



**Kareena's insight**

Actor Kareena Kapoor Khan shares her parenting philosophy, emphasising kindness over intelligence

LEISURE | **P2**



**China jets target Japan**

Japan says Chinese fighter jets have aimed their radar at its military aircraft in 2 'dangerous' incidents near Okinawa islands

INTERNATIONAL | **P10**



**Selling spree**

Foreign investors have pulled out ₹11,820 crore (\$1.3 billion) from Indian equities in the first week of December

BUSINESS | **P11**



**Heartbreak for Mandhana**

India batter Smriti Mandhana announces that her wedding has been called off, urging fans and media to stop speculations

SPORTS | **P12**

# Burn victim to be airlifted: Min

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, Dec 7:** Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling Sunday visited the 17-year-old burn victim admitted to the Burn Centre of Rourkela Ispat General Hospital (IGH) and said she would be airlifted to AIIMS Bhubaneswar or AIIMS New Delhi once her condition becomes stable.

Mahaling met the girl's mother and family members at IGH and held discussions with the medical team treating her. Doctors informed him that the survivor has suffered about 92% burns. A team led by Dr Ruby Singh is monitoring her treatment, while another team is consulting with specialists at AIIMS Bhubaneswar.

Police said the Plus III second-year student of Saraswati Women's College in Rajgangpur allegedly attempted suicide by setting herself on fire after being harassed by a youth. She was rushed to the IGH in a critical condition.

Mahaling said all medical protocols are being followed. He added that the accused youth has been arrested and produced in court. The minister said he had reviewed the case with the Sundargarh SP and stressed the need for preventive measures to avoid such incidents.



**FOR A CAUSE:** A vintage car rally over drug abuse and drug peddling in progress at Vidhana Soudha in Bangalore, Sunday. Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara and other dignitaries attended the event

# FIRE SAFETY THROWN TO THE WIND

## Nightclub blaze claims 25 in Goa

PNN & AGENCIES

**Panaji, Dec 7:** A fire that tore through an unauthorised nightclub in North Goa, killing 25 people including five tourists, has exposed the reckless and heavy-handed approach of the local administration. The club in Goa, Birch by Romeo Lane, which has presence in several other major cities in India like Delhi, Gurgaon, Meerut, Lucknow and also Bhubaneswar, was operating in blatant violation of fire safety norms. It continued to run even after receiving a demolition notice. Although the nightclub sat along the Arpora River backwaters, fire engines could not reach the site because of narrow access roads.

Fireworks emerged as the likely cause of the blaze at the nightclub at Arpora, officials said, adding that the facility allegedly did not possess even a fire department NOC. At least six people were injured in the incident. Five of them are undergoing treatment at hospitals. The deceased included 20 employees of the nightclub and five tourists, including four from Delhi.

Prima facie, the nightclub had not adhered to fire safety norms, Goa CM Pramod Sawant said.

Most of the deaths were caused by suffocation, as the victims got trapped on the ground floor and in the kitchen, said a fire brigade official.

Narrow lanes blocked access of fire brigade vehicles, and the water tankers had to be parked about 400 metres away from the spot. This made controlling the blaze a challenging task, a senior officer from the Fire and Emergency Services said.

Small doors coupled with the narrow bridge leading to it made it difficult for the people to escape, fire officials said.

The club's CGM Rajiv Modak, GM Vivek Singh, bar manager Rajiv Singhania, and gate manager Riyanshu Thakur were arrested, Sawant said.

# IRREGULAR by MANJUL



My experience says a pilot must get proper rest. He should never work 18 hours a day

# CM lays stone for Tarini shrine facelift

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 7:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday laid the foundation stone for a peripheral development project worth ₹312 crore at Maa Tarini Temple complex, Ghatagaon in Keonjhar district.

Laying the foundation stone, the CM said, "Maa's blessings have been received, and we've been given an opportunity to serve the Goddess." He noted that the project was a dream conceptualised 18 months ago and has finally taken shape.

The plan covers nearly 60 acres and aims to elevate the shrine to a world-class religious and tourism destination within a challenging one-year deadline. The mega revamp includes a 216-bed Yatri Niwas, Pilgrimage Centre, Interpretation Centre, Food Plaza, Watch Tower, Market Complex, Coconut Godown, and a vast Prasad Sevan Hall capable of serving 500 devotees at a time. The project also features enhanced approach roads, new parking zones, beautification of four temple ponds, shoe stands, changing rooms, toilet blocks, and facilities for drivers.

In a significant decision, the CM instructed officials to include accommodation for the temple's Dehuri priests, directing the Works department and District Collector to prepare a DPR, assuring that no financial constraint would come in the way of completing this sacred mission.

Majhi also announced infrastructure projects worth more than ₹3,700 crore for his home district.

The projects include a four-lane ring road in Barbil at a cost of ₹2,300 crore and a bypass road in Keonjhar town worth around ₹428 crore. Similarly, a four-lane road will be built in the district headquarters hospital.



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KIIT Deemed to be University  
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**KIIT shines at KHELO INDIA UNIVERSITY GAMES (KIUG) 2025**

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7th

among 222 Universities

3

Meet Records



**KIIT MEN'S TENNIS TEAM WINS GOLD**



**KIIT MEN'S RUGBY TEAM WINS GOLD**



**KIIT WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM WINS GOLD**



**KIIT WOMEN'S RUGBY TEAM WINS GOLD**



**KIIT 4X100M RELAY MEN'S TEAM WINS GOLD**



**MAGANTI KEERTHI WINS GOLD IN WOMEN'S WEIGHTLIFTING (86KG)**



**SAMARDEEP SINGH GILL WINS GOLD IN MEN'S SHOT PUT**



**KIIT WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL TEAM WINS SILVER**



**KIIT WOMEN'S SWIMMING TEAM WINS 10 MEDALS & 1ST RUNNERS UP**



**ISHA NEHI WINS GOLD IN WOMEN'S HEPTATHLON**



**KHOIROM REJIYA DEVI WINS GOLD IN WOMEN'S CYCLING INDIVIDUAL PURSUIT**



**RITHVIKA MITTAPALLI WINS GOLD IN WOMEN'S 50M BREASTSTROKE**

21 MEDALS

10 GOLD MEDALS

3 SILVER MEDALS

8 BRONZE MEDALS

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KIIT (Deemed to be University) has only one permanent campus in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. It has no other campus / off campus anywhere else in the country and globe.



# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today you will have to give in to your spouse's demands for improving the environment at home. In your own interest it will be advisable, says Ganesha, to hasten the measures needed to be taken and stay focussed on them as you are the one who is guilty of neglect.

**TAURUS**  
Ganesha sees you taking a day off from your work and immersing your self in domestic activities. A lot of time will be spent blissfully with your family folk chatting away or doing this and that. The idea of getting your interiors redone and give your house a new look will surely occur to you.

**GEMINI**  
You will be faced with a slew of demands from various people today, and you will find it difficult to meet all of them. However, you will be able to meet the requirements that need to be met to salvage the day. People will praise your intelligence and creativity, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
You will tackle with ease, even the most confounding challenges. You may be the scapegoat, fears Ganesha, as it shakes you and lowers your self-confidence. But shake off your weaknesses and obtain Lots of energy.

**LEO**  
You are advised to be more attentive to your work today. You will try to do the best work possible by putting in your maximum efforts. However, the results might turn out to be lower than your expectations. You need to be wary of excessive expenses or financial loss today. You need to escape losses today by keeping your wits above you, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
Ganesha foretells that your writing abilities will help you give vent to your emotions without hurting others. You will finish all your incomplete tasks successfully. Ganesha says that you will experience success in everything that you choose to do today.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says today is a good day to renovate your home. You will be able to decorate your home artistically because of your designing skills. The atmosphere at your home will be a happy one with the arrival of guests. You will make plans to go for a picnic with close friends or relatives.

**SCORPIO**  
It's time to influence people and win their hearts whether it's your crush, love or your boss. You may be eager to express your feelings for them. At work, you are likely to work actively and kick start the projects in the pipeline. Ganesha, advises your to keep your eyes and ears open.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Tough times do not last, but tough people do, remember this fact and move ahead in life. Try to make the complicated life simpler by your optimistic approach. Speak up when it is required and don't get bogged down by unnecessary pressure.

**CAPRICORN**  
The hassle and bustle around you will not disturb you today. You've been holding your emotions in your heart and they have started suffocating you. Such an uncomfortable situation may hamper your logical reasoning power and make you feel trapped. But, this too shall pass. You will easily come out of the negative zone and move ahead on the path, foretells Ganesha.

**AQUARIUS**  
You will go through some heavy mood swings today. And the people who know you well will get shocked and find it difficult to deal with you. Keep your guards on, and don't take uncalled-for decisions, advises Ganesha, rather get your current assignments cross the finishing line.

**PISCES**  
There is a thick chance that your day will be profitable on the monetary front. Money may pour in from business or even through overseas investments. Your knack for good public relations and networking will work to your benefit and good deals will come from far and unexpected sources as well.

## PERRY, TRUDEAU MAKE ROMANCE INSTA OFFICIAL

Pop star Katy Perry and former Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau have finally confirmed their long-rumoured relationship after appearing together on Instagram for the first time. The 41-year-old singer shared a set of photos from her recent Tokyo visit, and Trudeau featured prominently in the post, turning ongoing speculation into a moment that fans quickly labelled a "hard launch"

## SWEENEY'S ADVICE FOR UPCOMING ACTORS

Sydney Sweeney, known for her role in *Euphoria*, began honing her acting skills at the tender age of 12. She advocates for aspiring actors to follow their heart and pursue their dreams, reminding them to cherish every moment of their artistic journey



# Bebo shares parenting philosophy

**Mumbai:** Actress Kareena Kapoor, who is also a doting mother to her two boys - Taimur and Jeh, used social media to provide the netizens a glimpse into her parenting philosophy.

Kareena not just wants her kids to be the smartest in the room, but she also wants them to be the kindest.

Bebo wished for her boys to be able to love those who seem a little different, because she feels that, at the end, every professional achievement in life fades, but it is only one's character that stands the test of time.

Kareena took to the Stories section of her Instagram handle and re-shared a post that read, "I don't just want my kids to be smart. I want them to be kind. To love people who are different. To use their voices even when they shake. To live with faith even when the world makes fun of it. Because grades fade, jobs change, trophies collect dust - but character? That's forever (sic)."

Sharing the post on social media, Kareena wrote, "Happy Sunday Dosts", along with a red heart, rainbow and star emoji.

Work-wise, Kareena is currently occupied with Meghna Gulzar's forthcoming crime drama, *Daayra*. Backed by Junglee Pictures and Pen Studios, the much-awaited flick will also see Prithviraj Suku-in-a-crucial role.

IANS



## Aamir bats for diversity in film consumption

**New Delhi:** Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan said he doesn't have any biases against streaming platforms, and would rather be happy as long as audiences relish movies, be it in theatres, on OTT, or on YouTube.

Aamir spoke about it at a Summit, which took place in Delhi. His comments come after his last film *Sitaare Zameen Par*, which garnered positive response, skipped an OTT release after completing its theatrical run.

It was later released on YouTube via a pay-per-view (PPV) model for Rs 100.

Explaining his decision, Aamir said he wanted to introduce a new model for the films. "I was doing it alone; I was not doing it as an industry move. It would be nice if the industry collectively tried to create a window for the pay-per-view. It will be helpful to the industry," he said.

When asked about British star Hugh Grant's critique of streaming platforms detracting from the communal joy of cinema, Aamir said he isn't "agnostic" about the existence of the OTT medium.

"I'm not as judgemental. I feel all platforms are good. I've enjoyed watching films and shows on OTT as an audience. As an industry, we should reach a position where we are mature enough that we allow the consumer to decide where he wants to consume and how, that's the ideal thing. Any industry cannot survive on rules and regulations,"

PTI



# Krithi's spooky encounter

**Chennai:** Actress Krithi Shetty, who plays a Gypsy spirit reader in director Nalan Kumarasamy's upcoming Tamil film *Vaa Vaathiyaar*, featuring actor Karthi in the lead, has now disclosed that she really came across a spirit a day before she began shooting for the film!

Talking exclusively to this news agency, Krithi discloses, "I play a Gypsy spirit reader

in Nalan sir's film."

When asked if she believes in spirits and if whether she has had supernatural experiences, she says, "I definitely believe in spirits. Because I am Tulu. We pray to our ancestors and we believe that they are always around us, protecting us like our guardian angels."

She goes on to add, "Something happened to me which made me believe in spirits even more. I witnessed a spirit in my hotel room. Just the night before my first

day of shoot, it was very, very strange. I am not sure if that spirit came to help me or it came because I did something while learning or while I was in the process of becoming the character."

"I didn't see the face of the spirit. But I saw the body, I saw the figure. And when we turned the light on, there was a loud sound and my mother and I looked at each other knowing that this was something supernatural," she recollects.

IANS



**Mumbai:** Actor Sara Ali Khan is looking back fondly at her debut film *Kedarnath* as it completes 7 years since its release December 7. Marking the occasion, she shared a series of nostalgic photos on Instagram along with a heartfelt note thanking her co-star, the late Sushant Singh Rajput, and the film's team.

"7 years to *Kedarnath*. If only I could go back to 2017... not to change a single moment but to relive, cherish and truly appreciate every nanosecond of that magical time," she wrote. Sara added that she misses the experience every day but remains deeply grateful for everything it taught her.

In her trib-



ute, she thanked Sushant for introducing her to black coffee, trekking, pahadi food, and even inspiring her fascination with the moon. She credited him for instilling curiosity and a constant desire to learn. She also expressed gratitude to director Abhishek Kapoor, writer Kanika Dhillon, and her longtime friend Jehan Handa, calling the film an integral and sacred part of her life.

Released in 2018, *Kedarnath* featured Sushant as a 'pithu' at the holy shrine and retold the tragic 2013 Uttarakhand floods. The romance-drama was both critically appreciated and a box-office success.

Sara was last seen in Anurag Basu's *Metro... In Dino*, now streaming on Netflix.

AGENCIES

## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

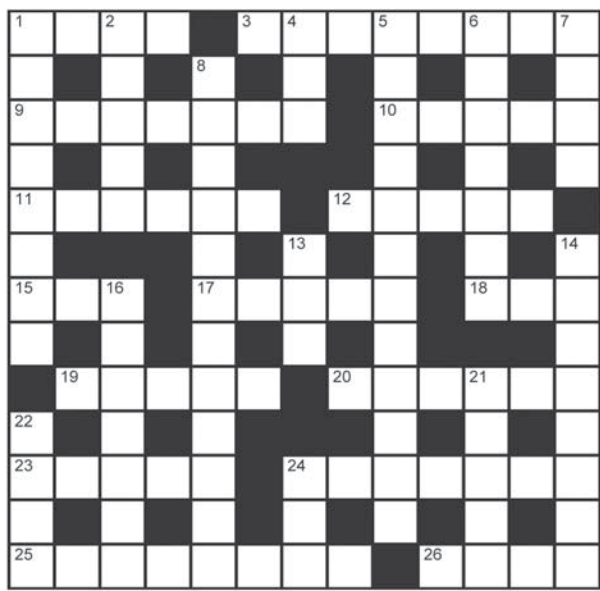


## BREVITY



## FUN post

## CROSSWORD



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### Across

- Table extender
- Where to find castles and horses (5,3)
- Protective wall
- Wherewithal
- Garish, cheap and shoddy
- Poker term (3,2)
- Engine part
- Great divide
- Sun follower?

### Down

- Purse item
- Cupid's projectile
- Hammond instrument
- Jailbird
- Port-au-Prince's land
- Multi-coloured pony
- Medical eruption
- Macho-man

- Radioactive
- Lacking grey matter (6-6)
- Amphitheatre
- Ivory source
- Expressing gratitude
- Shrew
- Bride-to-be
- Gin or vodka cocktail
- Anticipate
- Clarified butter
- Taro dish

## 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.

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

## SOLUTIONS

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | L | C | S | G | P |
| G | E | N | E | V | A |
| N | G | S | A | T | E |
| G | U | R | P | E | R |
| M | I | M | A | A | A |
| V | E | T | E | R | A |
| M | N | C | B | A | L |
| O | P | I | N | E | S |
| E | I | C | S | E |   |
| G | R | U | M | B | L |
| O | B | O | A | O | A |
| F | R | O | L | I | C |
| S | E | K | A | Y | H |

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW







INDIA VS SOUTH AFRICA TUESDAY

CP issues traffic advisory ahead of Barabati clash



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 7:** The Commissionerate Police (CP) Sunday, issued traffic advisory ahead of India vs South Africa match December 9 and practice session December 8, scheduled at Barabati Stadium in Cuttack. Ahead of the T20 match and practice sessions, Cuttack will witness heavy traffic on all major routes leading to the venue. Police have urged commuters to plan their travel and follow traffic instructions to avoid congestion. “In order to ensure player

security and smooth traffic management, the Commissionerate Police has imposed special traffic restrictions under Odisha Urban Police Act, 2003 and Regulation 36 of the Bhubaneswar–Cuttack Police Commissionerate (Traffic and Public Order) Regulation, 2008. These restrictions will be in force December 8 from 12 noon to 9 pm, and December 9 from 8 am until the match ends and the crowd disperses,” the official notification issued by CP and signed off by Police Commissioner S Dev Datta Singh mentioned.

According to the advisory, vehicles coming from Mata Matha must park at the Lower Baliyatra Ground, while pass-holding vehicles will park at Upper Baliyatra ground. Vehicles from Howrah Motor Square and Mani Sahoo Chowk will be diverted from Madhusudan Statue and re-routed through Mahanadi Ring Road to Lower Baliyatra ground. Likewise, no vehicles without valid passes will be permitted towards Barabati Stadium from Biju Patnaik Square, Chandi Mandir square, Hanuman Mandir square, or Lions Eye Hospital square. Similarly, access to Baliyatra ground via Killa Fort from Ananda Bhawan Square will remain restricted. Heavy vehicles will face strict movement restrictions on both Mahanadi and Kathajodi Ring Roads and within the City limits from 8 am to 2 am. During the players’ practice session December 8, heavy vehicle movement will be completely barred between Chahata Square and Sikharpur Square towards Bamboo Depot from 12 noon to 10 pm.



INEFFABLE WINGED GUESTS: A flock of black-tailed godwits (Limosa limosa) in flight at Mangalajodi Wetlands in Tangi, Khurda Sunday PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

Cong slams BJP, terms it ‘washing machine’

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 7:** At a press conference Sunday, Congress brought back the long-running Barapada School of Engineering and Technology (BSET) scandal in Bhadrak into the spotlight, labeling serious allegations of corruption and land misappropriation against former BJD MLA Prafulla Samal and his son Prayaskanti Samal, while sharply criticising the ruling BJP for inducting leaders facing such corruption charges. Former MP Ananta Prasad

BSET SCAM

Sethi, Bhadrak Congress MLA candidate Asit Patnaik and senior Congress spokesperson Manoranjan Dash were present at the presser. “Two people hanged themselves by nooses around their necks due to non-payment of salary,” claimed the leaders, highlighting tragic human cost of the alleged financial irregularities of the institution. The party further alleged that the ‘corrupt money’ from the scandal was being used for the luxurious life-

style of Prayaskanti Samal. Sethi launched a scathing attack on the BJP, stating, “The BJP has once again proved itself to be a big ‘Washing Machine’,” and asserted that the party is inducting individuals currently under investigation by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for corruption. “Once the leaders with corruption allegations join the BJP, they become corruption-free and taint-free. The BSET corruption and joining of BJD leaders into the BJP is nothing but a strategy of the BJP,” Sethi said.

2 ganja peddlers get 20 years RI



AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 7:** In a significant verdict under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, the Second Additional District Judge-cum-Special Judge, Bhubaneswar, Saturday convicted two interstate ganja peddlers, sentencing them to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) and imposing a fine of Rs 1 lakh each.

The court further ordered that in case of non-payment of the fine, the accused would undergo an additional one-year of rigorous imprisonment. The convicts, Anil Kumar from Uttar Pradesh and Ganesh Shah from West Delhi, were charged under Section 20(b) (ii) (C)/29 of the NDPS Act, 1985, for transporting contraband ganja from Odisha to Uttar Pradesh and Delhi.

The duo was apprehended June 21, 2022, on NH-16 near Gohiria Chhak under Tamando Police Station, Bhubaneswar, while transporting the contraband in a container.

During the search, 806.9 kg of ganja was recovered, hidden in a secret chamber of the vehicle. Both the vehicle and the seized ganja were confiscated.

The contraband was sent to the State Forensic Science Laboratory (SFSL), Rasulgarh, where the Scientific Officer confirmed it as the fruiting and flowering tops of the cannabis plant. Following a thorough investigation, a charge-sheet was filed against the accused.

During the trial, the prosecution examined 12 witnesses and submitted 23 documents as evidence. The seized ganja has since been destroyed following the court’s orders.

The Special Task Force (STF) of Odisha Police, which specialises in curbing organised crime and narcotics trafficking, noted that this is the sixth NDPS case in the state resulting in a 20-year conviction under the NDPS Act, 1985.

AUTISM THERAPY CENTRE CELEBRATES ANNUAL DAY



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 7:** Autism Therapy Centre (ATC), Bhubaneswar celebrated its Annual Day function, along with Autism Awareness Day Sunday at Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) auditorium here.

The function was attended by the autistic children, their parents, and family members, besides many distinguished dignitaries. OMC CSR head and Executive Director (P&A) Talat Aafreen attended as chief guest.

MAN Trust Chairman Swarnalata Mishra presented the

annual report and listed various activities conducted by ATC including Annual Sports Meet, observance of various important national and religious celebrations and preparation of ATC calendar.

The winners of sports meet and debate competition on theme ‘Awareness or acceptance & empowerment for autistic individuals’ were awarded at the event. Gautam Panda was awarded ‘ATC Champion-2025’ prize. The function was presided over by MAN Trust’s executive body member Madan Mohan Panda, while Ranjan Kumar Bal delivered vote of thanks.

OPLC 2025 calls for digital libraries in panchayats

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 7:** Setting a decisive roadmap for the future of grassroots knowledge infrastructure, Odisha Public Library Conference (OPLC) 2025 concluded here Sunday with a strong collective commitment to establish modern digital public libraries in every panchayat of Odisha.

Hosted at Bhanja Kala Mandap here, the one-day conference was organised by Odisha Society of the Americas (OSA), a global organisation of Odias based in the United States. This year’s theme ‘Odisha Public Library Vision’, focused on a future-ready library ecosystem across the state. Odisha Legislative Assembly Speaker Surama Padhi attended as chief guest and appreciated OSA’s visionary initiative. Kendrapara MLA Ganeshwar Behera also graced the event.

“Libraries play a crucial role in enhancing the knowledge of



students, youth, and people from every walk of life. Therefore, establishing new libraries and modernising the present library infrastructure is essential. We must collectively work to realise OSA’s proposal for establishing modern public libraries in rural Odisha,” said Padhi.

Four panel discussions were held at the conference exploring themes such as building an integrated modern public library network in Odisha, capital investment in India’s digital public libraries, libraries of the 21st century—from

information centres to innovation hubs and strengthening the civil society-driven library movement in Odisha.

OSA’s Odisha Public Library Initiative chairman Ajay Kumar Mohanty, and convenor Nishikant Sahoo presented key proposals and insights. The conference engaged in extensive deliberations on how Odisha can rapidly build state-of-the-art public libraries accessible to every citizen, and how a robust library movement under the leadership of the state government can play a

ECoR to run special trains, augment additional coaches

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 7:** In view of the increased demand and to resolve passenger rush following IndiGo flight cancellations, East Coast Railway (ECoR) has decided to run special trains and augment additional coaches in some regular trains towards Mumbai, New Delhi, Bengaluru and Howrah regions, said ECoR officials Sunday.

Special trains announced by ECoR includes Bhubaneswar

– LTT special (08401)— will depart from Bhubaneswar December 7, LTT – Sambalpur special (08402) will depart from LTT December 9, Puri – Anand Vihar Terminal special (08403) will depart from Puri December 8, Anand Vihar Terminal – Bhubaneswar special (08404) will depart from Anand Vihar Terminal December 9, Visakhapatnam – SMVB Bengaluru special (08501) will depart from Visakhapatnam December 8 and SMVB Benga-

luru – Visakhapatnam special (08502) will depart from SMVB Bengaluru December 9.

In addition to special trains, extra AC coaches have been added

to the regular trains to clear extra rush of passengers. Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Tejas Rajdhani express (22811) December 7 and New Delhi – Bhubaneswar Tejas Rajdhani express (22812) December 8, augmented with one 1st AC. Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Tejas Rajdhani express

(22823) December 8 and New Delhi – Bhubaneswar Tejas Rajdhani express (22824) December 9 augmented with one 3rd AC.

Similarly, Puri – Shalimar Garib Rath express (12882) December 8 and 10 and Shalimar –Puri Garib Rath express (12881) December 9 and 11 augmented with one 3rd AC Economy class coach. Puri-Yesvantpur Garib Rath express (22883) December 12 and Yesvantpur –Puri Garib Rath express (22884) December 13 augmented with one 3rd AC Economy class coach.

Santali book stall opens at book fair

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 7:** A dedicated Santali stall, set up by Santali Saoanhed Akhada, was inaugurated at 7th Odisha State Book Festival–2025, organised by state government at Exhibition Ground here. This is the only stall representing Santali language at the fair.

The stall was formally inaugurated by eminent Santali writer Rambai Hembram. Others including Kailash Chandra Baskey, Surukuni

Murmu, Minati Hansda, Sunaram Murmu, Mangat Murmu and others were present during the occasion.

The 12-day-long book festival features a wide range of Santali publications, including journals, syllabus books, reference books and educational materials in Santali (Ol Chiki) script.

The organisers have urged the general public to visit the stall and make use of the opportunity to explore learning materials.

JRC aims to make 25 dists child marriage free

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 7:** Giving a thrust to India’s goal to become child marriage free by 2030, Just Rights for Children (JRC) has announced an intensive intervention in 25 districts of Odisha which are identified as high-prevalence areas under the National Family Health Survey V (2019-21). JRC targets to make one lakh villages in the country child marriage free by 2026.

The announcement coincides with first anniversary of ‘Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat’ campaign by Central government. As per the NFHS V, prevalence of child marriage in Odisha is at 20.5 per cent, lower than national average of 23.3 per cent. However, huge disparity in the situation remains in different districts within the state. For instance, in Nabarangapur, Nayagarh, Koraput, Rayagada, Malkangiri and Mayurbhanj, the prevalence of child marriage is higher than 30 per

cent. Six other districts also registered a prevalence rate more than the national average.

Extending complete support to the government’s campaign and sharing JRC’s roadmap for the year ahead, JRC founder Bhuwan Ribhu said, “The role of community groups, faith leaders, panchayats and citizens is central to building a child marriage free India.

“The government’s ‘Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat’ campaign has become a model for the world. It also stands as a celebration of our collective work to end this crime against children. Last year, more than one lakh child marriages were stopped or prevented, showing that when society comes together, change is inevitable. Next year, together we pledge to make one lakh villages child marriage free so that every child has opportunities and a secure future,” he added.

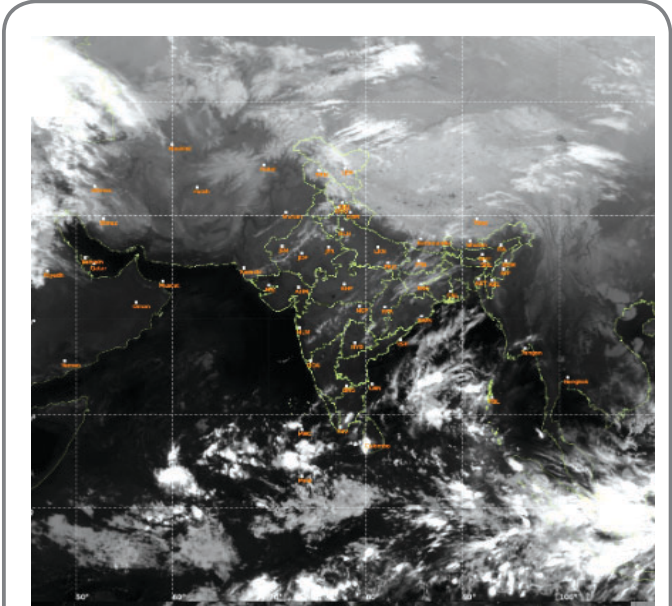
JRC uses 3P model of Protection, Prevention and Prosecution to stop child marriages



across the country and has prevented over 4,35,205 child marriages between April 1, 2023 and November 14, 2025. Through legal interventions and widespread awareness on child marriage laws in communities, schools, among faith leaders and marriage service providers, the network has driven a major shift in how

child marriage is perceived and tolerated in India.

To mark the successful completion of one year of ‘Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat’, Ministry for Women and Child Development has launched ‘100 Days Intensive Campaign Plan’. The 100-day action plan concludes on International Women’s Day March 8, 2026.



| WEATHER  |       |       |   |
|----------|-------|-------|---|
|          | BBSR  | CTC   | FORECAST  |
| Max Temp | 28.5° | 25.8° | Dry weather very likely to prevail over the districts of Odisha |
| Min Temp | 11.9° | 11.8° |   |
| Humidity | 67%   | 72%   |   |
| Rainfall | Nil   | Nil   |   |



# Farmers threaten stir over tardy paddy procurement

Instead of engaging with farmers' concerns, leaders of both the ruling and opposition parties are trading political barbs, the farmer leaders said, terming it an affront to the agricultural community

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargarh, Dec 7:** The kharif paddy procurement process in Bargarh has come to a grinding halt barely days after the process started November 28 sparking anger among farmers as mandis remain clogged with unsold grains. The delay has also kept thousands of farmers waiting for procurement tokens, while millers are reportedly staying away from lifting operations.

At a meeting held Sunday at Samata Bhavan, the Western Odisha Farmers' Organisations Coordination Committee cautioned that the continued deadlock could snowball into widespread unrest if immediate corrective steps are not taken.

The warning came as farm-



er leaders alleged that despite the late opening of mandis, the government has failed to operationalise the procurement process.

Farmers complained that only 'symbolic' quantities of paddy have been purchased at a few centres, leaving thousands of bags piled up without clarity on when they will be lifted. Farmer leaders criticised the government for failing to present any concrete plan even as the Assembly is in session.

Instead of engaging with farmers' concerns, leaders of both the ruling and opposition parties are trading political barbs, they said, terming it an affront to the agricultural community.

The unions also accused successive governments of allow-

ing millers to dictate procurement terms, pushing farmers further into exploitation. They demanded that the state adopt a direct procurement system on the lines of Chhattisgarh, where the government buys paddy directly from farmers and transports it to mandis.

The Jay Kisan Andolan warned that if the government continues to overlook the crisis, the organisation would have no option but to escalate its agitation at any moment.

The meeting was attended by senior farmer leaders including Siba Prasad Pradhan, general secretary Hara Bania, Arun Kumar Sahu, Bhanjan Barik, Arun Pradhan, Surendra Meher, Minister Barik, Bijay Pradhan, Kuna Behera, Prabin Sahu, and Sitaram Meher.

## Employee found dead at Badmal ordnance factory

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Saintala, Dec 7:** Police Sunday recovered the body of a Chemical Process Worker (CPW) from the Badmal ordnance factory premises in Bolangir district. The cause of death remains unclear, officials said.

According to police, two explosive-laden vans from the Aruvankadu factory in Tamil Nadu arrived at the Badmal unit Saturday evening under the supervision of CPW D. Balakrishna. The vans were parked near the factory's bachelor mess, where the team was permitted to rest for the night.

However, the driver reportedly found Balakrishna lying dead behind one of the vans Sunday morning and informed



factory officials, who in turn alerted Badmal police. Officers seized the body and have begun an investigation.

Police said the exact circumstances surrounding the death will be known only after the post-mortem report is available.

## Burnt, decomposed body found from hill

**Chhatrapur:** Police Sunday recovered the burnt and decomposed body of an unidentified person at the foot of the Sulia hill near Khallikote after passersby reported a foul smell along the Medipur-Alapur route. Chhatrapur SDPO Chandan Kumar Ghadei and Khallikote IIC Ramesh Kumar Pradhan reached the site and seized the body, which was found in a low-lying area. According to police, the corpse appeared to have been lying at the spot for three to four days based on its condition. Officers said the body bore deep injury marks and bruises, indicating the person may have been attacked with sharp objects before being set on fire with petrol. Police said the possibility of murder cannot be ruled out given the circumstances. A case of unnatural death has been registered at the Khallikote police station, and an investigation is underway to identify the victim and determine the cause of death.

## Traffic woes subside as Sunabeda Municipality clears vendors from NH

**Koraput:** The Sunabeda municipal administration Sunday carried out a major eviction drive to clear makeshift stalls and unauthorised business setups along the national highway passing through Semiliguda town, aiming to ease chronic traffic congestion and improve road safety. Municipal officials, supported by enforcement staff and police, began the operation early Sunday to avoid crowding and ensure a smooth process. Stalls lining both sides of the highway near the Semiliguda Vending Zone were removed, along with structures operating from the Semiliguda Traffic Square to the Ganga Maa Temple and along the Nandapur main road. Authorities said multiple warnings issued to vendors in recent weeks had gone unheeded. Executive Officer Sujit Choudhary said the eviction was necessary to protect public safety. "This is a busy national highway, and the encroachments were creating serious congestion," he said. Municipality Chairman Rajendra Patro said proper vending zones have been identified. He added that officials will assist genuine vendors in relocating and will monitor the stretch to prevent re-encroachment.

## Barpali Railway Station gets facelift under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

**Bargarh:** Barpali Railway Station has undergone a major transformation under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, one of the flagship initiatives of the Centre, aimed at ensuring modern, inclusive, and future ready railway infrastructure across the nation. This initiative reflects the Centre's broader vision of providing world class public amenities even in semi urban and rural regions, thereby ensuring balanced regional development. With a redevelopment cost of ₹22.28 crore, the upgraded Barpali Station now stands as a model of modern railway architecture featuring improved accessibility, enhanced safety, enriched cultural aesthetics, and upgraded passenger facilities. Guided by the consistent focus of the Union Minister of Railways on station modernisation and citizen centric services, Barpali Railway Station now emerges as a key infrastructural asset for western Odisha. The modernisation of Barpali Station is expected to bring wide ranging socio economic benefits, improved connectivity, support daily commuters, students, traders, and farmers across Bargarh district and peripheral regions. Enhanced infrastructure will boost opportunities for local businesses and OSOP (One Station One Product) artisans, helping them access a larger marketplace.



# Biting cold wave grips G Udayagiri



POST NEWS NETWORK

**G Udayagiri, Dec 7:** A severe cold wave has gripped the G Udayagiri area in Kandhamal district as temperatures continue to fall affecting normal life of the residents. Accord-

ing to the Meteorological Centre, Bhubaneswar, the minimum temperature in G Udayagiri was recorded at 4.4°C at 8am Sunday. The minimum temperature stood at 5.4°C Saturday.

Government data show that

## Minor girl drowns; another critical

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Digapahandi, Dec 7:** A minor girl drowned and another rendered critical after they slipped into the deep waters of a pond while taking bath at Chudungpur under this police limits and Sanakhemundi block in Ganjam district around 10 am Sunday.

The deceased was identified as eight-year-old R Saloni Patra, a Class III student of the village school. Her classmate N Rajeshwari was rendered critical while trying to rescue Saloni from drowning.

Police said Saloni accidentally slipped from the pond's edge and

fell into deep water. Her friend, Rajeshwari tried to save her but also slipped and went underwater. Some villagers, who were nearby, managed to rescue Rajeshwari, but Saloni could not be located immediately. On being informed, Digapahandi fire services personnel reached the spot and pulled both girls from the water. They were rushed to Digapahandi Community Health Center, where doctors pronounced Saloni dead. Rajeshwari was shifted to MKCH Medical College and Hospital, Berhampur. Police registered an unnatural death case (46/25) and began a probe.

# Missing for 11 years, man brought back from B'desh, reunited with kin



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, Dec 7:** A tribal man from Mayurbhanj district who went missing 11 years ago was reunited with his family Sunday after authorities in India and Bangladesh coordinated his return.

Sudam Hembram, 41, of Jagannathpur village under the Badasahi police limits, had disappeared in 2014. Officials later learned that he had inadvertently crossed the India-Bangladesh border and ended up in

the Chapai Nawabganj district of Bangladesh.

The Indian High Commission in Dhaka and the Bangladesh Embassy informed the Mayurbhanj district administration and police about Hembram's whereabouts October 28. Acting on the communication, Mayurbhanj police verified his identity and completed the required documentation, officials said.

A joint team of district police, district administration officials and members of Hembram's family then travelled to the Haridaspur-Benapole land check post on the India-Bangladesh border Saturday to initiate the repatriation process.

After cross-border and government procedures were completed, Bangladeshi authorities formally handed Hembram over to the Indian side at the Petrapole-Haridaspur check post in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district Sunday. Mayurbhanj Superintendent of Police Varun Guntupalli said.

Hembram's family, overwhelmed to see him after more than a decade, expressed gratitude to Mayurbhanj police, the district administration, the Indian High Commission and the Bangladesh Embassy for ensuring his safe return.

## Road blockade after couple, son assaulted

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Boinda, Dec 7:** Miscreants Sunday allegedly beat up a couple and their son with iron rods after they thwarted their encroachment bid at Kruttibasapur village under Thakurgarh police limits in Angul district.

The incident sparked tension in the area as local residents staged a road blockade by burning tires, demanding the immediate arrest of the accused persons.

Locals rescued the victims identified as Chhabi Rana, 48, wife Shailabala Rana, 42,

and son Siddhant, 25, and admitted them to the district headquarters hospital for treatment.

However, no formal complaint had been filed at the police station when reports last came in.

Residents said the incident stemmed from a long-standing dispute over a piece of land near the Kruttibasapur High School Square, where Chhabi runs a bicycle repair shop. A person from the Jarapada area had been claiming ownership of the spot, leading to frequent quarrels.

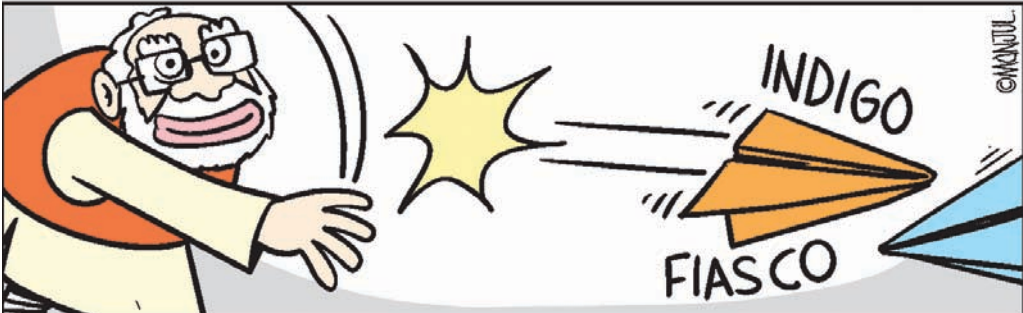
The incident occurred when

the person allegedly dumped five truckloads of gravel in front of the shop. When Shailabala and son Siddhant objected, the man and his associates reportedly attacked the family members with iron rods.

Following the assault, villagers staged a road blockade at Kruttibasapur, demanding the arrest of the attackers. When Thakurgarh police arrived and tried to pacify the crowd, agitated locals gheraoed the policemen.

Later, Athamallik SDPO Susanta Kumar Taudia reached the spot and held discussions with the protesters.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## Violence, arson rock Malkangiri village

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Korukonda, Dec 7:** Tension ran high, as residents of Rakhalguda village under this block in Malkangiri district Sunday marched to MV-26 village and allegedly vandalised several houses and set some of them on fire demanding arrest of the accused in a case wherein a decapitated body of a woman was found three days back.

Police recovered the body with its head severed near Poteru river under Korukonda police limits in Malkangiri district December 4. The deceased was identified as Lake Padiami, 50, of Rakhalguda. Residents of Rakhalguda and members of a local tribal outfit have alleged that someone from MV-26 village might have committed the murder. They demanded that police trace the missing head



and arrest the prime suspects immediately.

With no breakthrough even after three days, hostility between residents of MV-26 and Rakhalguda intensified.

Some residents of Rakhalguda and nearby areas reportedly marched to MV-26 Sunday, and vandalised several houses and set some of them on fire.

Collector Somesh Kumar Upadhyay and SP Vinodh Patil H rushed to the spot along with a large police and administrative team. Officials inspected each house in the village and held discussions with residents, assuring them of protection and support. Fire personnel doused the fire while sniffer dogs were pressed into service to trace the severed head. The Collector also said compensation would be provided after assessing the damage.

## 3 arrested for thrashing, dragging youth on road



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Balasore, Dec 7:** Three persons were arrested for allegedly thrashing a youth with lathis and dragging him on a road in Balasore district over property dispute, police said Sunday.

According to the police, the victim identified as Debasis Hati was allegedly beaten up and dragged on a village road tied to a rope till he became unconscious. He was later thrown near the police outpost of Parikhi under Sadar police station in the coastal district.

The incident happened at Telgadgia village December 3, and it became public after a video clip of the incident went viral on some social media platforms, the police said.

After the victim's wife lodged a complaint in the Sadar police station December 5, the police launched an investigation and apprehended the three persons for their alleged involvement in the incident, a police officer said.

In her complaint, Hati's wife alleged that she was also abused and manhandled while trying to save her husband from the miscreants on that day.

Hati is now being treated at the District Headquarters Hospital, Balasore.

The police said that the incident was the outcome of a property dispute.

"We have arrested three accused persons in connection with the incident. Two of them will be forwarded to the court Sunday, while another person was under medical care," said Ajay Kumar Murmu, Inspector In-Charge of Sadar police station. The third accused person will be forwarded to the court after getting medical clearance, he added.

इंडियन बैंक

Indian Bank

ALLAHABAD

ZONAL OFFICE: SAMBALPUR

1ST FLOOR, SHYAM ARCADE,

KHETRAJPUR, SAMBALPUR - 768003,

e-mail: [zosambalpur@indianbank.co.in](mailto:zosambalpur@indianbank.co.in)

E-AUCTION

SALE NOTICE

(See proviso to rule 6(2) & 8(6) Sale Notice for sale of property /ies under SARFAESI Act 2002)

**Sale of Immovable property/ies mortgaged to Bank under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 54 of 2002)**

Whereas, the Authorised Officer of Indian Bank had taken possession of the following property/ies pursuant to the notice issued under Sec 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in the following loan accounts with right to sell the same on **"AS IS WHERE IS BASIS", "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS"** and **"WITHOUT ANY RECOURSE BASIS"** for realization of Bank's dues plus interest as detailed hereunder and whereas consequent upon failure to repay the dues, the undersigned in exercise of power conferred under section 13(4) of the said Act proposes to realize the Bank's dues by sale of the said property/ies. **The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website <https://www.baanknet.com>.**

| Sl. No. | BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrowers /Mortgagor  | Description of the Immovable Properties  | Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession Notice/ Outstanding Dues   | Reserve Price / EMD / Bid Increment Amount |
|---------|--|--|---|--|
| 1.      | SAMBALPUR BRANCH, MOB NO.: 9777650733/<br>Borrower/Mortgagor: Mr. Ramesh Tandi, S/o: Lambodhar Tandi, At/P.O.: Kukudahad, Kantabanji-767039<br>Mouza: Kandhabahal, Dist.: Bolangir, Bounded by North: Dhamandanga Mouza, South: Tapan Panika, East: Rudrakhya Panika, West: Road | All that piece and parcel of Land recorded in the name of Mr. Ramesh Tandi, S/o: Lambodhar Tandi, Khata No.: 93/128, Plot No.: 488, Area: Ac.1.15 Dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, | 02.08.2019 / 14.10.2019 / ₹75,48,536/- as on 05.12.2025 + further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon | ₹15,60,000/-<br>₹1,56,000/-<br>₹10,000/-   |

DATE AND TIME OF E-AUCTION: 24.12.2025 from 11.00 AM to 5.00 PM with unlimited extension of 10 Minutes duration

LAST DATE AND TIME FOR SUBMISSION OF EMD AND DOCUMENTS IN THEIR WALLET BY 24.12.2025 I.E. BEFORE E-AUCTION DATE & TIME IN THE PORTAL.

Date & Time of Inspection of Properties: 12.12.2025 to 23.12.2025 between 10.00 AM to 4.00 PM (with prior appointment from bank) at their own expenses

**TERMS & CONDITIONS:** 1) For detailed terms and conditions of the sale please refer to the link: <https://www.baanknet.com> Prospective bidders may also contact the Authorised Officers / Branch as mentioned in above list., 2) This is a statutory 15 days sale notice to the above mentioned borrowers/mortgagors under Rule 9(1) of the SARFAESI Act, 2002. 3) This is a 15 days notice to the Borrower / Mortgagor of the above said loan about holding of this sale on the above mentioned date., 4) All expenses relating the stamp duty and registration of Sale Certificate/conveyance, if any, shall be borne by the successful bidder. 5) The Authorized Officer will not be held responsible for any charge, lien, encumbrance, property tax or any other dues to the Government or anybody in respect of the property under sale. 6) The Authorized Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject any bid or adjourn/postpone/cancel the sale without assigning any reason thereof. It may be noted that nothing in this notice constitute or deemed to constitute any commitment or representation on the part of the bank to sell the property.

STATUTORY 15 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 9(1) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002.

Borrowers/Mortgagors are hereby notified to pay the total dues along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of E-Auction, failing which the property will be auctioned/ sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest & cost.


Place: Sambalpur, Date: 06.12.2025

Sd/-Authorised Officer, Indian Bank



In order to see, you have to stop being in the middle of the picture

SRI AUROBINDO



# Cost of Monopoly

Tens of thousands of Indians had a harrowing experience last week as air travel virtually came to a grinding halt across the country. IndiGo, the country’s largest domestic carrier which has managed to corner about 60% market share, suffered its worst-ever operational meltdown leaving thousands of flights cancelled nationwide. At the root of the crisis is IndiGo’s operating policy that made it India’s most profitable airline. For years, the airline maximised night flying and operated with razor-thin pilot buffers, relying on a “use-every-aircraft, use-every-crew” strategy that boosted profitability and aircraft utilisation. Under older duty-time rules, this approach worked. But with stricter pilot rest mandates, the system buckled. In January 2024, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) introduced tightened Flight Duty Time Limitations to combat rising concerns over pilot fatigue and to bring India closer to global safety norms. These rules raise pilots’ weekly rest from 36 to 48 hours, sharply reduce the number of night-time landings per week, cap night-flying hours at 10, and prohibit more than two consecutive night duties. Collectively, these changes dramatically reduce the number of hours pilots can legally fly in a week. Although the revised rules were first notified in January 2024, and theoretically applied from 31 May, 2024, their implementation was subsequently staggered into a phased rollout from July 2025, with full compliance required by 1 November, 2025. Yet IndiGo, despite having all these months to respond, appears to have ignored the government orders, may be deliberately as some critics point out, to keep the operational scale of the transition at current levels.

The consequences were there for all to see. For six consecutive days, IndiGo cancelled thousands of flights. As India’s largest airline, the disruptions created a nationwide chain reaction. Airports struggled to cope with the sudden surge in displaced passengers, terminals were crowded with anxious and furious travellers, and thousands of bags piled up unclaimed. Rival airlines, already operating at near-full capacity, were unable to accommodate the overflow and resorted to blatant overpricing. Air ticket cost from Mumbai to Bhubaneswar shot up to an unprecedented Rs 84,000, while from Mumbai to Kolkata skyrocketed to Rs 90,000. Passengers bore the brunt of the meltdown with many missing job interviews, crucial business meetings and even own wedding receptions.

As is always the case in India, regulators stepped in with fare caps, advisories and increased oversight but only after all the damage was done. Also, in a duopolistic market where IndiGo and Air India jointly control more than 91 per cent of domestic capacity, restoring full normalcy will take time. And, herein lies the main problem that is plaguing almost all sectors in the country. When one player or at most two players are allowed to dominate a particular sector or industry, it comes with a huge price for the general population. We see this in airport and seaport operations where one particular corporate is being given all the contracts. Likewise, we see duopolies in telecom and other essential services sectors.

Monopolies and duopolies create structural problems that hurt consumers, competition, innovation, and even the broader economy, especially in the service sector. Such markets always come with higher prices for consumers, a gradual decline in service quality, market manipulation and predatory behaviour and concentration of economic power. Also, when one or two firms dominate a sector, their failure can disrupt the entire market, trigger job losses or even force government bailouts. Moreover, such markets are vulnerable to systemic shocks like financial crisis, technical crisis or supply chain issue. In all of these cases, the whole country suffers simply because there is no other alternative.

Apart from the companies operating in the Indian aviation sector, it’s also the government and the regulator that are responsible for the mess that the sector finds itself in. The government has been keeping ATF prices at very high levels which makes it difficult for low-cost airlines to operate at scale. Also, the demand-based pricing system followed by the airlines with no control whatsoever by the regulator has led to air ticket costs skyrocketing in the country. Besides, the government’s eagerness to go all out on privatisation has resulted in India not having even one state-owned airline, whereas countries like Singapore, Indonesia and even Pakistan use their national carriers as diplomatic leverage.

Under these circumstances, the recent recall of Airbus’ A320 aircraft over a software glitch is going to have its impact on the Indian aviation sector.

In the IndiGo case, it was seen that even the regulator lacked teeth to take action on the errant officials of the airliner. This was amply evident in the show cause notice which the DGCA sent to IndiGo. The letter had no mention of the CEO’s name nor of the action the regulator wanted to take against the airline.

If the government continues with its misguided policy of nurturing monopolies and duopolies in essential sectors such as airports, seaports, telecom and other infrastructure sectors, it would prove to be disastrous for the country.

## WISDOM CORNER

“Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And if you gaze long enough into an abyss, the abyss will gaze back into you.”

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

“People demand freedom of speech as a compensation for the freedom of thought which they seldom use.”

SOREN KIERKEGAARD

“Gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions. The more you express gratitude for what you have, the more likely you will have even more to express gratitude for.”

ZIG ZIGLAR

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

■ **1941:** US enters WWII. One day after the Japanese Imperial Navy launched an attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States declared war on Japan and entered World War II.

■ **1978:** The American classic film The Deer Hunter—starring Robert De Niro and Christopher Walken, among others—had its world premiere; an emotionally shattering look at the effects of the Vietnam War on the young American men sent to fight in it, the movie later won an Oscar for best picture.

■ **1980:** On this day in 1980, British musician John Lennon—who rose to fame with the Beatles and had a successful solo career—was fatally shot by Mark David Chapman in New York City, causing a global outpouring of grief.

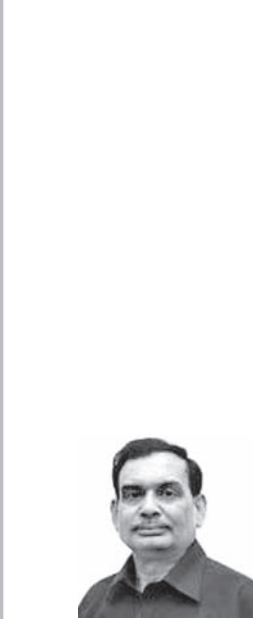
■ **1987:** US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev signed a nuclear weapons reduction treaty.

■ **1987:** First Intifada begins. The Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories began after an Israeli army truck attacked a car and killed 4 Palestinians. The Intifada ended in 1991 after the Madrid Conference

# power post

## FOCUS DIPLOMACY

# CAREFUL ON OPTICS



Shivaji Sarkar

**RUSSIA AND THE EAEU HAVE BECOME PRIORITY DESTINATIONS, AS NEW DELHI WORKS TO OFFSET RISING PRESSURE ON ITS TRADE**

The currency crisis is bound to impact India growth. Indeed, a deep crisis is ahead. The falling rupee is likely to hit the common man’s pocket as domestic fuel prices may rise sharply despite a global thaw in crude prices. Would Russian President Vladimir Putin’s visit, his close embrace and promises, make a difference? Putin’s visit may help New Delhi in many spheres but not in the crude oil sector. Russian crude has impacted Indians, though they never benefitted from the deals. The benefit was only for two companies, one Indian and the other Russian. Their profits alone swelled, while people, government and companies continued to buy fuel at high prices.

India-Russia ties go back to the Soviet era and have endured irrespective of the changing geopolitical landscape, this time coinciding with New Delhi’s talks with the US on a trade deal to cut punitive tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump on its goods over India’s purchases of Russian oil. Trump has been breathing down each movement of Indo-Russian ties. There was even news that the plane Putin was travelling to New Delhi had the most-monitored movements. Trump shadows all.

The Putin visit is not a nostalgic return to Cold War diplomacy. “It is a negotiation over risk, supply chains and economic insulation,” says Global Trade Research Initiative. India has close ties with Russia since the Nehru-Kruschev era of 1950s, the 25-year strategic deal with Indira Gandhi, Putin renewing it in 2000 with AB Vajpayee continuing the legacy. Since then much has changed both in the Ganga and Volga, but “Russia ties like pole star,” says Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while



**Even with relatively few major deliverables, the visit provided enough substance for Moscow and New Delhi to reaffirm their ‘special and privileged strategic partnership’**

Putin promises non-stop energy.

The Ukraine war has added a new NATO-European dimension. The UK is all for NATO but not keen on joining a war. Russia feels being isolated in Europe. Ambassadors of Germany, France and the UK wrote a rare joint article in an Indian newspaper criticising Russia’s stance on Ukraine as he landed in New Delhi. Were the NATO allies acting on their own or at the behest of their masters? Trump’s disgust for Russian oil purchases accusing India of fuelling/funding the Ukraine war ignites his sanctions to keep both countries cornered if exactly not on leash.

For Trump, Putin got the freedom to move out with the Alaska meet for peace negotiations on 15 August, where the two leaders discussed how to end the war. That was the first free trip of Putin outside Moscow since 2020. The next is the celebrated visit to New Delhi. Putin’s New Delhi visit has plenty of optics with modest deliverables. India is balancing Russia and America with caution.

The visit seeks India’s revival of free-trade talks with the

\$5-trillion Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). With exports weakening due to steep 50% Trump tariffs, two months of declining shipments, slowdown in manufacturing, and the rupee falling past 90 per dollar, India is urgently seeking new markets. Russia and the EAEU have become priority destinations, as New Delhi works to offset rising pressure on its trade.

India and Russia announced a major expansion of economic ties during Putin’s visit. Both sides launched a new Economic Cooperation Programme aimed at sharply increasing trade and investment, with targets of \$100 billion in annual trade by 2030 and \$50 billion in mutual investments. Putin also reaffirmed the commitment to complete four more nuclear plants at Kudankulam.

Bilateral trade already hit a record \$68.7 billion in 2024–25 from a mere \$8.1 billion in 2020. Key agreements were signed in energy, finance (including national currency settlements), fertilizers, healthcare, steel, shipbuilding, coal, and banking. India also plans to open new consulates in Russia to

deepen official engagement. Defence cooperation remains central, anchored by an existing military and technical pact that runs through 2031.

The national currency settlement reiterated by Putin is a commitment to BRICS. He held talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, attended a business forum and announced the launch of Russia Today (RT), a Kremlin-funded state-controlled TV network. Interestingly, Trump has a dislike for RT.

Even with relatively few major deliverables, the visit provided enough substance for Moscow and New Delhi to reaffirm their “special and privileged strategic partnership.” President Putin praised efforts to expand cooperation, underscored by agreements such as the Russia–India Economic Cooperation Programme, a framework for collaboration on critical minerals and supply chains, and a commitment to strengthen pharmaceutical ties, including a joint factory in the Kaluga region.

Optics did not stop at economics. Opposition leaders Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge were not invited to the dinner hosted for Putin at Rashtrapati Bhavan, though Congress MP Shashi Tharoor was invited. This comes a day after Rahul Gandhi alleged the Modi government is going against “tradition” and doesn’t want him or a representative of the Opposition to meet Putin because of its “insecurity.”

The Putin visit may have more optics left in the domestic and international scenario. Uncanny Trump, sceptical European leaders and neighbourhood developments in Afghanistan and Iran may have lot to unfold. Is it the beginning of a new era?

INFA

## SPECTRUM SOCIETY

# Investing in early childhood education

The leaders’ declaration adopted at the end of the recent G20 summit in South Africa reaffirmed the group’s commitment to tackling some of the world’s most pressing challenges, from inequality and long-running conflicts to AI and climate change. It also marked a historic milestone: For the first time, the G20 identified education as one of its top global priorities.



Justin van Fleet & Pia Rebello Britto

**PUTTING CHILDREN FIRST IS THE SUREST ROUTE TO A MORE PROSPEROUS, PEACEFUL, AND STABLE WORLD**

The declaration went on to highlight the urgent need to invest in children’s early development, pledging to “advance a comprehensive approach” that recognises investment in early childhood care and education (ECE) as “vital...for a country’s social and economic future.” This recognition is long overdue. In a world marked by economic volatility, the most effective investments are those made in people, and few yield greater returns than supporting children in their first five or six years of life, when they develop the skills that underpin long-term growth, social cohesion, and peace.

Today, we are failing far too many children before they even reach school age. Globally, more than 40% of preschool children – roughly 350 million – lack access to quality care. The result is a vast loss of human potential that holds back communities, economies, and societies.

Early childhood, when 90% of brain development occurs, is a unique window for establishing the foundations of lifelong learning, health, and well-being. Decades of evidence show that every dollar invested in ECCE generates up to \$17 in economic returns, helping to break cycles of poverty and reduce inequality. Expanding access to childcare also enables more women to enter and stay in the workforce, strengthening households and national economies alike.

The UN already recognised the importance of investing in ECCE when it adopted the SDGs in 2015. This was reaffirmed in UNESCO’s 2022 Tashkent Declaration, with more than 150 countries pledging to provide at least one year of free, compulsory pre-primary education for all children and to allocate at least 10% of their education budgets to preschool programmes. Despite these commitments, funding for early education remains woefully inadequate. In low- and middle-income countries, 180 million three- and four-year-olds still lack access to basic early-childhood services.

Against this discouraging backdrop, momentum for change is building, driven largely by major emerging economies within and beyond the G20. Early-childhood support was central to Brazil’s social-inclusion agen-

da during its G20 presidency, while the launch of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty in late 2024 signaled a broader push to tackle intergenerational inequities.

Brazil has also introduced ambitious domestic measures. Earlier this year, it launched its National Integrated Policy for Early Childhood, which established a single national database to track children’s needs and support a unified strategy across all of the country’s 5,568 municipalities, featuring a massive data platform covering daycare availability, vaccination records, and developmental milestones.

The recent G20 summit in Johannesburg – the first to be held in Africa – brought the scale and urgency of the problem into sharp focus. Childhood mortality rates across the continent remain 14 times higher than in high-income countries, and only one in four children in sub-Saharan Africa attends preschool. South Africa, which views investment in ECCE as a national priority, recently launched the largest early-years education programme in its history. President Cyril Ramaphosa has also used South Africa’s G20 presidency to frame early-childhood education as a global imperative and urge governments worldwide to invest in their youngest citizens.

Mobilising the political will and financing needed to transform ECCE will require a sustained, coordinated multilateral effort. Over the past two years, Theirworld has championed this agenda through its Act for Early Years campaign, and the recent announcement of the world’s first international gathering devoted specifically to funding pre-primary education – initiated by a coalition of stakeholders from both the Global South and North – indicates that early childhood is finally receiving the attention it deserves.

Looking ahead, the International Finance Summit for Early Childhood in 2027 offers a rare opportunity to raise new funding, redirect domestic investment, and unlock private capital. Crucially, it could demonstrate that investing in preschool education is not a secondary concern but a precondition for achieving the SDGs. One principle should guide the policy debates that will inevitably follow: putting children first is the surest route to a more prosperous, peaceful, and stable world.

*Justin van Fleet is President of Theirworld. Pia Rebello Britto is Global Director of Education & Adolescent Development at UNICEF.*

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## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

**OrissaPOST**  
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## Entertainment monopoly

Sir, Netflix’s bid to acquire Warner Bros marks a bold pivot in Hollywood’s power dynamics, injecting political tension into an already high-stakes industry. With Warner Bros rejecting a competing offer from Trump-aligned Skydance, the proposed deal has drawn scrutiny from both the Trump administration and Democratic leaders. Their concerns reflect a mix of regulatory caution and political calculation, as government approval gives Washington unusual influence over the fate of two of the industry’s most recognisable brands. Yet history shows that Warner Bros is no easy prize. For decades, the studio has cycled through owners who believed they could consolidate entertainment dominance only to be humbled by shifting technology and consumer behaviour. From the ill-fated AOL-Time Warner merger to AT&T’s costly and short-lived acquisition, corporate giants have repeatedly learned that controlling Warner Bros vast library does not guarantee market control. Netflix, long positioned as a disruptor of distribution rather than a traditional content empire, is betting it can break that cycle by pairing its global streaming reach with Warner’s deep catalog and HBO’s prestige brand. Still, talk of monopoly may be overstated. Netflix holds only about a quarter of the streaming market and less than 10% of the broader TV space, competing head-to-head with Amazon, Disney, and several legacy networks.

**Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBACH**

## Quick fixes

Sir, Our government seems to have quick fixes for all our pressing problems and needs. Not satisfied with government school education? Enroll your child in an expensive private school. Not happy with treatment in a government-run hospital? Visit a private one with state-of-the-art facilities. Not happy with public transport? Buy a car. Not happy with Nagar Nigam’s water supply? Buy a water purifier. Not happy with AQI of your city? Buy an air purifier. Not happy with services of airlines? Travel by your own private jet. Not happy with the present government? Thank your stars that you are not living in, say, Syria, Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, DR Congo, Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen, Haiti or Bangladesh. We Indians are a lucky lot.

**Avinash Godbole, DEWAS (MP)**



# Oppn skips tea party over lack of LoPs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Nagpur, Dec 7:** The Opposition in Maharashtra Sunday boycotted the government's customary tea party on the eve of the Winter session, citing its failure to appoint leaders of the opposition (LoPs) in both houses of the state legislature.

Congress Legislature Party leader Vijay Wadettiwar told reporters the tea party invitation had been sent to individual MLAs, instead of the LoPs. He addressed a press conference at the Vidhan Bhavan complex here along with Shiv Sena (UBT) leaders Bhaskar Jadhav, Sunil Prabhu and Nitin Raut as well as Anil Deshmukh of NCP (SP).

“There are no LoPs in both the houses. Both these are constitutional posts. By keeping both posts vacant, the government has shown that it does not trust the Constitution. So we have boycotted the tea programme,” Wadettiwar said.

Following the Opposition's rout in the state Assembly polls last year, no party could win 10 per cent of the total 288 seats. As per the norm, it is necessary for any Opposition to win at least 10 per cent seats to stake a claim for the post of LoP.

Wadettiwar said that in 1980, the BJP had 14 MLAs, still the LoP's post was given to the saffron party. Similarly, in 1985, the BJP had 16 MLAs, yet it was given the LoP's post.

“The Congress never kept the

## MAHA WINTER SESSION



There are no LoPs in both the houses. Both these are constitutional posts. By keeping both posts vacant, the government has shown that it does not trust the Constitution. So we have boycotted the tea programme

VIJAY WADETTIWAR | CONG LEGISLATURE PARTY LEADER

constitutional post of LoP vacant. If the government wants to keep these posts vacant and call us for tea, then it is better to boycott,” Wadettiwar said.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Bhaskar Jadhav claimed the government is scared of the Opposition despite its low number because of the “sins” it has committed.

The LoP's post is constitutional and the government fears the LoP will expose the government, he charged. “The government is not deciding on LoP but

has appointed two deputy chief ministers, a post not mandated in any law,” Jadhav said.

Wadettiwar claimed six to seven farmers die by suicide every day in the state. The government got votes by promising farm loan waiver, but has been postponing its implementation, he said, adding that cotton and soybean farmers were in huge trouble.

As per the National Crime Record Bureau records, in the first eight months of 2025, Maharashtra saw 1,183 farmer suicides, the Congress leader said. While the state government has claimed it sent a farmers' relief fund proposal to the Centre, the latter denies having received it, Wadettiwar said.

Wadettiwar also cited the “rising” crimes against women in the state behind the Opposition's decision to decline the tea party invitation.

There are no employment opportunities in Vidarbha though Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis is from the region, he added.

Assurances of farm loan waiver and ₹2100 to Ladki Bahin Yojana beneficiaries have not been fulfilled, Wadettiwar said. Alleging massive corruption, he said had written to the Fadnavis government seeking a “white paper” on government land transfers. The winter session of the state legislature will be held from December 8 to 14 in Nagpur. Sena (UBT) leader Jadhav has been nominated by his party, the largest Opposition outfit in the lower house with 20 MLAs, for the post of LoP in the legislative assembly, but no decision has been taken on the Cabinet-rank appointment by the speaker.

In the past, Jadhav had written to the state legislature seeking to know if there is any rule mandating that an Opposition party should have 10 per cent of the total strength of the assembly (29 out of 288 seats) to stake a claim to the LoP post.

## Bengal SIR

# EC to hold special camp for sex workers in red-light areas

This initiative comes as a response to concerns raised by organisations working for the welfare of sex workers and their children

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Dec 7:** The West Bengal CEO's office is set to launch a camp on December 9 at Sonagachi, Asia's largest red-light district, to aid sex workers in filling up enumeration forms as part of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, an official said.

This initiative comes as a response to concerns raised by organisations working for the welfare of sex workers and their children.

“A special camp will be held on December 9 at Sonagachi to address the issues of sex workers in filling up the enumeration forms,” the official said.

As part of the initiative, Election Commission officials will “visit the wards within the 166-Shyampukur constituency to meet with sex workers, listen to their concerns, and provide the necessary assistance for completing



the enumeration form fill-up”, he said. Talking to PTI, an official of Amra Padatik, a civil society organisation, said that they were concerned about the fate of sex workers in Kidderpore and Kalighat red-light areas.

“There are around 50 sex workers in Kalighat and 70 in Kidderpore area. They are confused about filling up the enumeration forms. We will talk to the officials at the CEO's office,” he said.

On November 21, three organisations working for the welfare of sex workers - So-

ciety of Human Development and Social Action, Usha Multipurpose Co-operative Society Limited and Amra Padatik - sent an email to the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), outlining widespread problems with the enumeration process.

Some workers were even reported to be leaving the area out of anxiety related to the process.

In response, the CEO's office assured that a dedicated camp would be organised to address these concerns and support the community.

# MACT Thane grants ₹40 lakh to family of plumber killed in 2018

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thane, Dec7:** The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT) in Thane has awarded ₹40.08 lakh as compensation to the family of a man who died in a road accident in 2018.

On November 17 that year, plumber Daulat Waman Davane (38) was hit by a speeding car while he was standing along the service road of Mumbai-Nashik Highway. Shahapur police had registered a case under Indian Penal Code and Motor Vehicles Act at the time.

In the order of November 28, details of which were made available on Saturday, Extra Joint District Judge and Additional Sessions Judge



KP Shrikhande, presiding over MACT Thane, accepted the testimony of the deceased's wife and petitioner Darshana Davane, as well as documentary evidence like FIR, spot panchnama and post-mortem report.

Her evidence about the accident of her husband arising out of the use of the offending vehicle has not been disputed

in her cross-examination, the judge said while rejecting the insurer's claim that the deceased was negligent.

The insurance firm's claim that the driver lacked a valid licence,, which constituted a breach of policy, was also rejected. Accepting that the deceased earned ₹10,000 per month as a plumber and an additional ₹10,000 from a tent business, the MACT calculated the loss of dependency at ₹37,80,000 along with 20 per cent enhancement.

“The petitioners are entitled to the compensation amount of ₹40,08,000 along with interest at 9 per cent per annum from the date of the filing of the petition,” the MACT said.

# Lakhs participate in mega Gita recital

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Dec 7:** Amid Krishna name chants and blowing of conch shells, lakhs of devotees, including sadhus and sadhis from across West Bengal and neighbouring states, took part in a mega Bhagavad Gita recital in Kolkata's iconic Brigade Parade Ground, organisers said.

The monks, clad in saffron robes, read shlokas from copies of the Gita in unison at the venue. Senior BJP leaders, including West Bengal BJP state president Sukanta Majumdar, Union minister Sukanta Majumdar, ex-MP Locket Chatterjee and MLA Agnimitra Paul, and prominent religious figures, including Swami Pradiptananda Maharaj, popularly known as Kartik Maharaj, and Dharendra Shastri, took part in the event.



A monk blows a conch shell during the ‘five-lakh-voices Gita chanting’ event, at the Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata

PTI PHOTO

Christened ‘Panch Lakkho Konthe Gita Path’ (Gita chanting by five lakh voices), the programme is being organised by the Sanatan Sanskriti Sanad, a collective of monks and

spiritual leaders drawn from various monasteries and Hindu religious institutions.

The boisterous crowd, which included a large number of young men and women, chant-

ed the name of Lord Krishna amid blowing of conch shells and ululations. Governor C V Ananda Bose, who addressed the gathering, recited from the Bhagavad Gita and spoke of peace and non-violence.

Pradiptananda Maharaj asserted that the congregation of lakhs was spontaneous and did not have any role of any political party.

“Despite non-cooperation from a section of the administration, over five lakh people turned up spontaneously out of love and devotion to recite the Bhagavad Gita and for saving the Sanatan Hindu Dharma,” Pradiptananda Maharaj said.

“In a climate of division, spiritual practice can restore calm and direction,” he said. Paul said, “The Gita is not for Hindus alone, it is for all 140 crore people of India.”

# Maha strengthens support for muscular dystrophy patients



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thane, Dec 7:** Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde Sunday said the state government will intensify its support for children suffering from muscular dystrophy, including pursuing the Central government to expedite vaccine availability for the rare disease.

He was speaking at a programme in which electric wheelchairs, Ventmed BiPAP machines (non invasive ventilation apparatus to facilitate

breathing) and essential medical supplies were distributed to children affected by muscular dystrophy as well as other patients.

“The willpower of these children is very strong. We should all stand by them. The Maharashtra government will continue to follow up with the Union government towards developing a vaccine. The government will immediately provide 100 additional electric wheelchairs, oxygen concentrators and portable ventilation devices to deserving patients,” he said. Emphasising the need for affordable physiotherapy for children with the condition, he said the state will mobilise support through CSR funds, the Public Health Department and public participation to reduce treatment costs, adding that every effort will be taken to make it more accessible.



Artisans craft idols of Jesus Christ ahead of Christmas festival, in Nadia, West Bengal

PTI PHOTO

## MOSQUE ROW

# Guv: WB ready to end religious arrogance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Dec 7:** West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose Sunday asserted that the state was “ready to end religious arrogance”, while pointing out at “something witnessed in Murshidabad a day before”.

Suspended Trinamool Congress MLA Humayun Kabir Saturday laid the foundation stone for a mosque modelled on Ayodhya's Babri Masjid in Murshidabad's Rejinagar.



Addressing a Gita recital at Brigade Parade Ground here, he said that the state is also ready to end corruption.

The governor said that he witnessed something happening in Murshidabad Saturday, without naming anybody or any programme.

Reciting from the Bhagavad Gita, the governor said, “Pari-tranaya sadhunam vinashaya cha dushkritam dharma-sans-thapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge”, which means “To protect the righteous, to annihilate the wicked, and to reestablish the principles of dharma I appear on this earth, age after age.”

# Road renovation in Medinipur makes villagers happy

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kolkata, Dec 7:** The renovation and construction of a 5.8 km long road from Padadiha to Banshpatri in Kharagpur subdivision of West Bengal's Paschim Medinipur district began recently, under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).

A total of four new culverts are being built along with the road. The project is expected to cost more than ₹5 crore. The residents were elated as

it would bring an end to years of roadblocks and traffic jams on the stretch.

For a long time, residents had to suffer daily due to the poor condition of this road. Especially, there was no end to the problems in the transportation of school students. With the much-awaited road renovation and construction of new projects beginning with a deadline, this has created an atmosphere of relief and hope among the residents.

Zilla Parishad party leader



Mohammad Rafiq inspected the progress of the work and expressed hope for its comple-

tion soon. “I saw the quality of the road - it is going great. If this road is built, the people

of Paschim Medinipur as well as Jhargram district will benefit,” he told the media persons.

A total of four new culverts are being built along with the road

The project is expected to cost more than ₹5 crore

The residents were elated as it would bring an end to years of roadblocks and traffic jams on the stretch

The residents have thanked the state administration and the Centre for the initiative. Notably, the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana was launched by the Central government to provide connectivity to unconnected habitations, as part of a poverty reduction strategy. The objective of the programme is to set high and uniform technical and management standards, and facilitate policy development and planning at the state level to ensure sustainable management of the rural roads network.



of the day  
**Quote**

From the 2014 Lok Sabha election till 2025...this has been a time of continuous victories for the BJP. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, our leader Narendra Bhai became the Prime Minister for the third consecutive time and set a record after many decades

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

Where there is an agitation, I am not there. I will be there if there is a discussion

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

It is disappointing to see the manner in which Tezpur University is being tackled by the government. At the same time, I am proud of the manner in which the students and faculty of Tezpur University have conducted themselves. Firm, unbending and dignified

GAURAV GOGOI | CONGRESS LEADER

**SHORT TAKES**

**Massive fire destroys 10 fishing boats**

**Kollam (Kerala):** Around 10 fishing boats anchored in Ashtamudi Lake were gutted in a massive fire in the early hours of Sunday, police said. The incident occurred in the Kureepuzha area under the jurisdiction of the Anchalumood police station. According to police, the blaze was first spotted past midnight, and the boats, anchored in a row, caught fire. Residents and fire personnel rushed to contain the flames. "As per preliminary assessment, around 10 boats were destroyed. The exact cause is yet to be identified, but a gas cylinder blast is suspected," a police officer said, adding no casualties have been reported.

**10 Naxals surrender**

**Balaghat (MP):** Ten hardcore Naxalites, including four women, carrying a collective bounty of ₹2.36 crore on their heads, surrendered in Balaghat Sunday, prompting Chief Minister Mohan Yadav to declare Dindori and Mandla completely free from the Naxal influence. The surrendered Naxalites laid down modern weapons, including AK-47 and INSAS rifles, in front of Yadav. They were part of the 'Bhorsaadev area committee' of the outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist), officials said.

**Forest fire triggers landmine blasts**

**Mendhar/Jammu:** At least half-a-dozen landmines exploded due to a forest fire along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district Sunday, officials said. The fire broke out in the Balakote forest along the zero line around 10 am, detonating about six landmines in the anti-infiltration obstacle system, the officials said.

**SHO dies at police station**

**Patna:** The SHO of a police station in Patna died on duty, officials said Sunday. Sanjeev Kumar, the Station House Officer (SHO) of the Ramkrishna Nagar police station, collapsed after returning to his office following a patrol of the area Saturday night, they said. "He was taken to a private hospital, where he was declared dead. Kumar, a resident of Muzaffarpur district, was an officer of the 2009 batch," an official said.



There is no issue with the construction of a mosque, but if someone builds it in the name of Babar, then we will not only oppose it, but we will also ensure it is swiftly dismantled

KESHAV PRASAD MAURYA | UP DEPUTY CM

**CAMPAIGNING CONCLUDES FOR FIRST PHASE OF KERALA LOCAL BODY POLLS**

Campaigning for the first phase of the local body elections in Kerala concluded Sunday evening, with the Election Commission making arrangements for voting in seven districts December 9



**Timeline of nightclub fires in past decade**

**OCTOBER 2015:** Collectiv nightclub fire in Bucharest, Romania, killed 64 people. Pyrotechnics during a performance by the metalcore band Goodbye to Gravity ignited the club's flammable polyurethane acoustic foam. The fire spread rapidly.

**DECEMBER 2016:** 'Ghost Ship' warehouse fire in Oakland, California, claimed 36 lives. The deadliest blaze in the history of Oakland was triggered during an electronic music and dance party.

**JANUARY 2022:** Fire at nightclub in Yaounde, Cameroon, killed 16 people. Blaze occurred due to fireworks lit while champagne was being served in the club.

**JANUARY 2022:** 19 killed in fire at Sorong nightclub in West Papua province, Indonesia. Club was burned by two groups which clashed inside the building.

**AUGUST 2022:** 23 charred to death at Mountain B nightclub fire in Bangkok, Thailand. Possible short circuit or an issue with the electrical system believed to have triggered the blaze.

**OCTOBER 2023:** Fire at nightclub complex in Murcia, Spain, claimed 13 lives. Fire was possibly triggered by an electrical fault.

**APRIL 2024:** 29 killed in blaze at Masquerade nightclub, Istanbul. Fire broke out when the venue was closed for renovation work.

**MARCH 2025:** Fire at a nightclub in North Macedonia, killed 62 people. Blaze broke out when sparks from indoor fireworks hit the ceiling and set it alight.

**Fireworks likely cause of blaze; 4 held**



Officials inspect the charred remains of the nightclub after a fire broke out due to a cylinder blast, in North Goa district, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

formed a committee of South Goa Collector, Deputy Director of Fire and Emergency Services and Director of Forensic Laboratory to inquire into the incident, he informed. The committee will submit its report within a week. The government has worked out measures to ensure that such incidents do not occur again, the CM said.

An advisory will be issued to all the nightclubs and other establishments in the hospitality sector asking them to take adequate safety precautions,

he added. Government officials who allowed the club to operate -- even though it violated several rules -- would be suspended during the day, Sawant said.

The state authorities will also conduct an audit of clubs which operate without permissions and also the places where there is a possibility of people gathering in large numbers, the

chief minister said.

An ex-gratia of ₹5 lakh for the nearest kin of each deceased and ₹50,000 for the injured would be paid from the State Disaster Management Authority Funds, he said.

Arrangements would be made to take the mortal remains of the deceased to their native places, he informed.

**PREZ, PM, OTHERS CONDOLE DEATHS; CONG SEEKS PROBE**

**NEW DELHI/PANAJI:** Leaders cutting across party lines Sunday expressed grief over loss of lives in the Goa nightclub fire even as the Congress brass demanded a thorough probe into the incident which claimed 25 lives. President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed deep pain and sadness over the incident and prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured. "Deeply pained by the tragic fire incident in North Goa district resulting in the loss of precious lives. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. May they find strength during this difficult time. I pray for the speedy recovery of those injured," the President said in a post on X. Prime Minister Modi called the fire incident in Arpora, Goa "deeply saddening". "My thoughts are with all those who have lost their loved ones. May the injured recover at the earliest," he wrote on X. Modi said he spoke to Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant about the situation. Vice President C P Radhakrishnan too condoled the deaths in the inferno. Union Home Minister Amit Shah also offered his condolences to the families of those who lost their dear ones and said that the local administration is carrying out rescue and relief operations and providing the necessary care to the affected. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge expressed his deepest condolences to those who lost their loved ones in the blaze. Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, said he was deeply pained by the tragic fire in Arpora. Trinamool Congress leaders also expressed grief over the loss of lives in the fire. In a post on X, TMC's Rajya Sabha deputy leader Sagarika Ghose called it a total collapse of the "double-engine" model of governance in Goa.

**POCSO CASE**

**After spending 8 yrs in prison, man acquitted**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Dec 7:** Having spent eight years in prison after being arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting a girl, a 56-year-old man has been acquitted by the trial court citing "scanty evidence".

The statement of the victim, who was said to be suffering from moderate intellectual disability, contradicted other evidence, said the special court for Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

In the ruling delivered November 28, judge N D Khose held that "evidence adduced by the prosecution is scanty and not sufficient to prove the guilt of the accused beyond reasonable doubt".

As per the prosecution, the incident took place August 23, 2017, in Kurar area of Malad (East).

The accused, who was the girl's neighbour, allegedly entered her house when she was alone, sexually assaulted her, and threatened her family.

The girl's mother filed a police complaint and the accused was arrested August 24, 2017, for rape under the Indian Penal Code as well as offences under the POCSO Act.

As per the prosecution, the girl was 17 years old at the time of the incident.

The court, however, found that her evidence "does not inspire confidence as she has not stated in detail what actually happened with her".

"Not only that, the medical evidence on record totally contradicts the evidence of the victim girl," the court said. Thus, the special judge concluded, "Prosecution has miserably failed to prove that the accused committed rape on victim girl knowing that she was below 18 years of age and insane." The accused should be released forthwith if not wanted in any other case, the court said.

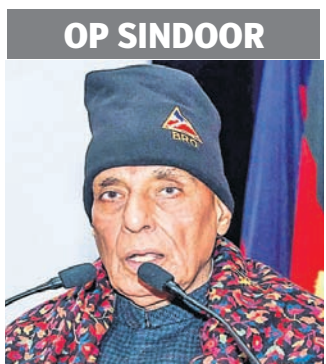
**‘Could have done much more’**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Leh, Dec 7:** Indian armed forces "could have done much more" during Operation Sindoor but deliberately opted for a "restrained" response and did what was necessary, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said Sunday.

Singh, who inaugurated 125 strategically significant infrastructure projects by Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in different parts of the country including the Shyok tunnel in Ladakh, stressed that better connectivity, especially in border areas, made the successful military operation possible.

"Our continuous endeavour has been to strengthen our communication and connectivity with all border areas, including Ladakh. We are fully committed to the overall development of each border area," the defence minister said here.



He highlighted the growth in India's defence manufacturing sector, noting that production has risen from ₹46,000 crore in 2014 to a record ₹1.51 lakh crore, and the country that was import-dependent has emerged as a producer-exporter.

"Just a few months ago, we witnessed how, in response to the heinous terrorist attack in Pahalgam, our armed forces executed Operation Sindoor, and

the world knows what they did to the terrorists.

"Of course, we could have done much more had we wanted, but our forces demonstrated not only valour but also restraint, doing only what was necessary," Singh said.

Stressing that such a massive operation was feasible due to strong connectivity, Singh said, "Our armed forces were able to deliver logistics right on time. Connectivity with the border areas was also maintained, giving Operation Sindoor its historic success."

"During Operation Sindoor, the coordination we witnessed among our armed forces, the civil administration, and the citizens of the border areas was incredible. I express my gratitude to every citizen of Ladakh as well as the border areas for extending their support to our armed forces," the defence minister said.

**UNESCO MEET**

**India's intangible heritage showcased at Red Fort**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 7:** From thematic galleries to performing arts, India showcased its rich cultural heritage at the Red Fort complex as the inaugural ceremony of a key UNESCO meeting on 'safeguarding intangible legacy' began here Sunday evening.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is attending the event as the chief guest. The 20th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) will take place at the Red Fort from December 8 to 13.

This is the first time that India is hosting a session of the UNESCO panel. Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, UNESCO Director-General Khaled El-Enany, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, and India's Ambassador and Per-

manent Delegate to UNESCO, Vishal V Sharma, were present at the opening ceremony.

According to UNESCO, the session will examine nominations submitted by state parties for inscription on the UNESCO ICH lists, review the status of existing elements, and provide international assistance for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

Vishal V Sharma will chair the session. On arrival at the venue, the guests were welcomed with traditional Mysuru headgear and a scarf. Outside, artistes showcased dance forms such as bhangra of Punjab, bihu of Assam and tribal dance forms.

Galleries mounted in British-era barracks by the National Museum, the National Gallery of Modern Art, and others will delight the delegates gathered here from across the world.



Tableau of intangible cultural heritage of India on the UNESCO list, such as Durga Puja of Kolkata and Garba of Gujarat, have been showcased at the venue.

In his address, Shekhawat said the Red Fort has been an iconic witness to the continuity of life in India. India hosting this meet is not just a matter of pride, but a reminder that cultural ethics echo through its rich past, he said.

"This event is a gateway to a dialogue for civilisations,"



IAF's Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team performs manoeuvres during an air show at Atal Sarovar, in Rajkot

PTI PHOTO

outcome," he had told PTI.

The dossier for the nomination was submitted in 2023. India sent the nomination for the 2024-25 cycle.

India currently has 15 elements inscribed on the coveted UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, including the Kumbh Mela, Durga Puja, Garba dance, yoga, the tradition of Vedic chanting and Ramlila -- the traditional performance of the Ramayana.

Aggarwal had said that more than 1,000 delegates from 190 countries are expected to attend the event. The 17th-century fort complex has been closed for general visitors from December 5-14 in view of the event.

Built by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan as the palace fort of his capital Shahjahanabad, the Red Fort complex is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a centrally-protected monument.







of the day

quote

Iran supports the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's (SCO) counter-terrorism plans and cooperation efforts



Mehرداد Kiaei | Director General for SCO and BRICS Affairs at Iran's Foreign Ministry

If you're working for a designated terrorist organisation and you bring drugs to this country in a boat, we will find you and we will sink you. Let there be no doubt about it



Pete Hegseth | United States Secretary of War

The future of the world will be digital. The future of the economy will be digital, and the future of work will be digital



Irfaan Ali | President of Guyana

SHORT TAKES

Indonesian Prez to visit Pak from today

**Islamabad:** Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto will undertake his maiden official visit to Pakistan from Monday to deepen bilateral ties and explore new avenues of cooperation. Subianto has been invited by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the visit from December 8-9, the Foreign Office said in a statement, adding that he will be accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising key ministers and senior officials. "This will be President Prabowo's first visit to Pakistan," the Foreign Office said.

Mild earthquake jolts western Nepal

**Kathmandu:** A 4.6-magnitude earthquake hit western Nepal's Sudurpashchim province Sunday morning. There were no immediate reports of damage. The earthquake was recorded at 8:28 am with an epicentre located in the Ghusa area of the Darchula district, according to the National Earthquake Monitoring and Research Centre. Tremors were felt in the neighbouring districts as well. However, there were no immediate reports of any damage caused by the tremor.

Pak: Security forces foil attack on Jaffar Express

**Karachi:** Security forces foiled an attempt to attack the frequently-targeted Jaffar Express passenger train in Pakistan's Balochistan province, according to a media report Sunday. Unidentified insurgents planted an improvised explosive device (IED) on the track used by the Peshawar-bound train in the Nasirabad area of the province Saturday, the Dawn newspaper reported. Law enforcement agencies cordoned off the area after receiving information about the device and defused it, the report said, quoting a police official.

Supporters of Machado march

**Caracas:** Supporters of Venezuelan Opposition leader María Corina Machado demonstrated Saturday in several cities worldwide to commemorate her Nobel Peace Prize win ahead of the prestigious award ceremony next week. Dozens of people marched through Madrid, Utrecht, Buenos Aires, Lima and other cities in support of Machado, whose organization wants to use the attention gained by the award to highlight Venezuela's democratic aspirations. The organization expected demonstrations in more than 80 cities around the world Saturday.

Pakistan criticises Jaishankar's remarks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, Dec 7:** Pakistan Sunday criticised External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's remarks against its military, saying its institutions, including armed forces, are a pillar of national security.

Speaking at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit in New Delhi Saturday, Jaishankar said much of India's problem emanates from Pakistan's military and even referred to its support for terror groups. Like there are good terrorists and bad terrorists, there are good military leaders and apparently not-so-good ones, he said, seen as a reference to Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir. "Pakistan categorically rejects and condemns the highly inflammatory, baseless and irresponsible comments made by the Indian External Affairs Minister," Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said in response to media queries regarding Jaishankar's comments.

Andrabi said that Pakistan is a "responsible" state and its all institutions, including armed forces, are a "pillar of national security."

'Chinese jets target Japanese aircraft'

AGENCIES

**Tokyo, Dec 7:** Japan said Sunday that Chinese fighter jets had aimed their radar at Japanese military aircraft in two "dangerous" incidents near Japan's Okinawa islands, an account Beijing disputed.

"These radar illuminations are a dangerous act that went beyond what is necessary for the safe flight of aircraft," Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told reporters, adding that Japan had lodged a protest with China over Saturday's "extremely regrettable" incident.

Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, meeting with his Australian counterpart Richard Marles in Tokyo, said Japan would respond "resolutely and calmly" to China's conduct in order to maintain regional peace and stability. But a Chinese navy spokesperson, Colonel Wang Xuemeng, said Japanese aircraft had repeatedly approached and disrupted the Chinese navy as it was conducting previously announced carrier-based flight training east of the Miyako Strait.



Japan and Australia urged calm, a month after the Japanese leader's recent remarks on Taiwan that stirred tensions between Tokyo and Beijing

CHINA-JAPAN TIES STRAINED OVER TAIWAN

The encounters near islands claimed by both Japan and China are the most serious run-ins between the two militaries in years and are likely to further escalate tension between the two East Asian powers.

Relations have soured in

the past month since Takaichi warned that Japan could respond to any Chinese military action against Taiwan if it also threatened Japan's security.

Directing a radar beam at another aircraft is a threatening step because it signals a potential attack and may force the targeted plane to take evasive ac-

■ China says Japanese aircraft were disrupting Chinese drills

■ Most serious China-Japan military confrontations in years

■ Radar illuminations considered a threatening act

■ Australian minister 'deeply concerned' about China's action

■ China-Japan relations soured over Japan PM's Taiwan comments

tion. Japan did not say whether the Chinese had locked on their planes or how Japan's aircraft responded. Wang, in a statement on official social media channels, countered that Japan's statement was erroneous and its actions had seriously endangered flight safety. "We solemnly demand that the Japanese side immediately stop slandering and smearing and strictly restrain front-line actions," Wang said. "The Chinese Navy will take necessary measures in accordance with the law to resolutely safeguard its own security and legitimate rights and interests."

US, Ukraine officials wrap up third day of diplomatic talks

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Kyiv, Dec 7:** Russian missile and drone attacks overnight into Sunday killed at least one person in Ukraine, after US and Ukrainian officials wrapped up a third day of talks aimed at ending the war.

A man was killed in a drone attack on Ukraine's northern Chernihiv region Saturday night, local officials said, while a combined missile and drone

attack on infrastructure in the central city of Kremenchuk caused power and water outages. Kremenchuk is home to one of Ukraine's biggest oil refineries and is an industrial hub.

Kyiv and its Western allies say Russia is trying to cripple the Ukrainian power grid and deny civilians access to heat, light and running water for a fourth consecutive winter, in what Ukrainian officials call "weaponising" the cold.

Hong Kong votes in legislative election

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Hong Kong, Dec 7:** Hong Kong voters are casting ballots Sunday in their second legislative election since a 2021 overhaul of the system eliminated the pro-democracy Opposition in the Chinese territory.

The poll, coming less than two weeks after an apartment fire that killed at least 159 people, is a possible test of public sentiment about the government's handling of the tragedy.

The focus is on voter turnout, which fell to about 30 per cent in the last election in 2021, after the overhaul dampened interest. Some analysts believe mounting public anger over government accountability in the blaze could suppress turnout further.

Turnout stood at about 20 per cent of eligible voters at 3:30 pm local time, after the polls had been open for eight hours. The polls close at 11:30 p.m.

"I'm performing my civic duty as a citizen to vote ... but I'm not too certain which candidate is hardworking and which is not," retiree Kwan Lam said outside a polling station. "I chose the one who cares for the elderly." City leader John Lee called on citizens to vote, saying it would send a signal on promoting reforms. He said he would put forth a proposal to the new legislature on how to support the fire survivors, many of whom have been left homeless.

Ahead of the vote, Chinese authorities called foreign media to a rare meeting to warn them that they need to comply with the city's national security laws. Election campaigning was suspended after the fire and remained subdued in the final days out of respect for the victims. Government efforts to drive up turnout, seen as a referendum on the new electoral system, had been in full swing before the blaze.

WEEK'S BEST PICS



People dressed as Santa Claus ride their Harley Davidsons through the streets of Lugano, Switzerland, for the traditional Santa Claus parade, December 6



Uzbekistan's Javokhir Sindarov in action against Hans Niemann of the US during the Diving Chess Competition in Cape Town, South Africa, December 4



A performer spits fire during a parade marking National Clown Day in San Salvador, El Salvador, December 3



Motorcycles pass a puddle by a war-damaged building in Yarmouk, a Palestinian neighborhood originally established as a refugee camp in 1957, in Damascus, Syria, December 7



of the day

QUOTE

We increased guidance on credit growth. We have revised it from 12 per cent to 14 per cent. We see a robust credit growth, particularly from the RAM segment, MSME is almost growing at 17-18 per cent and agriculture and retail is around 14 per cent



CS SETTY | CHAIRMAN, SBI

This week, markets will closely track India's CPI print on December 12... Globally, the spotlight will be on the US Federal Reserve's interest rate decision, which could drive risk sentiment across emerging markets already navigating currency pressures



AIT MISHRA | SVP, RESEARCH, RELIGARE BROKING LTD

Gold is expected to remain on positive side as traders will be focusing on the US Federal Reserve's FOMC meeting outcome and the Fed Chair Jerome Powell's commentary as well, while on the data front, the focus will be on China's trade and inflation data and the US jobs data



PRANAV MER | VICE PRESIDENT, EBG (COMMODITY & CURRENCY RESEARCH), JM FINANCIAL SERVICES

SHORT TAKES

Advent ends Whirlpool India stake discussions

**Mumbai:** Global private equity firm Advent International's talks to acquire US giant Whirlpool's India unit for up to \$1 billion have collapsed due to disagreements over valuation, four people familiar with the matter told Reuters. Advent had emerged as the frontrunner to acquire a 31% stake in Whirlpool of India from its Michigan-based parent, Whirlpool Corp, which would have triggered a mandatory open offer to acquire a majority stake, the sources said. In January, the US-listed home appliance maker said it had a 51% stake in its India unit and wanted to pare that to about 20% to pay off a major chunk of its debt amid a major rejig of its global assets.

Mcap of 5 of top-10 most-valued cos rises

**New Delhi:** The combined market valuation of five of the top-10 most valued firms surged by Rs 72,284.74 crore last week, with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Infosys emerging as the biggest winners. While Bharti Airtel, TCS, ICICI Bank, Infosys and Bajaj Finance were the gainers, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, State Bank of India, Larsen & Toubro, and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) faced erosion from their valuation. Last week, the BSE benchmark eked out a marginal gain of 5.7 points, while the NSE Nifty dipped 16.5 points. Reliance Industries remained the most-valued domestic firm, followed by HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, TCS, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro and LIC.

BoM slashes retail loan rates by 25 bps

**New Delhi:** Public sector lender Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) on Sunday announced reduction in interest rates by 25 basis points on retail loans, including home, car, education and other loans linked with Repo Linked Lending Rate (RLLR) in line with the RBI rate cut. With the revision effective Saturday, the bank's home loan starts from 7.10 per cent interest rate and car loan from 7.45 per cent, which is among the lowest in the banking industry, BoM said.

The industry, in Q2, just grew about 3.5-4 per cent. So, it's not been something which has been really great. Monsoon was the spoilsport, and the festive window was also small



AMIT SYNGLE | MD & CEO, ASIAN PAINTS

\$800BN: MUSK REJECTS SPACEX VALUATION

Elon Musk on Saturday dismissed media reports that SpaceX is raising funds at an \$800 billion valuation, calling them inaccurate. "SpaceX has been cash flow positive for many years and does periodic stock buybacks twice a year to provide liquidity for employees and investors," Musk said in a post on X



FPIs' exodus reaches ₹1.55L-cr

Indian Rupee depreciated by nearly 5% against the US dollar this year, which makes dollar returns smaller for foreign investors and encourages withdrawal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 7:** Foreign investors have pulled out Rs 11,820 crore (\$1.3 billion) from Indian equities in the first week of this month, primarily driven by the sharp depreciation of the rupee.

This sharp withdrawal follows a net outflow of Rs 3,765 crore in November, further pressuring markets.

These outflows come after a brief pause in October, when FPIs invested Rs 14,610 crore, breaking a three-month streak of massive withdrawals -- Rs 23,885 crore in September, Rs 34,990 crore in August, and Rs 17,700 crore in July.

According to NSDL data, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) withdrew a net amount of Rs 11,820 crore from Indian equities in the first week of this month. This takes the total outflow for 2025 to Rs 1.55 lakh



crore (\$17.7 billion).

Analysts attribute the renewed selling primarily to currency concerns.

"The rupee has depreciated nearly 5 per cent this year, prompting FPIs to pull out during such periods," said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments.

Adding to this, year-end portfolio repositioning by global investors, a typical December trend before the holiday season, has also intensified selling, noted Vaqarjaved Khan, Senior Fundamental Analyst at Angel One.

Khan said delays in final-

ising the India-US trade deal have further dampened global sentiment.

"However, despite the FPI exodus, the impact on markets has been cushioned by strong domestic participation. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought equities worth Rs 19,783 crore during the same period, completely offsetting the foreign selloff," Vijayakumar said.

DII confidence has been supported by India's robust GDP numbers and expectations of an improvement in corporate earnings ahead.

The sentiment received an additional boost after the RBI's

JAN DHAN ACCOUNTS NOW HOLD ₹2.75L-CR



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 7:** India's financial inclusion drive has reached a major milestone, with Jan Dhan accounts across the country now holding a total balance of about Rs 2.75 lakh crore.

This works out to an average of Rs 4,815 in each account, according to M Nagaraju, Secretary, Department of Financial Services.

Delivering the 69th Foundation Day Lecture on India's Financial Inclusion Journey at the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), Nagaraju said India has witnessed a transformation in how people access and use financial

services.

He described the country's progress as "nothing short of a miracle", noting that the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) launched in 2014 played a crucial role in bringing more than 57 crore people into the formal banking system.

He said that financial inclusion is now deeply linked with India's development model, especially through Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT).

In the current financial year alone, Rs 3.67 lakh crore has been transferred directly to beneficiaries, ensuring transparency and timely delivery of government support.

Nagaraju highlighted that

the majority of Jan Dhan accounts continue to benefit people living outside major cities.

About 78.2 per cent of these accounts are located in rural or semi-urban areas, while women hold around 50 per cent of them.

This, he said, reflects the government's emphasis on empowering rural households and improving financial access for women.

He also pointed out that India's Financial Inclusion Index has steadily improved, standing at 67 as of March 2025.

The rise indicates better access, wider usage and improved quality of financial services, supported by ongoing initiatives under PMJDY.

Responding to a question, the DFS Secretary said that LIC is in the final stages of digitising its product purchase and benefits disbursement systems.

These fully digital services are expected to be rolled out for consumers "in a couple of months".

India's financial inclusion efforts have been gaining momentum through awareness events and ground-level initiatives across the country.

Recently, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra attended a Jan Dhan anniversary event in Indore, where he emphasised that financial inclusion remains central to India's growth story.

Olympians promote solar power at TPCODL's stall



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 7:** Hockey India President and Olympian Padma Shri Dilip Tirkey, along with Olympians Sravani Nand and Deepgrace Ekka, visited the TPCODL stall on the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana at the Kalinga Stadium.

The athletes interacted briefly with the team at the stall and were apprised of the key features of the rooftop solar initiative.

Tirkey said that solar energy has become an important choice for households and encouraged citizens to make use of the support available under the scheme.

Utkal Karate School Secretary Hari Prasad Pattnaik also

MF equity investments surge 2X in November

Mutual funds invested net ₹43,465cr in equities last month

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, Dec 7:** Mutual funds sharply increased their equity purchases in November, riding on a steady rise in investor inflows and improving market sentiment.

According to data sourced from SEBI, MFs invested a net Rs 43,465 crore in equities last month -- more than double the Rs 20,718 crore they pumped in during October.

Market data shows that fund houses were consistent buyers through almost the entire month, stepping back only on two days when they pulled out Rs 2,473 crore.

The strong and steady buying interest from mutual funds helped lift overall market mood and contributed to the rise in benchmark indices.

While equity inflows surged, mutual funds turned significant sellers in the debt segment.

Net outflows from debt funds shot up to Rs 72,201 crore in November, compared with Rs 12,771 crore in October.

The strong domestic investment trend comes at a time



when the industry has already been witnessing robust participation from retail investors through systematic investment plans (SIPs).

In October, SIP inflows hit an all-time high of Rs 29,529 crore, rising from Rs 29,361 crore in September, as per data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI). Industry experts say this steady flow of money, especially into SIPs -- reflects disciplined investor behaviour despite short-term market volatility.

They believe such consistent contributions have helped expand the industry's total assets under management and continue to provide crucial support to equity markets.

Analysts also note that while confidence in equities remains strong, some investors are gradually diversifying towards debt-oriented schemes and gold, given the uncertain global environment.

UIDAI considering ban on Aadhaar photocopying

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 7:** A new rule to discourage entities like hotels, event organisers, etc, from taking photocopy of Aadhaar cards of customers and storing them in physical form will be published soon, a senior government official said.

Such practices are in contravention of the present Aadhaar Act.

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) CEO Bhuvnesh Kumar told PTI that the authority has approved a new rule mandating registration of entities that seek Aadhaar-based verification like hotels, event organisers, etc, to provide them access to a new technology that will enable them to verify an individual by scanning QR code or connecting with new Aadhaar app in the works, the top official said. "The new rule has been approved by the authority and will be notified soon. It will mandate registration of offline verification-seeking entities like hotels, event organisers. The objective is to discourage



paper-based Aadhaar verification," Kumar said.

The new verification process will also resolve issues related to several works that get hampered due to downtime of intermediate servers that connect with the central Aadhaar database. Entities seeking offline verification will get access to API (application programming interface) through which they can update their system for Aadhaar verification.

UIDAI is beta-testing a new app that will enable app-to-app verification without needing to connect with the central Aadhaar database server for every verification.

The new app can also be used at places like airports, shops that need to sell age-appropriate products, etc.

"The ease of verification will enhance offline verification without the use of paper while maintaining privacy of users or any risk of their Aadhaar data getting leaked for misuse," Kumar said.

The new app is expected to finetune Aadhaar authentication service in line with Digital Personal Data Protection Act, which will be completely operational in 18 months.

Eternal founder unveils teaser of 'Temple'

Deepinder says Temple is an 'experimental device' designed to measure brain blood flow accurately, in real time, and on a continuous basis

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 7:** Deepinder Goyal, founder and CEO of Zomato's parent company Eternal, Sunday shared a first look at his new product, a brain blood flow monitoring device called 'Temple'.

He posted a short teaser on Instagram with the caption "Getting there," giving users a glimpse of the small wearable gadget.

The device has sparked curiosity ever since Goyal was seen

wearing a tiny golden sensor on the right side of his forehead.

Many users wondered what it was, prompting him to explain its purpose in an earlier LinkedIn post.

Goyal said that Temple is an 'experimental device' designed to measure brain blood flow accurately, in real time, and on a continuous basis.

He said the device was created while he was researching his recently discussed 'Gravity Ageing Hypothesis'.

Last month, Goyal shared a series of posts outlining this "scientific yet unconventional" idea. He suggested that gravity could directly affect how humans age.

In his words, he was sharing the theory not as a CEO but as someone curious enough to follow a strange scientific path.

He noted that while Newton defined gravity and Einstein described how it bends space-



time, he believes gravity may also shorten human lifespan.

Goyal said he is studying connections between three factors: how standing upright slightly reduces blood flow to the brain, how sensitive cer-

tain brain regions like the hypothalamus and brainstem are to small changes in circulation, and how these regions control the ageing process.

According to him, these links could open a new understanding



# Not a fairy tale ending for Mandhana, Palash

A DREAMY PROPOSAL TURNED INTO A QUIET GOODBYE AS INDIAN STAR BATTER, MUSIC COMPOSER CALL OFF WEDDING, BRINGING AN END TO A TWO-WEEK SAGA AND A SIX-YEAR RELATIONSHIP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 7: India batter Smriti Mandhana Sunday announced that her wedding had been called off and urged fans and media to stop the speculation, while music composer Palash Muchhal confirmed that he had "decided to move on" from the relationship.

Muchhal also warned of legal action against those spreading defamatory rumours.

Mandhana, one of India's most prominent women cricketers, issued her first public statement on social media after rumours about her personal life had intensified over the past month. She was supposed to marry



I believe there is a higher purpose driving us all and for me that has always been representing my country at the highest level. I hope to continue to play and win trophies for India for as long as possible

SMRITI MANDHANA

Muchhal November 23 but the wedding was postponed after Mandhana's father, Shriniwas

was hospitalised due to a heart ailment. "I need to clarify that the wedding is called off. I would

like to close this matter here and implore all of you to do the same," she wrote.

Calling herself a "very private person", Mandhana said the need to set the record straight compelled her to speak. She requested fans and the public to "respect the privacy of both families" and allow them the "space to process and move on".

Soon after Mandhana's post, Palash Muchhal issued his own statement, confirming that he had "decided to move on" and expressing anguish over what he described as baseless online chatter. "I have decided to move on in my life and step back from my personal relationship. It's been very difficult for me to see people re-

act so easily on baseless rumours about something which has been most sacred to me. It's the most difficult phase of my life and I will deal with it gracefully holding on to my beliefs," he wrote.

Both statements come against the backdrop of intensified social media discussions and unverified reports, prompting public figures to step in to curb conjecture.

Mandhana, 28, has been a central figure in Indian women's cricket for nearly a decade, and her presence in the batting line-up has been crucial across formats. With India set for a busy 2026 calendar, the left-hander reiterated that her professional commitments remain her priority.

# India's FIH Junior WC dream over



Colts lose to title holders Germany 1-5 in semifinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Dec 7: India's dream of reclaiming the FIH Men's Junior World Cup after a hiatus of nine years went up in smoke as they lost 1-5 to seven-time champions and title holders Germany in the semifinal here Sunday.

The Indians had last won the Junior World Cup in 2016 in Lucknow. The ruthless Germans scored through Lukas Kossel (14th, 30th minutes), Titus Wex (15th), Jonas von Gersum (40th) and Ben Hasbach (49th).

India pulled one back in the 51st minute through a penalty-corner conversion by Anmol Ekka. Spain had earlier defeated Argentina 2-1 in the first semifinal. India started the match on a positive note but the Germans took control of the proceedings as the game progressed.

Germany had the first shy at the goal in the eighth minute but goalkeeper Prinedeep Singh was alert to deny Ben Hasbach's reverse hit.

Germany grew in confidence as the match progressed and secured their first penalty corner in the 13th minute.

Germany earned a penalty stroke as the goal-mouth flick from the resultant penalty corner

hit the body of an Indian defender. Lukas Kossel made no mistake in slotting home the goal.

Germany doubled the lead at the stroke of the first quarter when Wex deflected in a cross from Kossel. Just 11 seconds from the end of the second quarter, Germany secured their second penalty corner and Kossel was on target as the reigning champions took a handsome 3-0 lead half-time.

India will now play Argentina for the bronze medal Wednesday, while Germany will take on Spain in the final

India had a bright chance to pull one back three minutes after the change of ends but Sourabh Anand Kushwaha fumbled in front of an open goal. Germany continued their domination as the Indians looked a pale shadow of themselves.

Germany secured back-to-back penalty corners in the 36th minute but wasted both the chances. Down and out, India secured back-to-back penalty corners in the 51st minute and Anmol found the net from a variation effort. The Indians tried to press hard thereafter but by then the match was already over.

## SHORT TAKES

### Saraswat bags title

Guwahati: India's Sanskar Saraswat clinched his maiden Super 100 title after eking out a three-game victory over compatriot Mithun Manjunath in the men's singles final of the Guwahati Masters here Sunday. The 19-year-old from Jodhpur showcased grit and firepower while unleashing a barrage of smashes to outwit former national champion Manjunath 21-11, 17-21, 21-13 in an all-Indian final that lasted 50 minutes. However, Tanvi Sharma, a world junior championships silver medallist, registered a runner-up finish in women's singles after losing 18-21 18-21 to Tung Ciou-Tong of Chinese Taipei in the finals. Indian men's doubles pair of Pruthvi Krishnamurthy Roy and Sai Pratheek K also finished second best after losing 13-21 18-21 to Malaysia's sixth seed Kang Khai Xing and Aaron Tai in a lop-sided final.

### Villa stun Gunners

London: Aston Villa ignited the Premier League title race with a last-gasp 2-1 victory over leaders Arsenal that allowed Manchester City to close the gap to two points Saturday. Substitute Emiliano Buendia struck the winner in the fifth minute of stoppage time with virtually the last kick of a sizzling Villa Park duel to leave the resurgent Midlands club just three points behind Arsenal who slipped to their first defeat in 19 games in all competitions. City enjoyed a routine 3-0 home win against Sunderland. Champions Liverpool remain 10 points behind Arsenal though after drawing 3-3 at Leeds United. Fourth-placed Chelsea drew 0-0 at Bournemouth, while Everton are up to fifth as they beat Nottingham Forest 3-0 at home. Tottenham Hotspur claimed only their second home league win of the season in a 2-0 defeat of Brentford.

### Kane scores hat-trick

Berlin: Harry Kane was substituted in at the hour mark and still had enough time to score a hat trick. The England captain took his goal tally for Bayern Munich this season to 28 and the defending champions maintained their eight-point lead over second-placed Leipzig with a 5-0 thrashing of Stuttgart on the road. With Kane on the bench, Konrad Laimer took on the scoring duties and produced a superb finish.

# Norris new champion

BRITON CLINCHES FIRST FORMULA ONE WORLD TITLE, ENDS McLAREN'S 17-YEAR DROUGHT

REUTERS

Abu Dhabi, Dec 7: Mentally fragile, too cocky, a privileged Gen Z kid bankrolled by a wealthy father, rapid but lacking the killer instinct that separates champions from the rest -- Lando Norris has faced plenty of criticism on his road to the top in Formula One.

He has been booed by hostile crowds in parts of the world with different favourites, replying with a smile and wave from the podium, and taken flak for mistakes including colliding with McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri.

The 26-year-old, who was world karting champion in 2013 and became Britain's 11th Formula One champion since the 1950s with third place in Abu Dhabi Sunday, has repeatedly made the naysayers eat their words.

There are plenty of fired-up fans ready to defend their hero, although maybe not in Australia

where questions have been asked and conspiracies raised about alleged McLaren favouritism of the Brit over local boy Piastri.

Until last year's Miami Grand Prix, social media keyboard warriors dubbed Norris Lando No-wins' -- holder of the Formula One record for most podiums without a win (15) after finishing run-



I've not cried in a while. I didn't think I would cry but I did. It feels amazing. I now know what Max feels like a little bit

LANDO NORRIS

ner-up eight times in 110 starts.

That matter dealt with, the focus turned to the McLaren driver's inability to convert pole positions into victories -- a 'fact' he buried this season by winning the Melbourne opener from the top slot. Of his seven wins this campaign, five

■ Norris ends Verstappen's four-year reign

■ Verstappen wins race, Piastri second

■ McLaren celebrate first title double since 1998

have come from pole position.

### HEART ON SLEEVE

Norris has increasingly worn his heart on his sleeve, speaking out openly about mental health issues and becoming a role model as a new type of F1 driver far removed from stereotypes of old.

Retired four-times world champion Sebastian Vettel was quick to identify that attitude as a source of strength rather than weakness.

"Heroism is fine but it's also part of the heroism to just talk about your problems and your weakness. I think that's a great development to see and to witness," he told Reuters in April.

## ISSF WORLD CUP FINAL

# Golden shot by Simranpreet

SILVER LINING FOR AISHWARY, ANISH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Doha, Dec 7: Young Simranpreet Kaur Brar overcame a challenging field to win the women's 25m pistol gold while men's 50m rifle 3-position exponent Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar bagged a silver on his ISSF World Cup Final debut here Sunday.

World Championships silver-medallist in 25m rapid-fire pistol Anish Bhanwala also ended the year on a high with another second-place finish as India took their tally to six, including two gold, three silver and a bronze.

With another strong showing on day two, India maintained their second position on the medal tally behind China who have three gold, two silver and three bronze. Simranpreet, whose father left his govern-



ment job to support his daughter, did her parents proud with biggest achievement of her career by shooting a superb 41 in the final, equalling the World junior record in the process.

The other Indian to qualify for the eight-shooter final, Esha Singh finished seventh. Double Olympic bronze medallist Manu Bhaker could not make the final after finishing ninth in the qualification round with a score of 581.

# FC Goa defend Super Cup title

Manolo Marquez's team wins the tournament for record-extending third time, books spot in CL 2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Margao, Dec 7: FC Goa won the AIFF Super Cup after they prevailed over East Bengal FC in sudden-death shootout here Sunday, the title triumph also giving them a spot in next season's AFC Champions League 2.

The win helped Manolo Marquez's team to become the first side to defend the Super Cup title and win it for a record-extending third time.

In a riveting contest at the Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium, the Gaurs emerged 6-5 victors in the shootout to clinch their second successive title in the tournament played among the top teams from Indian Super League and I-League.

The match went into extra time after both teams were unable to find the target, and



they could not score in the additional 30 minutes too, taking the contest to tie-breaker.

The teams were locked 4-4 in the penalty shootout, and the match was then decided in sudden death with FC Goa having the last laugh. In the sudden death, Sahil Tavora scored the winner for FC Goa after Udanta Singh too found the back of the net.

Substitute Hamid Ahadad scored for East Bengal but PV Vishnu missed the target for East Bengal.

The final ebbed and flowed

both ways right from the start. The hosts, buoyed by the boisterous support from the stands, began well with a couple of set-piece opportunities early on, which the East Bengal defence eventually negotiated.

East Bengal, however, soon recovered their composure and began orchestrating chances. Their first opportunity came in the 12th when Miguel Ferreira was played in behind the defence and had just goalkeeper Prabhsukhan Singh Gill to beat, but shot wide.

## Inter Miami bag first MLS Cup title



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Fort Lauderdale, Dec 7: Inter Miami CF secured a historic 3-1 win over Vancouver Whitecaps FC to clinch the Club's fourth trophy and first-ever MLS Cup title.

Lionel Messi assisted second-half goals from Rodrigo De Paul and Tadeo Allende, delivering Miami their first Philip F Anschutz Trophy in the club's sixth season.

Notably, Messi earned MLS Cup MVP honors after dishing out two assists. Additionally, Spanish legends Jordi Alba and

Sergio Busquets were selected as Icons of the Match presented by Royal Caribbean as they closed out their stellar careers lifting one last title.

Inter Miami have earned their most sought-after trophy since signing Messi in July 2023, a monumental move that kick-started a new era of North American soccer. They previously won Leagues Cup (2023) and Supporters' Shield (2024) titles, and are now the 16th all-time MLS Cup winner. This all comes in Miami's sixth season, and with the club set to open Miami Freedom Park next April.

REUTERS

Brisbane, Dec 7: Australia stormed to an eight-wicket victory in the second Ashes test in Brisbane to go 2-0 up in the series on Sunday as England's resistance was broken on day four by a pace blitz from unlikely hero Michael Neser.

Helped by the catching magic of home captain Steve Smith, 35-year-old Neser finished with 5-42 at his home ground in his first test in three years, leaving the hosts needing 65 runs to win the day-night match.

While England quick Gus Atkinson grabbed two wickets, opener Jake Weatherald (17 not out) and number four batter Smith (23 not out) mowed



down the target after dinner, condemning England to a 15th loss in their last 17 tests in Australia.

England seamer Jofra Archer had a heated exchange with Smith in the final overs but ended up getting smashed for two fours and a six by the fired-up skipper.

Australia finished on 69 for two and Smith sealed the win in style, thumping Atkinson for another six over deep square to the delight of the home fans in the crowd of 27,888.

With Adelaide to come among three matches left in the series, England captain Ben Stokes refused to concede the urn was lost after battling hard in a 152-ball 50.

It would nonetheless take something extraordinary for England to win it from here.

Only one team has ever come back from 2-0 down to win the series in nearly 150 years of test cricket - Don Bradman's Australia in the home Ashes of 1936/37.



Indian head coach Gautam Gambhir, leg-spinner Kuldeep Yadav and South Africa captain Temba Bavuma clicked while being welcomed at a City hotel Sunday. Players of both the teams have arrived in Bhubaneswar for the first twenty-20 match to be played at Barabati Stadium, Cuttack December 9

PC- BIKASH NAYAK