions—and often mainstream conversations—resulting in tangible political consequences.

"(Keir) Starmer must go and he must face charges for his complicity in the worst mass crime in the history of Britain," the tech billionaire posted recently. He was alluding to the period when the British Prime Minister served as the chief state prosecutor in England and Wales, a time that overlapped with a child grooming scandal wherein predominantly Pakistan-origin men were the main culprits. He made 23 posts urging King Charles III to dissolve the British Parliament and call for fresh general election, all accompanied by memes and vitriolic remarks aimed at Starmer. Musk has also advocated support for the fringe anti-immigration party Reform UK, whose leader, Nigel Farage, he recently met. Additionally, he shared a message from former UK Prime Minister Liz Truss urging the cessation of state funding for the BBC. Musk, some allege, is spreading misinformation and disinformation targeting what he calls the "legacy media." He has even gone to the extent of calling 'X' the true media.

The Tesla CEO recently referred to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz as a "fool" following the collapse of the latter's coalition government in November. Not just that, in an opinion piece for a prominent German newspaper, Musk expressed his support for the Far-Right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party. While Scholz stated that he was not bothered about Musk's personal criticisms, he expressed concern over the US billionaire's involvement in Germany's general election by endorsing the AfD.

Of late, Musk's actions have sparked speculation that he intends to provide financial support to conservative politicians across the world, following his status as America's leading political donor, having spent \$277 million on the US Presidential elections last year. Notably, his brand of politics has always attracted individuals with a Right tilt. Unsurprisingly, he appeals mostly to white conservatives across America and Europe as the algorithms of X boost racist posts and conspiracy theories targeting various groups - people of colour, immigrants, Jews, Moslems and most recently Indian-American Hindus. Even in India, most Right-leaning users erupted in celebration the moment he took control of Twitter in a hostile takeover. This is exactly the reason why many reputed media outlets and journalist groups have quit the platform over the disinformation that it promotes. Among them are the British daily The Guardian, Sweden's Dagens Nyheter (DN), Spain's Vanguardia, American public radio NPR and the European Federation of Journalists.

WISDOM CORNER

- If you first fortify yourself with the true knowledge of the Universal Self, and then live in the midst of wealth and worldliness, surely they will in no way affect you.** - RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHANSA
- If you plan on being anything less than you are capable of being, you will probably be unhappy all the days of your life.** - ABRAHAM MASLOW
- Peace in the world starts with peace in oneself. If everyone lives mindfully, everyone will be more healthy, feel more fulfilled in their daily lives and there will be more peace.** - THICH NHAT HANH

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1838:** Samuel Morse presents the telegraph to the public. Together with Alfred Vail, the inventor relayed the message "A patient waiter is no loser" over a distance of 2 miles (3 km).
- 1907:** Maria Montessori opens her first school. Montessori's revolutionary educational approach is practiced at about 30,000 schools today.
- 1912:** German scientist Alfred Wegener presents his theory of continental drift. His work laid the foundation for the theory of plate tectonics, which explains why continents move.
- 1941:** US President Franklin D. Roosevelt outlined his Four Freedoms in his State of the Union message to Congress.

LOL

EATING THE PEANUTS
A man visits his aunt in the nursing home. It turns out that she is taking a nap, so he just sits down in a chair in her room, flips through a few magazines, and munches on some peanuts sitting in a bowl on the table. Eventually, the aunt wakes up, and her nephew realizes he's absentmindedly finished the entire bowl. "I'm so sorry, auntie, I've eaten all of your peanuts!" "That's okay, dearie," the aunt replied. "After I've sucked the chocolate off, I don't care for them anyway."

FOCUS JOBS

THE GIG SLAVERY



IRONICALLY, THE COUNTRY'S THINK TANK CELEBRATES THIS SHIFT TO A GIG ECONOMY, MARKED BY SHORT-TERM CONTRACTS AND FREELANCE WORK OVER STABLE, PERMANENT JOBS

In an economy struggling to regain momentum, a new threat looms—an exploited class of "slave" workers, lauded by NITI Aayog as gig workers. These low-paid labourers, the fastest-growing segment in India, are trapped in a precarious cycle -- raising their voice against exploitation means risking their livelihoods and pushing their families into starvation. Ironically, the country's think tank celebrates this shift to a gig economy, marked by short-term contracts and freelance work over stable, permanent jobs. For workers, it brings relentless stress, unpredictable schedules, and a lack of basic social security. While companies benefit from a cost-free, unregulated labour force, the human cost is staggering. Lessons from Bangladesh's collapse point to the perils of such an economic model, as rising anger among the jobless youth contributed to its downfall.

The term "gig" is a slang word for a job that lasts a specified period of time. Traditionally, the term was used by musicians to define a performance engagement. And who does not know the exploitation of musicians since ages the world over. NITI Aayog estimates that the gig workforce in India, contributing 1.5% of the GDP, would expand to 23.5 to 30 million workers by 2029-30, over 200% jump from 7.7 million in 2020-21. It throws open a system that is anti-worker and is ordained to thrive as it reduces liabilities of companies. The Aayog recognises that gig work is the worst form of jobs and still promotes it, knowing that it lacks paid sick leave, health and accident insurance, old age support and pension as well as support to workers in a situation of irregularity of work.



These low-paid labourers, the fastest-growing segment in India, are trapped in a precarious cycle -- raising their voice against exploitation means risking their livelihoods and pushing their families into starvation

The Aayog projects gig economy as a "free" (not exploitative) market system in which temporary positions are common and organisations hire independent workers for short-term commitments. The Aayog says it is marked by "erosion of traditional economic relationships, lack of job security, irregularity of wages and uncertain employment status for workers." Prior to it, the Aayog led the Labour Ministry to severely compromise with labour laws and replace 44 laws into four labour codes that only worsen workers' woes. E-commerce giants are the worst perpetrators leading the agony globally. As India rides this wave, the real challenge lies in striking a balance. As MNCs navigate new terrain, the future of work in India is being rewritten now - one gig or casualisation at a time by the corporate and the government remains a spectator. As per the latest available

Annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) report, the estimated unemployment rate on usual status for youth of age 15-29 years was 12.9%, 12.4%, and 10% during 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23, respectively. The total unemployed in 2016 were 44.85 million or 4.48 crore, supposedly a little less than 48.26 million or 4.82 crore in 2014. The gig economy, according to official statistics, gives an income of around Rs 15,000 a month to a worker in most cases as e-commerce biggies have cut rates for per piece of delivery. Chaos prevails in the society with rising inflation to around 6 to 9% and GDP growth falling to 5.4%. Overall employment in agriculture has fallen and marginally risen in the construction sector. On 9 July 2024, credit ratings agency India Ratings said that 63 lakh informal sector enterprises shut down in the country, resulting in a loss of 1.6 crore jobs between 2015-16 and 2022-23. The report blamed the downturn on the shocks to India's economy

due to demonetisation, the introduction of the GST and the COVID-19 pandemic. The IT sector is in a thaw and perhaps after Trump takes over there could be serious crunch for Indians as the US could shell out fewer projects. The UPA-I and II started a process of jobless growth. There is no uptick in manufacturing or purchasing power but more in IT sector are now losing jobs. Many with experience of a decade or more are becoming gig workers in their early 40s. The PLFS report showed that between 2017-18 and 2022-23, there has been a decline in the share of Indians employed in salaried jobs, and a corresponding rise in self-employment, that as per ILO now includes "unpaid helpers in household enterprises." There is no robust legislation to address concerns about unfair trade practices and data privacy. The Indian Code on Social Security, 2020 recognises gig workers as a separate category, but it has been criticised for lacking legal mandates, universal coverage, and accountability mechanisms. The US has the highest global market for gig workers, but India, Indonesia, Australia, and Brazil are rapidly growing strong. International experts feel illegal immigrants to the US fall into a trap of forced labour that gives a boom to the US economy. The agricultural industry is one of the most troubling industries, where forced labour is rampant in the US. It is assumed that gig is being deliberately promoted for cheap labour. India must move the ILO and other fora for strong global job codes for fair wages in the new employment scenario.

SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

Ban solar geoengineering



Disha Ravi & Heleen Bruggink

We have grown up in a world where climate change is apparent everywhere. We see it in our stormy skies and in the floodwaters inundating our communities. We feel it in our throats and lungs when we inhale polluted air, and on our skin as we walk down the street during heat waves. World leaders would convene every year to make decisions and deals, compromises and commitments, always falling far short of delivering what was needed to mitigate and, increasingly, to adapt to climate change. Last year's COP29 was no exception.

All this inertia has spurred some to try to find a way around the hard work of ending harmful greenhouse-gas emissions, protecting critical ecosystems, and rethinking economic growth and development. One proposed "solution," being pushed by a small but vocal minority in the Global North, is solar geoengineering, which involves modifying Earth's atmosphere to create a reflective barrier against the Sun's radiation. For today's youth and future generations, however, such interventions threaten to be as catastrophic as climate change.

Solar geoengineering can take many forms, including the release of huge amounts

of sulfur particles into the stratosphere to create a reflective barrier against sunlight (stratospheric aerosol injection) and the injection of salt spray into shallow marine clouds (marine cloud brightening). But it never addresses the root causes of the climate crisis, and it involves modifying our planet's atmosphere in ways that cannot be adequately tested at scale, with effects that will last decades or longer.

Geoengineering research has always been controversial for precisely these reasons. Countless scientists and experts have warned that the approach could cause far-reaching unintended consequences. Studies show, for example, that it could disrupt climate and weather patterns, leading to severe droughts, hurricanes, and other extreme weather. These risks are unpredictable, and their effects would be unequally distributed.

In fact, solar geoengineering would amplify existing global power imbalances, not least because decisions about its deployment would be made primarily by rich countries in the Global North - the same countries that created the climate crisis. These countries nurtured a deadly phenomenon, the burden of which is falling disproportionately on

vulnerable communities, and now they propose a highly risky strategy that, even in the best-case scenario, would not solve the problem.

None of these objections has prevented millions of dollars from being funneled - largely by tech and finance billionaires - into solar geoengineering initiatives. Proponents suggest that such initiatives are a temporary fix, a way to buy more time for mitigation and adaptation. To us, such statements sound like dangerous castles in the air - appealing but illusory.

It is far more likely that solar geoengineering would provide an excuse for the world's major emitters not to end their fossil-fuel addiction. This compounds the threat of a "termination shock": if solar-geoengineering efforts were abruptly halted, rapid warming would ensue. Future generations - including today's young people - would thus have to confront dangerous spikes in temperature and far more acute crises than those we face now.

If nothing else, we will be the ones footing the bill for the economic and societal transformation that climate change demands - a transformation that is not receiving adequate investment today. Advocates of solar geoengineering like to

frame it as a "cheap" solution, but diverting resources from initiatives that we know work - and do not risk the health of our planet - cannot possibly be considered sound financial management. Instead, it amounts to offloading the hard work of addressing the carbon debt onto our generation and those that follow us. That is why we advocate a full ban on solar geoengineering. And we are not alone. More than 2,000 civil-society organisations, including Fridays For Future, and over 540 academics have called for an International Non-Use Agreement on Solar Geoengineering. Countries on the front lines of the climate crisis, such as Vanuatu and others, have similarly opposed the use of such technologies.

The last thing young people need is to be left shouldering the responsibility of yet another crisis we did not create. But that is precisely what solar geoengineering would most likely mean. Pursuing it amounts to a profound generational betrayal.

Disha Ravi is Co-Founder of Fridays For Future India. Heleen Bruggink is Co-Founder of Mind Our Future: Critical Youth on Solar Geoengineering.

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



Protect journalists

Sir, It is sad that the new year began on a tragic note for India's media fraternity, as a young journalist Mukesh Chandrakar was found murdered, with his body seen lying in a septic tank in Bijapur. The journalist was allegedly killed for his ground reporting of the Maoist conflict in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region. It was reported that Mukesh, a seasoned journalist and the creator of the popular YouTube channel Bastar Junction, garnered millions of views for his investigative reports. The global toll of journalist fatalities reached 179 in 2024, spanning 25 countries. India reported four journalist killings last year, all from central India, a region fraught with challenges for the Press. Mukesh's untimely death has once again spotlighted the perils faced by journalists in conflict zones and the urgent need for stronger protections for media professionals in India. But every attack on the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression only adds to the strength of the Fourth estate in our country.

Virus threat

Sir, An alarming rise in the number of patients infected due to a new respiratory virus HMPV in China has once again alerted the world bringing back horrendous reminiscences of the COVID-19 pandemic which emerged in China five years ago during a winter and spread around the world taking thousands of lives. Symptoms of HMPV often mirror those of common cold and flu, including cough, high fever and breathing difficulty. However, severe cases can escalate into life-threatening conditions such as pneumonia. Patients with asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases or weakened immune systems are especially vulnerable to complications. Health officials have stated that as of now there are no specific vaccines or antiviral treatments for HMPV and focus is on prevention to curb the virus' spread. The public has been recommended to wear masks in crowded spaces, practice social distancing, and wash hands frequently as effective preventive measures. They have emphasised the importance of early detection and supportive care in managing the virus.

Protect journalists

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Virus threat

M Pradyu, KANNUR



Indian Railways Fostering New Regional Growth Hubs

for

Viksit Bharat



Inauguration of

New Jammu Railway Division of Northern Railway

&

Charlapalli New Terminal Station in the twin cities of Secunderabad and Hyderabad

and

Foundation stone laying for

Rayagada Rail Division Building in Odisha

By

Narendra Modi

Prime Minister

(Through Video Conferencing)

On January 6, 2025 | Time 11:00 AM

HIGHLIGHTS

Jammu Railway Division

- Links major cities and towns across India to the Jammu & Kashmir region, fulfilling the long-pending demand of its people.
- Acts as a game-changer by promoting trade, tourism and economic opportunities in the region.
- Seamlessly connects regions of Jammu & Kashmir viz. Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla and Leh & Ladakh to major destinations across India strengthening unity and development.

Rayagada Divisional Office Building

- Features a Divisional Control Office, eco-friendly staff residences and modern amenities, enhancing railway operations in Koraput, Rayagada and Kalahandi.
- Streamlines railway management and boosts operational efficiency across Odisha.
- Strengthens connectivity, accelerates development and fosters economic progress in tribal belt of South Odisha for Viksit Bharat.

Charlapalli New Railway Terminal in Telangana

- A world-class, eco-friendly terminal that offers top-tier facilities at Charlapalli in the Twin Cities.
- Relieves pressure on existing terminals in Secunderabad, Hyderabad and Kacheguda.
- Facilitates the operation of new trains and enhances connectivity for the people of Telangana and nearby regions.

In the august presence of

Dr Hari Babu Kambhampati
Governor, Odisha

Mohan Charan Majhi
Chief Minister, Odisha

Ashwini Vaishnav
Union Minister of Railways,
Information & Broadcasting
and Electronics & Information
Technology

V. Somanna
Union Minister of State for
Railways and Jal Shakti

Ravneet Singh
Union Minister of State
for Railways and Food
Processing Industries

Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka
Member of Parliament

Balabhadara Majhi
Member of Parliament

Anita Subhadarshini
Member of Parliament

Pradeep Panigrahi
Member of Parliament

Sukanta Panigrahi
Member of Parliament

Malvika Devi
Member of Parliament

Watch the live programme on





We need to spend a lot more money on education and strengthening government institutions
RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

GRAP 3 REVOKED IN DELHI

The Centre's panel on Delhi-NCR's air quality Sunday revoked stage 3 curbs under the Graded Response Action Plan after witnessing a dip in air pollution levels owing to favourable meteorological conditions, especially improved wind speed, according to an official order



of the day uote

The Supreme Court has said that internal reservation has to be given, but as some have said that there is no empirical data, a commission has been formed headed by (Justice) Nagmohan Das. We are committed to providing internal reservation

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

The state government has already filled 55,143 posts in various government departments in the first year of assuming power, and it is unprecedented in the country. Telangana has become a model for the nation

A REVANTH REDDY | TELANGANA CM

The Shiv Sena chief was speaking after welcoming several Shiv Sena (UBT) leaders from various parts of the state into his party. Shiv Sena is growing stronger

EKNATH SHINDE | MAHA DEPUTY CM

POST OF THE DAY

When Manmohan turned menacing. When China turned aggressive, he moved Sukhoi squadrons and BrahMos missiles closer to border, raised 2 new army divisions, and the first ever mountain strike corps. All these together sent the right message to the neighbour.

@rprasanna

SHORT TAKES

4 killed as vehicle falls into river

Jammu: Four persons were killed after a vehicle carrying six people skidded off the road and fell into a river in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir Sunday, police said. Two persons, including the driver, are missing and a rescue operation is underway, they said. The accident took place at Sanyas in the Paddar area, when the vehicle, a Camper, skidded off the road and rolled 300-foot down into river Machail, a police official said. Police launched a rescue operation and recovered the four bodies, he said.

Man found dead inside parked car

Kochi: A 65-year-old man was found dead inside a car parked in front of a hotel here, police said Sunday. The deceased, identified as Joshi V K, was a native of Aluva near Kochi. A professional cab driver, Joshi arrived at the hotel with a guest on Saturday night. His death is suspected to have occurred later that night after he returned to the vehicle, parked at the hotel, after dropping the guest. A police officer stated that Joshi likely suffered a heart attack or another physical ailment and collapsed inside the vehicle suddenly.

Married man, lover end life

Barabanki (UP): A 25-year-old married man and his purported lover hanged themselves in separate incidents in the Asandra police station area here, police said Sunday. According to the SHO of Asandra police station, GP Singh, Manish and Nidhi (22), both of whom were from the same village, had been in love for about four years and their families were aware of the relationship.

Tighter anti-spam norms: TRAI pilot soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 5: TRAI will start, this month, a pilot to onboard paper-based and past permissions given by customers for receiving commercial communications onto its digital distributed ledger technology (DLT) platform, a process that in the long-run would include scrubbing and verifying their current validity and offering opt-outs to those seen on it, Chairman Anil Kumar Lahoti said, adding that tighter regulations on curbing spam as well as new consultation examining an authorisation framework for telemarketers can also be

expected in coming weeks. Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has also ruled out any rethink on its latest regulation that mandates service providers to offer separate special tariff vouchers (STV) for voice calls and SMS. Lahoti told PTI in an interview that while consumers can be encouraged to use data, they cannot be "compelled" to do so. TRAI's focus is to protect not only the interest of the industry, but also the interest of the consumer, who must have the option to pay only for services they need, he said. The regulator is also all set to initiate a massive rehaul of its IT system,



a move, it expects, would lead to rationalisation and reduction in multiple instances of filings by telecom companies and other industry stakeholders. Deloitte which has been roped in as a consultant is on the verge of submitting its report on revamp of its IT systems. The regulator will thereafter ap-

point an agency for the revamp and the entire exercise will be prioritised and completed this year, Lahoti said. On TRAI's list of priorities for 2025 are recommendations on satellite communications spectrum -- arguably one of the most keenly watched events in a high-stakes game involving telcos like Jio, and Airtel on one side and Elon Musk's Starlink pitted on the other. Lahoti declined to comment on the specifics or timeline for release of the recommendation except to say "all comments are being examined on their merits and we will take a balanced view". TRAI's 2025 to-do list

also includes framing recommendations for network authorisation, new authorisation framework for broadcasting, and revamp of national numbering plan for fixed line, while work will continue on combating and curbing spam calls and pesky messages. TRAI is in the process of operationalising system of separate 160 series for service or transactional calls by principal entities (say banks, insurance companies or other service providers) to differentiate them from promotional calls. Currently, both types of calls are being routed under 140 series, which will henceforth be used only for promotional calls.

PATANJALI'S 30TH FOUNDATION DAY

Swami Ramdev announces five new revolutions to transform education



POST NEWS NETWORK

Haridwar, Jan 5: In the presence of Swami Ramdev Ji Maharaj, the President of Patanjali Yogpeeth, and Acharya Balkrishna, the General Secretary, the 30th foundation day of the Patanjali institution was celebrated at the Yog Bhavan Auditorium, located at Patanjali Wellness, Haridwar.

Today, the entire economy is trapped in the cruel claws of a handful of people. Our goal is prosperity for service and wealth for welfare. So far, Patanjali has done charity worth ₹1 lakh crore in education, healthcare, research, character-building, and nation-building.

In the program, with the presence of more than 6,000 officials from the Patanjali Yogpeeth organization across the country, Swami Ramdev Ji Maharaj gave an introduction to the 30 years of service, struggle, and dedication and shed light on the future plans of Patanjali Yogpeeth.

Fourth: Intellectual and cultural freedom
India, which first gave the message of spiritual world knowledge to the world, cannot afford to endure intellectual and cultural slavery. Today, India depends on impoverished countries for everything, which have nothing but paper money, dollars, or pounds.

First: Freedom in education
He said that today, 50 to 90, and in some places, 99 percent educated individuals are unemployed, addicted, characterless, and dull children, whose childhood, youth, and our lineage are in danger. We have decided that first in India and then in the entire world, a new education system will be introduced, and its leadership will be done by India.

Fifth: Freedom from addictions, diseases, and indulgences
A dangerous game of addiction is spreading worldwide. In India, addiction has destroyed lives through diseases, intoxication, and obscenity.

Second: Freedom in healthcare
"Disease is not our nature; Yoga is our nature." Today, around the world, due to the consumption of synthetic medicines, steroids, and painkillers, people's bodies are deteriorating. For healthcare freedom, through Patanjali Wellness, Yoggram, Niramayam, hospitals, and health centers, and modern research, we are advancing the legacy of sages and science.

Remarks by Acharya Balkrishna Ji Maharaj
Acharya Balkrishna remarked that with Swami Ji's unrelenting and extraordinary efforts, Patanjali's contribution is inspiring the world. Patanjali runs campaigns for charity using profits from its business. Patanjali is not a market but a family for India. With a team of over 500 world-class scientists, Patanjali is making evidence-based Ayurvedic medicines like juices, herbs, and tablets accessible worldwide. By integrating India's ancient knowledge with modern science, Patanjali has brought Yoga from caves to the masses, reaching millions in over 200 countries.

Third: Economic freedom

MAHA KUMBH

Cleric fears mass conversions of Muslims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Jan 5: Ahead of the Maha Kumbh, a senior cleric has written to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressing fears that mass conversions of Muslims will take place during the event, while other community leaders have flagged the alleged demand raised by some Hindu seers' body to keep Muslims out of the mega gathering. Last year, the Akhil Bharatiya Akhada Parishad (ABAP) had allegedly given a call to procure goods for the Maha Kumbh exclusively from Hindu

shopkeepers to ensure that purchases were made solely from the true followers of Sanatan Dharma. Held every 12 years, the Maha Kumbh will be organised in Prayagraj from January 13 to February 26.



All India Muslim Jamaat president Maulana Shahabuddin Razvi Barelvi, who was in the spotlight recently for advising Muslims not to visit the Maha Kumbh, urged Adityanath Friday to "thwart plans" to convert hundreds of Muslims during the event. Speaking to PTI, Barelvi claimed he received information from reliable sources about plans to

convert Muslims during the Kumbh, and as a concerned citizen, he informed the chief Minister about his apprehension.

BJP won't stop Delhi govt's welfare schemes, says Modi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday made a strong appeal to people to bring the BJP to power in Delhi, as he attacked the Arvind Kejriwal-led party with "AAP-da" and "Sheesh Mahal" jibes and assured Delhiites that no welfare scheme would be discontinued if the saffron party forms the government.

The "AAP-da" government does not have any vision to develop the national capital, and that is what lotus (the BJP's poll symbol) is going to bloom in the city and the BJP would usher in change, the Prime Minister said

Speaking at the BJP's first public rally in Rohini before the upcoming polls, Modi said every season in the city has turned into a period of "emergency," with drinking water shortages in the summer, waterlogging during the monsoon and pollution during the winter. The BJP has been out of power in Delhi since 1998. It has been making all out efforts to dethrone the AAP which has ruled the city since 2015. Assembly elections in Delhi are likely next month.



"Only when this 'AAP-da (disaster)' is gotten rid of in Delhi, the double-engine of development can come in," Modi said, hitting out at the AAP. He said the AAP government was a "disaster" that had struck

Delhi, and any more responsibility given to the "AAP-da" means punishment for the people of Delhi. The "AAP-da" government does not have any vision to develop the national capital, and that is what lotus (the BJP's poll symbol) is going to bloom in the city and the BJP would usher in change, the prime minister said.

"We want to make Delhi such a world capital that reflects the vastness of India's heritage. It should be the centre of new global systems. This can happen only when the BJP govern-

ment works both at the Centre and state (Delhi)," he told the 'Parivartan Rally'. Modi also accused the AAP government of spreading fear that a BJP government in Delhi would discontinue several welfare schemes launched by the AAP. The AAP government is currently providing free electricity, water, bus rides for women and pilgrimage for the elderly. The AAP also says its government work in the health and education sectors are an example for others to follow.

Bidhuri's remark on Priyanka sparks row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jan 5: BJP candidate from Kalkaji Ramesh Bidhuri Sunday drew flak for his remarks that he would make roads which are like Congress leader "Priyanka Gandhi's cheeks" in his constituency, with the Congress demanding an apology from him for "insulting women" and some leaders in his party also expressing their disapproval. Bidhuri, who has courted controversies in the past too over his statements, initially remained defiant, pointing to similar remarks by RJD leader Lalu Prasad on actor and BJP MP Hema Malini. However, he later posted a message on X expressing regret if his comments had hurt anyone and stated that his remarks



had been misconstrued by some for political gains. "Lalu said in Bihar that he would make roads like Hema Malini's cheeks, but he lied, he could not do it."

"I assure you that just as we made the roads in Okhla and Sangam Vihar, we will make all the roads in Kalkaji like Priyanka Gandhi's cheeks," Bidhuri is heard saying in the purported video, which went viral on social media. The Congress condemned the remarks, alleging it reflected the "anti-women" mentality of the BJP. "Ramesh Bidhuri's statement regarding Priyanka Gandhi is not only extremely shameful but shows their ugly anti-women thinking. But what else can be expected from a man who used foul language against his fellow MP in the House and did not receive any punishment?"

"Not only Bidhuri, but the BJP's top leadership should apologise with folded hands," Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete said, adding it was not only an insult to Priyanka Gandhi but to all women. Asked about the Congress' demand for an apology, Bidhuri sought to defend himself by saying, "If this is a mistake, then the one who committed it first should apologise. Isn't Hema Malini a woman?"

4 Naxalites, cop killed in encounter in Ch'garh



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dantewada (Chhattisgarh), Jan 5: Four Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region, a senior police official said Sunday.

A head constable of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) was also killed in the face-off, he said. The gunfight broke out Saturday evening at a forest in south Abujhmad along the border of Narayanpur and Dantewada districts when a joint team of the DRG and Special Task Force (STF) was out on an anti-Naxalite operation, the official said.

After the exchange of fire stopped late Saturday night, bodies of four Naxalites and automatic weapons, including AK-47 rifle and self loading rifle (SLR), were recovered from the spot, he said. DRG head constable Sannu Karam was also killed in the gunfight, the official said, adding that search operation was still underway in the area. The anti-Naxalite operation, comprising the DRG teams from Narayanpur, Dantewada, Kondagaon and Bastar districts, was launched Friday. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai Sunday said the fight will continue to end the Naxal menace.

"So far, there is news of four Naxalites being killed in an encounter between security forces and Naxalites in the south Abujhmad region bordering Narayanpur and Dantewada districts," Sai said in a post on X. The chief minister expressed grief over the policeman's death in the gunfight. "DRG head constable Sannu Karam was also martyred in the encounter. His sacrifice will not go in vain. Security forces have been fighting very strongly against Naxalism and the fight will continue till the menace is eliminated," he said. A Naxalite was killed January 3 in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Gariband district, which falls in Raipur division.

pocrisy, he said, "Hema Malini was from a simple family, is she not a woman? The one who is from a known family is a woman, how is it possible?" "Hema Malini is from the South, does that mean that she is not a woman. Every body should get respect. ... they should have made him (Lalu Prasad) apologise, they did not ask for it because she was from a simple family. It is their hypocrisy," Bidhuri told reporters. Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva stressed that such statements should be avoided and said all should follow proper conduct regarding language and respect for women, while reminding the Congress of the objectionable statements by its leaders and allies in the past.

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Accusing the Congress of hypocrisy, he said, "Hema Malini was from a simple family, is she not a woman? The one who is from a known family is a woman, how is it possible?" "Hema Malini is from the South, does that mean that she is not a woman. Every body should get respect. ... they should have made him (Lalu Prasad) apologise, they did not ask for it because she was from a simple family. It is their hypocrisy," Bidhuri told reporters. Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva stressed that such statements should be avoided and said all should follow proper conduct regarding language and respect for women, while reminding the Congress of the objectionable statements by its leaders and allies in the past.

is known all over the world as a secular country. So, talking about banning Muslims from Maha Kumbh is like crushing the soul of the Constitution."

Maulana Yasooob Abbas, general secretary of the All India Shia Personal Law Board, said, "If a Muslim goes to Maha Kumbh to increase his knowledge, what's the harm in it? Islam is not so weak that a person of the faith will be in danger just by attending a fair or by visiting a place of worship." On Barelvi's apprehension of conversions, Abbas said, "If the foundation of someone's faith is strong, no one can convert him."



Dozens of partner countries will participate in the meeting of the Ramstein group at Ramstein Air Base in Germany Thursday, including those who can help boost our capabilities not only to defend against missiles but also against guided bombs and Russian aviation
 VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

SNOW BLANKETS US

A blast of snow, ice, wind and plunging temperatures stirred up dangerous travel conditions in parts of the central US Sunday, as a disruptive winter storm brought the possibility of the "heaviest snowfall in a decade" to some areas



international

of the day uote

A major focus of the Trump II foreign policy will likely be on the China challenge, whether in the form of economic and military competition, the technology race, or countering China's strategy to dominate the Indo-Pacific

What we've had to look at each and every time is not only should we give this to the Ukrainians but do they know how to use it? Can they maintain it?

The upcoming trip to the U.S. will focus on ensuring a stable business environment for South Korean firms in the United States and seeking to enhance cooperation with the new U.S. government in areas that include industry, trade and energy

Yoon arrest delayed as deadline looms

The dispute over the warrant came against the backdrop of demonstrations by thousands of protesters near Yoon's official residence amid heavy snow in the capital, Seoul, with some rallies demanding his arrest, and others opposing it

REUTERS

Seoul, Jan 5: The chief of security for South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said Sunday he could not cooperate with efforts to arrest the impeached leader, in remarks that could push the political crisis towards another high-stakes confrontation.

With a warrant for Yoon's arrest on grounds of insurrection set to expire at midnight (1500 GMT) Monday, the official, Park Chong-jun, cited the legal debate surrounding the warrant as the reason for the lack of cooperation.

"Please refrain from insulting remarks that the presidential security service has been reduced to a private army," he said in a statement, adding that it had provided security to all presidents for 60 years, regardless of political affiliation.

The comments came after a Seoul court rejected a complaint from Yoon's lawyers that the arrest warrant was illegal and invalid, the Yonhap news agency said. Telephone calls to the court to seek comment went unanswered.

"Judging the legitimacy of any legal interpretation and execution is difficult," Seok Dong-hyeon, a lawyer advising Yoon, said on Facebook.

"If there is an error in the legality of law enforcement against the incumbent president, it will be a big problem." Yoon became the first incumbent



South Korean president to face arrest for his botched attempt to declare martial law Dec 3, which triggered political chaos in Asia's fourth-largest economy and a key US ally.

The conservative president was impeached by parliament and is suspended from official duties while the Constitutional Court decides whether to reinstate or remove him.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was set to arrive in Seoul Sunday for talks with senior officials.

In Sunday's statement, Park dismissed as "preposterous" an accusation by the main Opposition Democratic Party that

he had ordered presidential security officers to use live ammunition if they got "caught short" in Friday's standoff.

Yoon's lawyers have said the warrant was unconstitutional because the anti-graft force leading his criminal investigation has no authority under South Korean law to investigate any case involving insurrection accusations.

In a statement Sunday, the lawyers threatened to report to prosecutors Oh Dong-woon, the chief of the Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials (CIO) and the investigators for what they called an illegal effort to execute the warrant, in the absence of authority to do so. The CIO did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Yoon's lawyers say arrest warrant is unconstitutional
WARRANT EXPIRES AT 1500 GMT MONDAY
COURT REJECTS YOON LAWYERS' COMPLAINT
US'S BLINKEN SET TO ARRIVE IN SEOUL FOR TALKS

SHORT TAKES

Trump appears with Italian PM Meloni

Palm Beach: President-elect Donald Trump made an appearance Saturday with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who was visiting his Mar-a-Lago club. Meloni follows Argentina President Javier Milei, who became the first world leader to meet with Trump at Mar-a-Lago after his Election Day victory in November. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary also travelled to Florida to meet with the president-elect. Trump appeared at a screening of a documentary detailing challenges some conservative lawyers report facing in the legal system. He entered the grand ballroom around 7 pm and then returned around two hours later after having dinner.

\$20 bn lending package for Pak

Islamabad: The World Bank is set to approve a \$20 billion indicative lending package for Pakistan – a pioneering 10-year initiative to protect its funded projects from political transitions and focus on six targeted areas, according to a media report. The programme, titled "Pakistan Country Partnership Framework 2025-35", aims to improve social indicators in the most neglected but important areas, the Express Tribune newspaper reported, citing official documents. It will focus on reducing child stunting, combating learning poverty, enhancing climate resilience, decarbonising the environment, expanding fiscal space, and boosting private investment to improve productivity.

Syrian foreign minister to meet Qatar's PM

Doha: Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shibani, appointed by the country's new rulers, arrived in Doha Sunday to meet Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, a Qatari official told Reuters. Syrian official news agency SANA confirmed the arrival of the Syrian delegation, which includes the country's Defence Minister Murhaf Abu Qasra and head of intelligence Anas Khattab. The Syrian delegation was set to meet Sheikh Mohammed, who also serves as Qatar's foreign minister, and other senior Qatari officials including Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mohammed Al-Khulaifi, the official said. The Syrian minister's visit to Qatar is his second foreign trip less than a month since former President Bashar al-Assad was ousted by rebels Dec 8.

SNIPPETS

Austrian People's Party nominates Christian Stocker as interim leader



VIENNA: Austrian People's Party has nominated its General Secretary Christian Stocker as interim leader after the expected resignation of Chancellor Karl Nehammer, Austrian news agency APA reported. Stocker, a lawyer and member of the Austrian Parliament, has served as general secretary of the People's Party since 2022. He is seen as an experienced and calm crisis communicator who has frequently appeared in Austrian media to defend controversial decisions. Nehammer announced Saturday he would resign in the next few days after coalition talks with the Social Democrats collapsed. Nehammer is expected to meet with Austria's President Alexander Van der Bellen Sunday. The president will then make a public statement to announce the next steps. Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer said Saturday he will resign in the coming days after talks on forming a new government failed a second time. The announcement came after the People's Party and the Social Democrats Saturday continued coalition talks a day after the liberal Neos party's surprise withdrawal from discussions.

Bangladesh cancels planned training of judges in India

DHAKA: Bangladesh's interim government Sunday cancelled a planned training programme for 50 judges and judicial officers in India, scrapping a previous notification. "The notification has been cancelled," a law ministry spokesman said without elaborating. The Daily Star newspaper, however, reported the cancellation came in compliance with a directive from Bangladesh's Supreme Court. The cancellation order came a day after the state-run Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha reported that 50 lower judiciary judges would undergo a one-day training programme from February 10 at the National Judicial Academy and the State Judicial Academy in Madhya Pradesh. The trainee judges selected under the programme were district and sessions judge or its equivalent officers, additional district and sessions judge, joint district judge, senior assistant judge and assistant judge. The Indian government was supposed to bear all the expenses for the training programmes.



A statue depicting the late Syrian President Hafez Assad is seen destroyed on the top of a mount in Dayr Atiyah, Syria, Sunday

Singapore concerned over increasing 'sham marriages' with foreign women

'Sham marriages' in Singapore often involve a foreign woman paying a Singaporean man money for a union to be arranged, so she can get a permit to stay or work here

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Singapore, Jan 5: Singapore authorities are concerned over the increase in "sham marriages or marriages of convenience" between Singaporean men and foreign women, which most of the time involves a syndicate and could lead to social problems.

The Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) has highlighted the concern and reported that "sham marriages" have increased to 32 cases between January and Septem-

ber last year compared to just four cases during the same period in 2023.

A media report cited ICA as saying that arrests of people involved in "sham marriages" followed vigorous investigations into a suspected syndicate arranging such arrangements between Singaporean men getting paid for marrying foreign women.

"Sham marriages" in Singapore often involve a foreign woman paying a Singaporean man money for a union to be arranged, so she can get a permit to stay or work here, reported The Straits Times Sunday.

A marriage of convenience is when two people tie the knot for the sole intention of acquiring an immigration advantage.

Inspector Mark Chai, deputy officer-in-charge of ICA's intelligence division, said the increase in such cases was concerning as it could lead to a social problem in multi-ethnic



Singapore, where these foreigners could get involved in illicit activities. He attributed the increase to more foreigners wanting to extend their visit passes to continue staying and working here.

"The idea of such marriages is often spread through word of mouth. And to some Singaporean men, it can be seen as easy money," the broadsheet had

Insp Chai as saying. "But it is illegal, and the ICA is stepping up enforcement efforts to bust such arrangements," he warned.

Those convicted for their involvement in a marriage of convenience can be jailed for up to 10 years, fined up to SGD10,000, or both.

Superintendent Goh Wee Ki, a senior assistant director at

180mn denied voting rights: B'desh CEC



Bangladesh's interim Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus hinted that the national election could take place between late 2025 and mid-2026

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Jan 5: Bangladesh's Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) AMM Nasir Uddin Sunday said that almost 180 million people have been denied their voting rights and the Election Commission wants to end their deprivation. The Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported.

The CEC, while addressing the inaugural ceremony of a training programme for election officers ahead of a voter list updating exercise, said the Election Commission (EC) wants to remove the fact that the people have been deprived of the voting right for so long.

"We want to remove the pain of their deprivation. We are steadfast in our commitment," he said. The countrywide door-to-door data collection for updating the list of possible voters will start January 20.

The CEC said they are here to hear the 180 million people who have been suffering from

the deprivation of voting rights. "We've taken the responsibility so that we can remove their deprivation," he said.

He said the commission's main goal is to arrange a fair and credible election. "It's a marathon race beginning from today up to the delivery of the result," he said.

"Our goal, commitment and promises to the nation is to present a free, fair and credible election as the nation has been deprived of it for so long," the CEC said.

Meanwhile, the EC has decided to investigate irregularities and shortcomings in all previous elections, including the three preceding elections that have been controversial during the Awami League-rule in 2014, 2018 and 2024.

The 2014, 2018 and 2024 national elections are widely regarded as some of the most controversial in the country's history. The newly formed EC, which assumed office November 21, has already initiated several reform measures while preparing for the 13th National Election.

A few days ago, CEC Nasir Uddin said that ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League may participate in elections unless the government or the judiciary issues a ban against the party.

A marriage of convenience is when two people tie the knot for the sole intention of acquiring an immigration advantage

ICA's intelligence division, added that most marriage of convenience cases were flagged to the ICA by tip-offs from the public.

He said, "The couple can try to hide the fact that their union is a marriage of convenience, but there are telltale signs that our officers are able to spot."

He cited one case of a Singaporean mother not being

aware of her son's marriage, which is usually not the case for such a milestone event in someone's life.

A case was also cited of sham marriage where the "wife" lived away from the house of her "husband". He was arrested for making a false declaration, saying his "wife" lived with him but her clothes were elsewhere.

Goh encouraged the public to report any suspected cases of marriage of convenience here, noting that all information provided will be treated with the strictest confidence.

In June 2024, 13 people – six Vietnamese women and seven Singaporean men – were charged over their alleged links to marriages of convenience.

ICA REPORTS A RISE, WITH 32 CASES BETWEEN JANUARY AND SEPTEMBER 2024, UP FROM JUST 4 CASES IN THE SAME PERIOD IN 2023

THOSE CONVICTED FOR THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE CAN BE JAILED FOR UP TO 10 YEARS, FINED UP TO SGD 10,000, OR BOTH

