



Adah's choice

Actor Adah Sharma opens up about her preferences when it comes to matters of the heart

LEISURE | P2



Youth screens go dark

Australia bans social media for children under sixteen, blocking TikTok, YouTube, Instagram and Facebook from midnight

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Equities in red

Indian equity benchmarks fall for a second straight session Tuesday, led by information technology stocks

BUSINESS | P11



Colts aim bronze

India's title hopes are gone, but they aim for bronze against Argentina to please home fans in FIH Men's Junior World Cup

SPORTS | P12

Leopard rescued from trap dies



POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, Dec 9: A middle-aged male leopard died Tuesday after being rescued from an illegal trap set by suspected poachers in a forest under Karatapata beat of Purunagada section in Angul Range.

Forest officials said the leopard was caught late Monday night in a trap made of galvanised wire near Chanamalina Nullah, close to Dimiripal village. Locals reportedly heard the big cat's roar early Tuesday and alerted the Forest department personnel, who located the trapped leopard using a drone camera. Officials said the animal sustained severe injuries while attempting to free itself from the trap. It was tranquilised and rescued before being taken to Kulasingha nursery near Purunagada for treatment.

However, the leopard died due to internal bleeding caused by pressure wounds on its abdomen, confirmed Angul divisional forest officer (DFO) Nitish Kumar. The postmortem was conducted by departmental veterinary officer Debasis Panda.

The incident has raised serious concerns about poaching and forest surveillance, especially given the forest's proximity to Satkosia Wildlife Sanctuary. Villagers expressed shock at how poachers managed to set traps so close to protected areas. They said they had never noticed any traps or leopards in the area and discovered the animal after hearing dogs bark and the leopard roar while heading to their farmlands.

Forest authorities are investigating the matter and have intensified patrolling in vulnerable locations.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



What!! There flight is on time!?

Minister orders 10% cut in IndiGo flights

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Mumbai, Dec 9: The Civil Aviation Minister has asked for a 10 per cent cut in planned IndiGo flights to help restore order at India's biggest airline, which cancelled thousands of flights nationwide after failing to plan for tighter safety regulations.

Posting a picture of IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers, sitting with folded hands in front of him, Minister Ram Mohan Naidu, in a post on X, said that the airline management was summoned to the ministry to provide an update. "The Ministry considers it necessary to curtail the overall IndiGo routes, which will help in stabilising the airline's operations and lead to reduced

Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu said no airline, however large, will be permitted to cause hardship to passengers

cancellations. A curtailment of 10 per cent has been ordered. While abiding by it, IndiGo will continue to cover all its destinations as before," he said.

The curtailment is double of what the sector regulator Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had ordered Monday.

As part of the winter schedule for 2025-26, the airline has

been operating over 2,200 flights per day. Airline, on its part, said there is "steady improvement across the network", as it reinstated flights to all 138 stations. It flew

more than 1,800 flights Tuesday, which will go up to nearly 1,900 Wednesday, IndiGo said in a statement. "We have optimised our operations, and our on-time performance is also back to normal levels," it added.

PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 9: At a time when the country has witnessed at least 30 booth-level officer (BLO) deaths under duress across 12 states during the Election Commission's second-phase Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, the Supreme Court Tuesday voiced serious concern over the alleged lack of cooperation from state governments.

The bench asked the EC to report any instance of non-cooperation or obstruction affecting the work of BLOs, assuring that the court would intervene wherever necessary. When the EC's counsel suggested that the pressure on BLOs stemmed partly from interference by political parties and other external factors, Chief Justice Surya Kant made it clear that the court does not wish to be drawn into a political blame game. "Deal with the situation or it will cause anarchy. Bring the impediments to the functioning



of BLOs to our notice, and we will address them," the CJI said.

A bench of CJI Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi said, "What we want to ensure is that the SIR is done on the ground without any glitches."

"Bring to our notice instances of lack of cooperation, hindrances to work of BLOs and we will pass appropriate orders," the bench told senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for the Election Commission (EC).

Dwivedi submitted, "The state governments are supposed to cooperate with us and give us protection. If the state government refuses to do so, then we have no option other

than taking the local police under deputation. If the situation still does not improve, then we will have to call central forces."

Justice Bagchi said the poll panel cannot take the police under its jurisdiction until the commencement of the poll process.

Dwivedi said the EC has all constitutional powers to deal with instances of BLOs and other officials engaged in SIR work being threatened.

"Deal with the situation or it will cause anarchy," CJI Kant told Dwivedi, terming the situation "very serious".

Senior advocate V Giri, appearing for petitioner Sanatani Sangsad and others, pointed out that the petitioners have alleged violence and threats against BLOs and other officials engaged in SIR work and sought directions to the EC to protect them.

Justice Bagchi said the poll panel cannot take the police under its jurisdiction until the commencement of the election process.

Threat to BLOs will cause anarchy: SC

Winter Session ends 18 days ahead of schedule

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: Winter Session of the state Assembly was Tuesday adjourned sine die, 18 days ahead of its scheduled end December 31.

Speaker Surama Padhy announced that the House was adjourned sine die after government chief whip Saroj Kumar Pradhan moved a motion in this regard, stating that no major official business was left.

Earlier, the session was scheduled to function for 29 sittings, but it ended after 11 working days.

The Winter Session is significant as President Droupadi Murmu addressed the members on the opening day November 27. She was the first President to address the Odisha Assembly.

During the 11 working days, the House approved the Supplementary Budget of ₹17,440 crore. Apart from the Odisha Appropriation Bill, the House also passed six other Bills, including those related to the

CAG flags dropout, infra woes in schools

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has found student dropout, lack of proper infrastructure, and low student-teacher ratio in government-run schools in the state, and observed that the objective of universal access to school education was not achieved in the state due to the dropout of students at different levels of education.

The CAG carried out a performance audit of 108 government schools in 12 blocks of Bhadrak, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Nuapada, Sambalpur and Subarnapur districts. It noticed that the objective of universal access to school education was not achieved in the state due to the dropout of students at different levels of education.

Teachers, who play a pivotal role in the schooling system, were not available in schools according to norms, hampering the quality of education in government and government-aided schools.

Gross enrolment ratio in secondary and higher secondary school levels declined in the state, compared to a rise at the national level, it said.

The CAG also found that the student dropout across the classes (Class-II to XII) ranged from 3.12 to 7.26 per cent between 2018 and 2023.

Reacting on the issue, educationist Naba Kishore Pujari said, "The CAG report highlights government's negligence toward school education. Surrender of 18% funds, poor utilisation of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, declining enrolment, and over 21,000 schools with inadequate pupil-teacher ratio show the poor state of school education. Strengthening School Management Committees, proper budgeting, teacher recruitment, and meeting teachers' demands are essential to address these issues."

Similarly, another educationist Basudev Bhat said, "The report exposes a systemic collapse in Odisha's school education. Less than 50% of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan budget is used, and hundreds of crores go unspent each year. Schools lack basic facilities like ramps and toilets, and funds for CwSN children are misused. We demand a White Paper on the report."



MLAs to get ₹90K salary, CM ₹1 lakh

Bhubaneswar: The Assembly Tuesday passed four Bills on the last day of the Winter Session to increase the salaries and allowances of the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, ministers, MLAs, and other office-bearers. The pension for former MLAs has also been revised. The revised structure will take effect retrospectively from June 5, 2024. The salary of MLAs has gone up from ₹35,000 to ₹90,000. The pension of former MLAs has been increased from ₹30,000 to ₹80,000, and they will also receive a monthly travel allowance of ₹12,500. The CM's salary has been increased from ₹41,000 to ₹1 lakh per month, the vehicle allowance from ₹17,000 to ₹91,000, and the sumptuary allowance from ₹40,000 to ₹1.83,000.

thanked all for the smooth functioning of the session.

Bank fraud: CBI books Jai Anmol Ambani

New Delhi: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Tuesday registered two FIRs against Anil Dhirubhai Ambani (ADA) group companies - Reliance Home Finance Ltd (RHFL) and Reliance Commercial Finance Ltd - in separate bank fraud cases, naming Jai Anmol Anil Ambani in one of them and bringing alleged loan defaults worth ₹14,852 crore under scanner, officials said Tuesday. Following the registration of the FIR against Jai Anmol, the son of industrialist Anil Ambani, the CBI teams carried out a search at his residence on the seventh floor of the Sea Wind building, Anil Ambani's home in Cuffe Parade, Mumbai. The CBI has named Jai Anmol Ambani, the then Director of RHFL, along with ex-CEO Ravindra Sharad Sudhakar in connection with the case of allegedly cheating the Union Bank of India of ₹228 crore.

SRK among world's 67 Most Stylish People

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan made it to the list of 67 Most Stylish People of 2025 released by the 'New York Times'.

The names of other celebrities included Sabrina Carpenter, Doechii, A\$AP Rocky, Vivian Wilson, Nicole Scherzinger, Walton Goggins, Jennifer Lawrence, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Cole Escola and Noah Wyle among others.

The 60-year-old actor was recognised for his appearance at the Met Gala earlier this year, where he wore a design by renowned designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee. "Known by his army of fans simply as SRK, Bollywood's biggest star and one of the world's most famous actors brought the Met Gala into his orbit as a first-time guest. He wore a design by Sabyasachi Mukherjee," read a note about the superstar on the list



The 60-year-old actor was recognised for his appearance at the Met Gala earlier this year, where he wore a design by renowned designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee

It was followed by the pictures from the event, featuring the actor in an all-black bespoke menswear. It was complemented by a crystal-studded pendant shaped as the letter 'K' in one of the necklaces around his neck. Shah Rukh will next

feature in "King" alongside his daughter Suhana Khan and Deepika Padukone.

The film is directed by Siddharth Anand, who has previously collaborated with Shah Rukh in 2023's "Pathaan", which went on to emerge as a

hit at the box office. The upcoming film is produced by Red Chillies Entertainment and Marflix Pictures.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES

Your charismatic appeal is always ready-to-use. And today, you will possibly reap rich dividends through it. But there is always scope for improvement and you will find yourself drawn to altruism. Ganesha guarantees satisfaction in lending a helping hand to the needy.

TAURUS

You will enjoy your responsibilities at the home front, says Ganesha. People whom you trusted to watch your back might let you down today. Remember, what you sow is what you reap, so do not fall short of putting in the effort required to make something fruitful. Be careful and cautious in dealing with people, advises Ganesha.

GEMINI

Today, a strong emotional link with someone special may get established, predicts Ganesha. So you will remain delighted and elated for most part of the day. Still, some petty problems may spoil your happy mood later in the day. Diffuse tension with a light-hearted approach.

CANCER

Today, you will realise that in this materialistic world, everything is judged by its appearance, and what is unseen counts for nothing. You will work hard to be seen and will crave for attention. Though Ganesha strongly suggests that this will only bring you grief as the most beautiful of flowers shrivel and your appearance will not help you beyond a point, you are not likely to follow his advice.

LEO

Though God is benevolent, it is but necessary that we reciprocate the magnanimity of the Almighty through our actions. So wake up today with a little prayer on your lips. Make it a point to visit a temple for some peace of mind. The other alternative is to do a small pooja at home. Connect with your spiritual side through meditation and find peace with yourself, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

If curiosity killed the cat, it is going to inspire you to go to exotic places and meet new people, says Ganesha. Enriching experiences enter enthusiastically today. But hold on, don't unpack, as you may set off on yet another adventure. Ganesha sees you being crack ductile and malleable.

LIBRA

Lady Luck offers you a mixed bag today, so expect anything and everything. You may also develop a knack for pointing out others' mistakes, while turning a blind eye to your own shortcomings. Ganesha disapproves of this.

SCORPIO

You've been keeping things within for too long now, and today may just be the day when you vent it all out, says Ganesha. This overwhelming pressure may have an effect on your health. Ganesha counsels you to spend quality time with your loved ones to ease up a bit.

SAGITTARIUS

Skilled at multi-tasking as you are, today you may just take things one by one. Instincts will rule the roost for most of the time. And govern your actions too. But as peculiar as the day may be, you shall find yourself back to being your own assured self.

CAPRICORN

If trouble happens to knock at your door today, your guardian angel will come to your rescue, foresees Ganesha. Unlike many others who waste life running after impossible goals, you will be content with your achievements. But that does not, by any means, imply that you aren't ambitious. Just like yourself, your ambitions will be simple in nature, to the extent that it may elicit awe among people.

AQUARIUS

You will seek spirituality as you feel thoroughly dejected by your present situation. Ganesha says that even struggling courageously with circumstances requires a spiritual endeavour. These trying times give you the patience to deal intelligently with challenges and setbacks.

PISCES

Your spiritual and religious streak comes to the fore. You will likely visit a place of worship to soothe your troubled soul. Meditative techniques may also be resorted to in your quest for peace and calm, says Ganesha.



MILA KUNIS SAYS NEIGHBOURS COMPLAIN TO HER ALL DAY LONG

Mila Kunis has revealed her role as president of her homeowners association means she's flooded by complaints all day long. The 42-year-old actress is head of the HOA - homeowners association - for her eight-home neighbourhood in Beverly Hills, but she has suggested the role is a thankless task.

KIMMEL SIGNS NEW ABC DEAL

Jimmy Kimmel has signed a contract extension to stay on air until 2027. The 58-year-old late night host has revealed his *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* deal - which was set to expire in May 2026 - has gained another year with ABC.



LITERARY JOURNEY ON WHEELS

Walking BookFairs Travel Writing Festival to roll Dec 14

After hosting the country's first lit-fest on a train last year, the organisers are excited to bring this edition on a bus to celebrate sustainable, mindful travel and the transformative power of stories, ideas, and food that transcend borders

BHUBANESWAR: The third edition of the Walking BookFairs Travel Writing Festival is set to embark on a unique literary journey from Bhubaneswar to Puri December 14, promising book lovers and writers an immersive experience on wheels. Organised in partnership with OrissaPOST, the festival will travel in a specially curated bus carrying books, authors, conversations, and curated cultural stops, making literature accessible beyond conventional spaces.

Renowned English poet, novelist, translator, and journalist Jerry Pinto will inaugurate the festival at the Walking BookFairs pick-up point in Bhubaneswar. Following the inauguration, the travelling literature festival will begin its day-long route, blending storytelling with exploration.

The festival will host two key panel discussions. The first, titled *Reading, Writing and Publishing in a Fractured World*,



will feature renowned authors and journalists including Jerry Pinto, Ravi Singh, Sanjay Kak and Sampad Patnaik.

The second session - *The Enduring Importance and*

Joys of Slow Living and Travel - will bring together Dharitri and OrissaPOST Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy, Editor Tathagata Satpathy, businessman-investor-auth-

or Ravi Mantha, and travel writer-novelist Chandras Choudhury. The discussion will explore mindful travel, sustainable living, and the cultural value of unrushed journeys.

Describing the festival's growing legacy, founders Akshaya Bahibala and Satabdi Mishra said, "The Walking BookFairs Travelling Writing Festival is India's first travel literature festival, born in Odisha. After hosting the country's first lit-fest on a train last year, we are excited to bring the third edition as 'a litfest on a bus.' This year, we celebrate sustainable, mindful travel and the transformative power of stories, ideas, and food that cross borders."

The travelling festival aims to create meaningful engagement between readers and writers through interactive sessions, shared travel experiences, and conversations that celebrate the joy of reading on the move.

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Qualities Adah considers essential in a partner

MUMBAI: Actress Adah Sharma opened up about her preferences when it comes to matters of the heart.

In her recent post on Instagram, she revealed the kind of man she is drawn to and the qualities she considers essential in a partner. Taking to her Instagram handle, Adah shared a new video in which she responded to a fan who asked her what kind of guy she likes. The clip also featured text that read, "Ask me anything: What kind of guy you like and what quality he should have?"

In response, *The Kerala Story* actress said that the one quality she values most is a "very small, tiny ego," emphasising that humility is essential for her. Sharing her video, Sharma wrote, "Small and tiny hona bahut important hai."

On the professional front, the 33-year-old actress is gearing up to play a Devi in an upcoming trilingual film directed by National Award-winner BM Giriraj. Sharing her excitement about the project, she said she feels grateful to be entrusted with such distinctive, powerful roles and to collaborate with accomplished filmmakers.

Speaking about the film, Adah shared, "I am very fortunate to be getting the opportunity to play such amazing roles and work with such talented filmmakers."



Lulia on impact of RK classics

IAN S

MUMBAI: Actress and singer Lulia Vantur recently reflected on her early connection with Indian cinema. Speaking exclusively to this agency, she revealed that late veteran actor Raj Kapoor's iconic films played a significant role in shaping her first impressions while growing up in Romania.

The actress shared how his timeless storytelling, music, and emotional depth introduced her to the vibrant world of Hindi films long before she ever stepped into India.

When asked whether she had watched films from the golden era featuring legends like Amitabh Bachchan, Dharmendra, and others, Lulia explained that her earliest exposure to Indian cinema actually began much earlier in Romania through Raj Kapoor's classics.

"Definitely. I grew up watching iconic Hindi films. In Romania, we even watched Raj Kapoor's movies in theatres. They shaped my early image of Indian cinema."

The singer expressed, "Every language has its own soul, its own musicality. Music holds the essence of culture. Indian music is like a rainbow to me — full of colors, tones, traditions, emotions. By learning Hindi music, I feel richer as a person. It added a whole new dimension to my Romanian roots."

Lulia Vantur gained recognition in Romania for hosting shows such as and has since expanded her career to Bollywood. She appeared in films like *Bunraku* and collaborated with Himesh Reshammiya on musical projects.

IAN S

SHRUTI'S cinematic obsessions

MUMBAI: Actor-singer Shruti Haasan revisited one of her long-time cinematic obsessions as she shared a moment from the 1955 horror thriller cult classic *The Night of the Hunter* directed by Charles Laughton.

Shruti took to her Instagram stories and re-posted an eerie still from the film, calling it a timeless favourite.

"Forever obsessed with this film," she wrote, reaffirming her admiration for the Laughton-directed thriller, known for its haunting imagery and performances.

The *Night of the Hunter* stars Robert

Mitchum, Shelley Winters and Lillian Gish. The film was based on the 1953 novel of the same name by Davis Grubb.

The plot is about Preacher Harry Powell (Mitchum), a serial killer who poses as a preacher and pursues two children in an attempt to get his hands on \$10,000 of stolen cash hidden by their late father.

The novel and film draw on the true story of Harry Powers, who was hanged in 1932 for the murder of two widows and three children in Clarksburg, West Virginia.

The film's lyrical and expressionistic style, borrowing techniques from silent film, sets it apart from other Hollywood films of the 1940s and 1950s, and it has influenced such later directors as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Robert Altman, Spike Lee, Martin Scorsese, the Coen brothers and Guillermo del Toro.

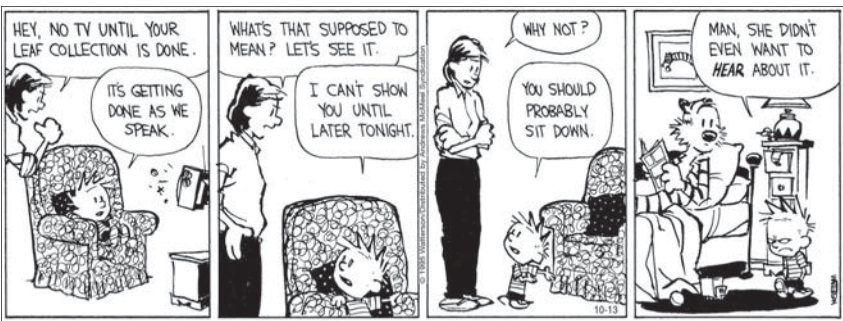
IAN S



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

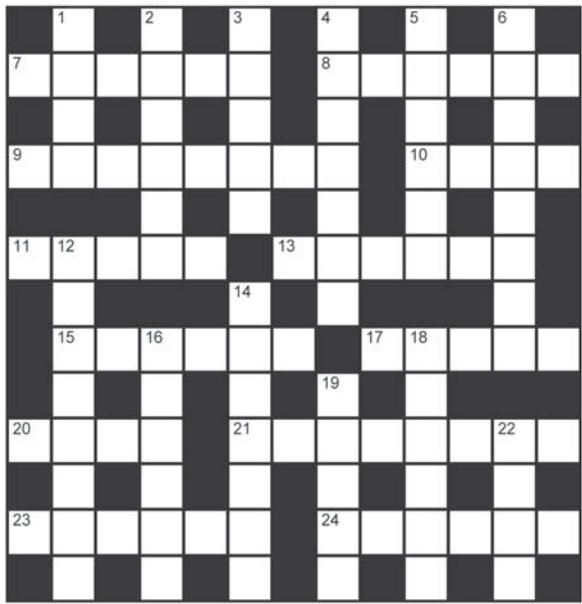


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



- Across**

7 Ravel classic

8 Cry of dismay (2,4)

9 Health drink

10 Minute amount

11 Venomous snake

13 Mombasa native

15 Airline passenger's problem (3,3)

17 Dwelling

20 High point

21 Discount a price (4,4)

23 Shooting star

24 Bookstore section

Down

1 Good earth

2 Mescal button source

3 Coffee shop order

4 Cloaked

5 Unusual knickknack

6 Secured

12 Down in the mouth

14 Carpenters' tools

16 A little giggle (3-3)

18 Homeowner's fiscal map

19 Snares

22 "Star Trek" speed

SUDOKU

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

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| | | 2 | | | 6 | | | |
| | 6 | 3 | | 4 | | | | |
| | | | | | | 9 | | |
| | | | 6 | 9 | | | | 8 |

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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| I | U | F | E | B | O | C | | | | | | |
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SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Pravat, Biranchi to receive best proof-reader award

CUTTACK: The Adhyapika Niharika Das Smruti Nyasa has announced that this year's Best Proof-Reader Award in Odia will be jointly conferred on Pravat Ranjan Beura of Bhubaneswar and Biranchi Narayan Mishra of Rourkela. In a press release issued recently, the convener of the outfit Deepak Kumar Mahanta stated that the award will be presented at a ceremony December 14 at the Gandhi Bhawan, Cuttack. Lakshminarayan Sahu Mahavidyalaya former principal Kamal Prasad Mohanty will grace the occasion as chief guest, while renowned litterateur Baishnab Charan Mohanty will attend as chief speaker. With an aim of highlighting the importance of proof-reading before the society and encouraging before the proof-readers, the Adhyapika Niharika Das Smruti Nyasa has been honouring the best proof-reader in Odia with a cash prize every year since 2024.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT



By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public, Junagarh, No.712, Date.11:11.2025, I, Benudhar Senapati, R/o. Vill- Junagarh, PO/ PS- Junagarh, Dist- Kalahandi (Odisha) declare that Saraswati Senapati is my eldest daughter. That, after joining Anand Marg Pacharak Sangha she is known as Abadhutika Ananda Subrata Acharya, daughter of Sri Sri Anandamurti Ji, her Aadhar Card bearing No.xxxxxxxx 8233 and her permanent address is Vill/PO- Baglata, PS-Joypur, Dist-Purulia (West bengol). That, both the names are one and same person.

I, Mihnujuddin Shaikh, S/o. Sofian Shaikh, resident of Ward No. 12, Jaipura, PO/PS/ Dist. - Kendrapara, PIN - 754211, Odisha declare by this Affidavit No.2490, dtd. 29.11.2025 that now onwards I shall be known as SK MIHNOJUDDIN for all future purposes.

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate Rayagada, dated 08.12.2025 I, Binod Kondagori , Address Vill- Burujuguda, PO-Rekhapadar, P.S-Chandili, Dist-Rayagada, Pin Code - 765029, Odisha, declare that I have changed the name of my son from Binad Kondagori to Binod Kondagori. Henceforth, he shall be known as Binod Kondagori for all purposes. Binod Kondagori

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate Rayagada, dated 20.08.2025 I, Suraj Kumar Batra , Address Vill- Bhatipada, PO- Jkpur, P.S-Chandili, Dist- Rayagada, Pin Code -765017, Odisha, declare that I have changed the name of my son from Surata Bhatria to Suraj Kumar Batra . Henceforth, he shall be known as Suraj Kumar Batra for all purposes. Suraj Kumar Batra

Two MoUs inked for agri, digital farm services push



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: In a significant push to strengthen agricultural development and digital services for farmers, the Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment (DAFE) Tuesday signed two key Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with partner organisations. The pacts aim to boost value chain development for major crops and scale up digital agricultural advisory services across the state. The first MoU, signed between DAFE and Heifer International, focuses on developing value chains for ginger, turmeric, and millets (Shree Anna) in Odisha. The partnership aims to modernise production practices, improve market access, and strengthen organised value chain support, ultimately enhancing farmers' incomes. The second MoU, executed between DAFE, the department of Fisheries & Animal Resources Development (FARD), and M/s Tatwa Technologies Ltd., pertains to the operation, management, and maintenance of Odisha's mobile-based digital agricultural extension service—the Krushi Samrudhi Helpline. The initiative aims to strengthen mobile-based advisory services at the grass-roots level by delivering real-time crop, livestock, fisheries, and weather advisories, helping farmers make informed decisions and improve productivity.

THE INITIATIVE AIMS TO STRENGTHEN MOBILE-BASED ADVISORY WITH REAL-TIME UPDATES ON CROPS, LIVESTOCK, FISHERIES, AND WEATHER

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo, who also holds the Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment and Energy portfolios, said the new agreements would "help us reach the un-reached and ensure timely government assistance for farmers in need." Fisheries and Animal Resources Development and MSME Minister Gokulnanda Mallik highlighted the impact of real-time livestock advisories, noting that they have enabled farmers and livestock rearers to address challenges more effectively. Providing detailed insights, Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment Principal Secretary Arabinda Kumar Padhee said the Krushi Samrudhi Helpline is a toll-free advisory platform currently serving over 80 lakh farmers, offering guidance on 70 crop types, 11 livestock categories, and three fisheries practices. Since its launch, the platform has delivered more than 95 crore crop advisories, 40 crore livestock advisories, 5.32 crore fisheries advisories, and 26 crore weather- and scheme-based advisories, he added. The signing ceremony was attended by senior officials, including FARD Principal Secretary Suresh Kumar Vashishth; the Directors of Agriculture, Horticulture, Soil Conservation, Fisheries, and Animal Husbandry; and representatives from Heifer International and M/s Tatwa Technologies.

Centre okays ₹44,771cr for Odisha roads

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: The Centre Tuesday approved ₹44,771 crore for major national and state highway projects in Odisha, giving a substantial boost to the state's infrastructure. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways cleared the proposals, aimed at improving connectivity and driving economic growth. Odisha Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan and Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari reviewed the projects in New Delhi. The projects are expected to be completed in the 2025–26 fiscal, significantly strengthening the state's road network. One of the major highlights is the 8-lane expansion of the Bhubaneswar–Puri highway, which is expected to ease rising traffic and ensure faster, smoother travel between the twin cities. Another key project is the 6-lane upgrade of the 140 km Tangi–Puitola–Ichhapuram stretch, which will significantly improve regional connectivity



across multiple towns. Additionally, the 400 km Rourkela–Barbil–Paradip corridor, a key route for freight movement to Paradip Port, will be expanded to 8 lanes. A 68 km stretch of NH-149, from Palalahara to Pitiri, will also be upgraded to 4 lanes to ease congestion in the area. Alongside national highways, several key state highways are also set for upgrades. The Barpali–Bolangir, Kesinga–Bhawanipatna–Junagadh, and Brahmapur–Kalusundhpur roads will be widened to 4 lanes, ensuring smoother travel across major cities and districts. The Brahmapur–Kalusundhpur stretch, in particular, will further strengthen industrial and commercial connectivity. In another major development, the government has approved a new Greenfield Road Corridor connecting Bhubaneswar directly to Paradip Port. The corridor is expected

to be a game-changer, significantly improving port access and accelerating trade and economic activity. By linking the state capital with one of Odisha's most crucial ports, the project will greatly strengthen regional connectivity. Minister Harichandan thanked Union Minister Gadkari for his continued support in strengthening Odisha's road infrastructure. He noted that the upcoming expansions will significantly ease transportation across urban and rural areas, while giving a strong push to the state's economic growth. The approval follows productive deliberations at the Indian Road Congress held in Bhubaneswar in November 2025, where the Centre had also cleared a ₹1,500-crore plan under the Central Road Infrastructure Fund (CRIF). With these fresh sanctions, Odisha's road network is poised for a major upgrade, improving travel efficiency, boosting industrial activity, and strengthening connectivity across the state.

IIIT-Bhub to host two int’l conferences in Dec

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: The International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT)-Bhubaneswar will host two flagship international conferences this December, attracting researchers, industry leaders, and innovators from across the globe. From December 10 to 14, the institute will host the International Geoscience and Remote Sensing Symposium (InGARSS 2025), a premier event showcasing the latest advancements in geoscience and remote sensing technologies. The inaugural ceremony December 11 will be presided over by Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati. This year, InGARSS 2025 received over 500 paper submissions, with 241 authors selected to present. The programme includes 151 poster presentations, 90 oral presentations, and a student paper competition, featuring 18 finalists chosen from 57



entries. Participants will discuss topics such as AI-driven remote sensing, SAR imaging, climate analytics, disaster resilience, and environmental sustainability, highlighting the global focus on using advanced sensing technologies for societal benefit. Immediately after InGARSS, IIIT-Bhubaneswar will host INDOCRYPT 2025, one of India's premier conferences on cryptography and cybersecurity, from December 15 to 17. Organised by the Cryptology Research Society of India (CRSI), the event will bring together cryptographers, cybersecurity experts, academicians, industry leaders, and policymakers. The valedictory ceremony will be attended by Chief Minister Mohan Charan

Armed gang attacks Chandaka police; 3 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: In a dramatic turn of events, personnel from Chandaka police station were attacked by a group of armed miscreants Monday night while verifying intelligence inputs on criminal activities near Kantabada village. Police said three accused — including one impersonating a police officer — were arrested, while several others managed to flee. According to the written report, police received credible information that a gang armed with lethal weapons was blocking the road near Kantabada and extorting money from commuters. Acting on the tip off, ASI Jyotsnarani Pradhan, accompanied by an IRBN team, reached the spot around 10:10 pm December 8.



Before their arrival, SI A. Kar and the Investigating Officer had already reached the location in plain clothes for verification. They observed around seven to eight armed individuals stopping vehicles and intimidating travellers, with one of them even wearing a police uniform. On noticing the approaching police team, the gang abandoned their motorcycles and fled towards Kantabada. Police seized multiple motorcycles and sharp weapons from the spot. The accused have been booked under Sections 127(2)/29 6/115(2)/308(2)/109(1)/132/221/3 (5) of the BNS read with Section 25(1)(a) of the Arms Act.

Fake landowner held for ₹1L fraud

BHUBANESWAR: Police arrested a man Tuesday for duping a firm of ₹1 lakh in a fake land deal in Kalarahanga. Two individuals, Avani Pattnaik and Akshay, had introduced the complainant to "landowners" Prahlad and Lochan Swain, offering land for an apartment project with a 60:40 share. The complainant paid ₹1 lakh advance after verifying documents, only to discover that the supposed owner was Pahalli Sahoo (59), who had impersonated the landowner. Police apprehended Sahoo in Bachipur; he confessed to the fraud. He has been booked under Sections 420/34 IPC, with investigation ongoing.

KIIT INT’L MUN 2025

Event ends with global delegates & star night

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: The KIIT International Model United Nations (KIIT MUN) 2025 concluded Tuesday after three days of participation from delegates across India and abroad. This year's edition featured three international executive board members, over 20 corporate sponsors, and a star night headlined by Bollywood play-back singer Ash King. The conference began on December 5 with enthusiastic participation from young delegates and more than 30 international students. Speaking at the inaugural session, Pro Vice-Chancellor Prof. Raju KD underscored the growing



importance of diplomacy in a rapidly changing world. "In the digital age, the art of diplomacy is going to be counted," he said, noting that the present world is "mostly polarised." He urged students to view MUN as a platform to understand global complexities and reaffirmed

KIIT's philosophy of "empower, enlighten, enable, and engage" in nurturing future leaders. Vice-Chancellor Saranjit Singh, in his address, lauded the international diversity of the conference, with delegations from three countries. Registrar JR Mohanty highlighted

LOST

I, Ashish Kumar Pradhan, S/O- Akshay Kumar Pradhan, AT/ P.O.- Dera, Rajnagar, Kendrapara, PIN - 754225, has lost my father's Original SALE DEED vide Doc. No.- 673/2005 executed before DSRO, Bhubaneswar along with original patta to that effect, while staying at Kalingavihar, K-5, HIG-484 on date 29.08.2025 and same event has been reported at Tamando Police Station on date 04.12.2025 vide DRS No. 2336/2025. If anybody finds above RSD and patta please inform by Mob. No.- 8320122524 or at Tamando Police Station, Bhubaneswar. Ashish Kumar Pradhan

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 9: A five-member delegation from the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Odisha, representing the Election Commission of India (ECI), has completed a five-day official visit to Poland. The first-of-its-kind international engagement aims to deepen bilateral ties with other democracies and strengthen election management practices through mutual learning. The delegation comprised Additional Secretaries and national-level master trainers Shatrughna Kar and Pramod Kumar Sahu, Khurda District Election Officer Amrit Raturaj, Bhubaneswar Sub-Collector Manoranjan Sahu, and Chinmaya Kumar Seet, Booth Level Officer of Booth No. 144 under the 112 Assembly Constituency. Chief Electoral Officer RS Gopalan said the visit was not only a matter of pride for Odisha but also an opportunity to gain valuable insights into election and electoral roll



management practices. During the visit, the delegation called on the head of the Indian Mission in Warsaw and later held an extended meeting with two Election Commissioners of Poland and the Director (International Relations) of the National Election Commission. Two Election Commissioners (who are Judges) of the National Electoral Commission, along with the Director (International Relations), interacted with the delegation for more than ninety minutes. The exchange covered best practices and their observations on strengthening election delivery. In the course of the interaction, three focused presentations were delivered: an overview of India's election process

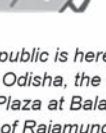
by Satrugghna Kar; a briefing on EVMs, polling day arrangements, and counting procedures by Pramod Kumar Sahu; and a detailed presentation on electoral roll preparation and field-level challenges by Amrit Raturaj. The delegation underscored India's vast election ecosystem, highlighting the use of EVMs and VVPATs, technology-driven processes, large-scale voter management, and mechanisms for independent audit and scrutiny. Polish authorities appreciated the depth of the presentations and shared insights into their democratic practices, electoral system, political framework, and use of modern tools in election management. The Odisha delegation also visited polling stations, voter registration centres, and district election offices to observe pre-poll preparations, polling logistics, and post-poll procedures. These visits provided a close look at Poland's administrative practices and voter service arrangements.

MARKET WATCH

| CURRENCY | | BOURSES | | COMMODITIES | |
|----------|---------------|---------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| INDEX | VARIATION | INDEX | VARIATION | INDEX | VARIATION |
| DOLLAR | 90.03 ▼ 0.24 | SENSEX | 84666.28 ▼ 436.41 | GOLD | ₹130,002 ▲ ₹40 |
| EURO | 104.90 ▼ 0.09 | NIFTY | 25839.65 ▼ 120.90 | SILVER | ₹184,604 ▲ ₹2,862 |

WEATHER

| | BBSR | CTC | FORECAST |
|----------|-------|-------|--|
| Max Temp | 28.7° | 26.4° | Fog or Mist in the morning and Partly cloudy sky later |
| Min Temp | 13.7° | 12.6° | |
| Humidity | 74% | 82% | |
| Rainfall | Nil | Nil | |

|  | | National Highways Authority of India Project Implementation Unit, Keonjhar Plot No - 63/447, At - Badadera, P.O. - Mandua, Dist - Keonjhar, State - Odisha - 758014. | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| PUBLIC NOTICE | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>The public is hereby informed that pursuant to approval of the Competent Authority of NHAI, RO, Odisha, the revised user fee rates for completing of balance length of the project under Fee Plaza at Balani at Km. 331+200 in the section of Rehabilitation and Up-gradation to Four Laning of Rajamunda- Barkote Section of NH-23 (New NH-143) from Km.287.200 to Km.337.185 (Package-III) in the state of Odisha under NHDP Phase-IV of an EPC Mode to be applicable with effect from 10.12.2025 at 00:00 Hours as per the rates given below for the year 2025-26.</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| <p style="text-align: right;">(in Rs.)</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| Balani Toll Plaza At Km. 331+200 | | | | | | | | | |
| Sl NO. | Category of vehicle | Fee for Single journey | Fee for return journey within a day | Fee for Monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month | Fee for single journey for the commercial vehicles registered within the district of the fee Plaza. | | | | |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | | | | |
| 1 | Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle | 85 | 125 | 2750 | 40 | | | | |
| 2 | Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus | 135 | 200 | 4445 | 55 | | | | |
| 3 | Bus or Truck (Two axles) | 280 | 420 | 9315 | 140 | | | | |
| 4 | Three-Axles Commercial Vehicles | 305 | 455 | 10160 | 150 | | | | |
| 5 | HCM OR EME or MAV (Four to Six axles) | 440 | 655 | 14605 | 220 | | | | |
| 6 | Oversized Vehicle (Seven or More axles) | 535 | 800 | 17780 | 265 | | | | |


- The monthly pass for non-commercial vehicle residing within a distance of 20 km of the toll plaza is Rs.340/-
- As per user fee notification, the concessionaire shall issue 50 or more one way tickets at a discounted rate equivalent to 2/3rd of the fee payable during the period of one month from the date of payment of fee. If any person asks more than 50 trips during a period of one month the concessionaire shall be required to issue such tickets at a discounted rate as above (i.e. If 60 trips are asked in a month by any person for a car the amount will be [60 x pre- rounded fee for single trip x 2/3 rounded to nearest 5]).

Sd/-
Project Director

NOT JUST ROADS, BUILDING A NATION

“

Life is life – whether in a cat, or dog or man. There is no difference there between a cat and a man. The idea of difference is a human conception for man’s own advantage.



SRI AUROBINDO

Concert of Europe

At a crucial juncture when US President Donald Trump seems to be too eager to make Ukraine a sacrificial lamb to the aggrandisement of Russian President Vladimir Putin, three European countries – the UK, France and Germany – made a reassuring gesture by organising a summit of sorts in London December 8 to throw their weight behind Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and the German Chancellor Friedrich Merz held talks with Zelenskyy. The meeting came in the wake of US efforts to get Kyiv and Moscow to sign up quickly to a plan to end the war in Ukraine.

Kyiv is in an existential crisis as the US brokered plan wants it to cede territory to Russia. While Ukraine doggedly opposes the idea of forking out its own territory, it also wants security guarantees to ensure that Moscow respects an eventual agreement. Starmer lent his voice to the second proposition when he said Ukraine needed “hard-edged security guarantees”. He has also repeatedly said that Kyiv must determine its own future and not have conditions imposed on it. This is only natural if we understand the current situation that the three European countries are concerned not only for Ukraine’s future, but also for the security of the continent as a whole. Their anxiety stems from the fact that if Russia is “rewarded” with Ukrainian territory as part of a peace deal, it could then attack other European countries in the future with similar demands.

The question is whether the three European countries will eventually be able to stand up to Trump’s pressure tactic. The visuals of Europe’s arguably most influential nations standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Zelenskyy in Downing Street tell only one part of the story. The other part will unfold when they come to Washington. For, the US has made its intentions clear in its National Security Strategy published on December 5 by slamming Europeans for having “unrealistic expectations” as to how the Ukraine-Russia war might end. The three European countries fear, as experts point out, that Trump is interested only in thrashing out a quick fix formula for peace in Ukraine, whereas that could only be a temporary truce which will give filip to even more Russian intrusions into Europe.

Recent incidents show ominous signs pointing towards that direction. For example, unmanned drones caused chaos in civilian airports in Germany, Denmark, Belgium and elsewhere, while an act of railway sabotage was reported in Poland that could have cost lives. There have also been significant cyber-attacks across the continent. Russia is suspected to be the author of such acts. War in Ukraine seems to be just the tip of the iceberg for Europe. This has strengthened the fears that Russia would like to weaken their continent as a whole.

However, till now such European concerns are not expressed loudly and Europe is walking a tightrope while dealing with Trump. Zelenskyy too is circumspect. He needs both the US and European powers for the survival of his fellow countrymen. He can ill afford to antagonize the unpredictable and bullying US President whereas the three European countries alone may not be able to provide him a sense of security to ward off Russia.

European countries can do nothing independent of the Trump-led US. This is evident from the words of Starmer who praised the US President for his peace negotiations. In a compliment to Trump he said this is “the furthest we’ve got in the four years” in just a few weeks. German Chancellor Merz, however, expressed scepticism about the peace deal and said it needs to be carefully examined.

In short, European leaders are in no position to incur Trump’s wrath even after his flip flops over the US stand on Putin’s treatment of Ukraine. Obviously the US is the biggest and most powerful member of Nato. Europe relies on Washington for intelligence, military command and air force capabilities.

The difference in the perception of Russia between Trump and European leaders is making the peace process in Ukraine tortuous. Trump holds the key. He does not have a high opinion of European powers even though he cannot turn his trusted allies into enemies. The question is how long he will listen to them. Putin too may be counting on this for his own domestic survival.

WISDOM CORNER

“The essence of science is independent thinking, hard work, and not equipment. When I got my Nobel Prize, I had spent hardly 200 rupees on my equipment.”

C V RAMAN

“Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

“Scientific research is one of the most exciting and rewarding of occupations.”

FREDERICK SANGER

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

■ **1768:** The first part of the first edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica, the oldest English-language general encyclopaedia, was published and advertised for sale in Edinburgh.

■ **1815:** Ada Lovelace, who is often considered the first computer programmer, was born in what is today London.

■ **1884:** Mark Twain’s classic novel Adventures of Huckleberry Finn was first published, appearing in the United Kingdom and Canada; it was released in the United States the following year.

■ **1901:** The first Nobel Prizes were distributed, marking the fifth anniversary of the death of Alfred Nobel, the Swedish industrialist and inventor of dynamite, who founded and endowed the awards through his will.

■ **1931:** The Australian government officially surrendered after a month-long battle against thousands of large flightless birds.

LOL

Picking on a tardy student

A college business professor could not help but notice that one of his students was late to class for the third time that week. Before class ended he went around the room asking students some questions about the day’s lecture. Of course, he made sure to pick on his tardy pupil. “And who was it that developed the theories behind communism?” the professor asked.



“I don’t know,” the student said. “Perhaps if you came to class on time, Mr. Reebbs, you would know,” said the professor. “That’s not true,” the student replied. “I never pay attention anyway!”

STRINGENT ACTION VITAL

FOCUS AIR POLLUTION

A 10-year assessment of air pollution across major urban centres has found that none of the country’s top cities met safe AQI levels at any point between 2015 and November 2025. The report, prepared by Climate Trends, analysed long-term pollution patterns across 11 major cities. The case with India is no different with its capital Delhi, as always, remaining the most polluted city throughout the period of study with average AQIA levels peaking above 250 in 2016 and hovering around 180 this year.

Cities such as Lucknow, Varanasi and Ahmedabad, which recorded high average AQI values – often above 200 – in the first half of the decade, showed some improvement in the second half. While southern and western cities such as Mumbai, Chennai, Pune and Bengaluru recorded relatively moderate AQIA levels, even they did not meet safe thresholds. A recent government report found over 2 lakh cases of acute respiratory illness in six major hospitals in Delhi though other metros such as Mumbai and Chennai find similar increases during periods of high pollution. Experts stressed the need for better planning and data-driven interventions to at least check the problem.

Referring to stubble burning which has gradually gone down in Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan and that this happens for just a fortnight, the Supreme Court asked the Union and NCR governments to detail the measures taken on other pollution sources such as vehicles, industries, construction, dust and the tangible results through implementation of effective steps in this regard. It was very critical of construction activities and wanted quality public transport to reduce air pollution.

It is worth noting here the report of the Centre for Research on Energy & Clean



As per a study published in The Lancet Public Health, long-term exposure to air pollution heightened mortality by 1.5 million deaths per year in the country. Despite such alarming findings, public attention and policy urgency remain disproportionately focused on metropolitan India, chiefly the national capital

Air which has rightly pointed out that, the scale of the crisis far exceeds what is generally assumed. As per the report, about 60 of India’s 749 districts breach the national annual PM2.5 standard of 40 micrograms per cubic metre that has been prescribed by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

Not a single district meets the far stricter guidelines of WHO, which recommends 5ug/m, about eight times more stringent than India’s standards. In fact, air pollution is an annual threat. The northern states such as Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and the UT of Chandigarh as well as the north-eastern state of Meghalaya maintained 100 percent district-level exceedance in all seasons except for monsoon.

The top 50 most polluted districts are mostly concentrated in four northern and eastern states – Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Bihar and Assam. The perennial nature of poor air in the country has grave consequences for public health and this has been revealed in various studies, from time to time. Long-term exposure to PM 2.5 is associated with a range of serious diseases including stroke, lung and heart

ailments.

As per a study published in The Lancet Public Health, long-term exposure to air pollution heightened mortality by 1.5 million deaths per year in the country. Despite such alarming findings, public attention and policy urgency remain disproportionately focused on metropolitan India, chiefly the national capital. Along with cities, it is imperative that Indian districts should have robust air-quality monitoring, local emission-control plans, cleaner public transport, stricter regulation of industrial and agricultural emissions, dust & waste management.

The disastrous effect of air pollution on health was investigated by scientists at the University of South California which found excess risks of death on the hottest days there are heat and extreme levels of PM 2.6. Many places in India have this combination, observed Soumya Swaminathan, the WHO’s chief scientist, while delivering the JC Bose Memorial Lecture titled ‘Fragile Futures: The Climate Crisis & Its Toll on Women and Children’.

Some experts consider air pollution the single largest threat to human life expectan-

cy because of its scale, reach and continuity. According to the Air Quality Life Index, it has been found that long-term exposure to current pollution levels cuts almost three-and-a-half years from an average Indian’s life. Though it is most visible during the winter months, it is active all year round.

China and the United States have been successful in dramatically cleaning up their environment over time. Smaller nations and younger democracies like The Gambia in Africa have made meaningful progress. Other Asian countries like Japan, Thailand and Singapore have progressed as well. Ultimately, it is for India to take positive steps in this regard as clean air is a true national priority. Experts have suggested that India should work towards a more unified system like US’s Air Now and the EU’s CAMS for dedicated atmospheric monitoring with the help of air quality sensors, aviation advisories and meteorological data integrated into a single geospatial platform.

Whether the apex court’s stricture will help the state governments in implementing the graded action plan (GRAP) in scrupulously enforcing both short-term and long-term measures in tackling air pollution remains to be seen. However, it evident that in most metros and big cities private transport rarely follows government guidelines and there is virtually very little monitoring and enforcement of pollution norms. The state governments do not want to take drastic action against these private operators as otherwise the transport system may collapse. Thus, air degradation has become manifest throughout the year though it hits the headlines during the winter season. It goes without saying that if public health has to be safeguarded, more stringent action is called for.

INFA

IN JEST THIS

Humans should never be called ‘garbage’



Melvin Durai

WHAT IF TRUMP CALLS PEOPLE FROM INDIA “GARBAGE” ONE DAY? WOULD I HAVE TO WHEEL MYSELF TO THE STREET?

During a recent Cabinet meeting, US President Donald Trump went on a rant, labeling Congresswoman Ilhan Omar and other immigrants from Somalia as “garbage.”

“We could go one way or the other, and we’re going to go the wrong way if we keep taking in garbage into our country,” Trump said. “She’s garbage. Her friends are garbage. These aren’t people who work. These aren’t people who say, ‘Let’s go, come on, let’s make this place great.’”

As someone who occasionally has to handle garbage, wheeling our garbage bin from our home to the street once a week, his words concerned me. What if he calls people from India “garbage” one day? Would I have to wheel myself to the street? Perhaps my wife and I would wheel each other to the street.

Me: “You first.”
She: “No, you first.”
Me: “I insist.”
She: “I resist.”
I was concerned enough about Trump’s words that I

decided to randomly dial members of the 260,000-strong Somali community in America to find out how they are coping. The only person who didn’t hang up on me was a 32-year-old nurse.

Nurse: “Whatever you are selling, I don’t want it. I have enough insurance, enough credit cards, and enough romance.”

Me: “I’m not selling anything. I just want to know how you feel about President Trump labeling Somali immigrants as ‘garbage.’”

Nurse: “It doesn’t bother me at all. I’ve been called a lot worse.”

Me: “You have an ex-husband?”

Nurse: “No, I work in a psychiatric hospital. Most of the patients are respectful to me, but every now and then, you get someone who refuses to take their medication and calls you all kinds of names. But you have to forgive them. They are going through a lot of mental distress.”

Me: “So you never get offended?”

Nurse: “No, you get used to it. Sometimes it’s amusing. Just the other day, I tried to get one man to take his meds and he said, ‘I’m the president of the United States and you can’t make me.’ I asked him, ‘What makes you think you’re the president of the United States?’ And he said, ‘Don’t you reporters have better questions to ask?’”

Me: “Do you think the president should apologize?”

Nurse: “He should come and meet some of us. It’s easy to call people ‘garbage’ when you don’t really know them. But humans should never be called ‘garbage.’ It happens too much though. It even happens in sports. Some fans refer to players who don’t perform well as “garbage.”

Me: “So a president who doesn’t perform well might also be called—”

Nurse: “No, never. Humans should never be called garbage. Animals should not be called garbage either. My sister would be so offended if I called her cat ‘garbage.’ She would stop sharing her Netflix

password with me.”

Me: “What would you tell the president if he comes to meet you?”

Nurse: “I would tell him that one man’s trash is another man’s treasure. I have a neighbor who takes a lot of garbage to the street every week. He doesn’t believe in recycling or donating. Anything he doesn’t want is garbage to him. So every now and then, passers-by help themselves to something he has tossed out. A piece of furniture, perhaps, or even a rug.”

Me: “Do you consider yourself one of those treasures?”

Nurse: “No, I was an item in a recycling bin. I’ve been recycled in America. I was poor and unemployed in Somalia, but when I came here as a refugee, I went to college and became a nurse.”

Me: “So what the president should have said is, ‘Ilhan Omar and other Somalis are recyclables.’ That doesn’t sound very insulting though.”

Nurse: “It’s a compliment. Anytime you have turned your life around, it’s a big achievement.”

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgah Industrial Estate,
Bhubaneswar-751010

Time to end duopoly

Sir, India’s aviation sector, now the world’s third-largest, is at a critical crossroads. Demand is soaring due to rapid urbanisation, rising incomes, and the opening of 83 new airports annually. Yet the industry has long been fragile: 14 airlines, including Air Sahara, Air Deccan, Kingfisher, and Jet Airways, collapsed over the past two decades due to high operating costs, expensive fuel, and steep airport charges. The early 2000s “romantic era” saw a flurry of new carriers, but India’s aviation market could not sustain so many players. Currently, IndiGo dominates over 65% of domestic traffic, alongside Air India, creating a duopoly. The recent IndiGo fiasco triggered by failure to comply with new pilot-rest regulations — caused thousands of flight cancellations, stranded passengers nationwide, and exposed the risks of excessive market concentration. Experts stress that India ideally needs at least five strong carriers to absorb shocks, ensure reliable connectivity, and meet growing demand. Recovery requires strong policies, reduced aviation-fuel and airport taxes, and incentives for new entrants. If implemented, these steps will foster competition, strengthen the sector, and enable India’s aviation industry to realize its full economic and regional potential.

RS Narula, PATIALA

Assistance diplomacy

Sir, They say a friend in need is a friend indeed. For India, however, friendship is not merely policy—it is the art of diplomacy itself. Today, as the island nation of Sri Lanka reels from a devastating cyclone, India has spared no effort to rush to its side, deploying naval ships, relief planes, and medical teams within hours. In the 21st century, soft power has acquired new dimensions, and “assistance diplomacy” has emerged as a compelling facet of this toolkit, turning compassion into credibility. The Indian government deserves full credit for deftly wielding this instrument, simultaneously serving the interests of its neighbours and global partners. May such generosity of spirit continue to narrow the distances—geographic, economic, and emotional—that separate us from our regional family, weaving a tapestry of shared resilience and trust.

Kirti Wadhawan, KANPUR

It is evident that the masses in Kerala are not largely supporting the UDF. Even some who were part of the UDF are increasingly drifting away. When this happens, they feel the need to adopt a new approach if they want to grow. They are looking to see whether a new force can be brought together

PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CM

When will you train and when will you give the jobs? I say this piece of paper is valueless. We will come back to power. Under Karmashree, we are giving 70 days of work. We will increase it to 100 days. We don't want your mercy. That is why I am tearing the note

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

The overall IndiGo episode and chaos at airports, which affected thousands of people... the whole world is watching India. This is India of the 21st Century, and it is supposed to be a modern India, and we can't even manage our own airlines

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | AAP LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Five killed in road accidents

Ranchi: Five people were killed in separate road accidents in Jharkhand. Two died in a head-on motorcycle collision on the Lalpania-Gomia road in Bokaro district. In Hazaribag district, two pedestrians were run over by a gas tanker near Berna Bara Chowk. A 20-year-old man, Sajet Kumar, died after his tractor overturned in Garhwa district. The man, a resident of Karke village, was illegally transporting sand, Garhwa police station in-charge Sunil Tiwari said.

AP: Fire breaks out at cotton processing unit

Adoni (Andhra Pradesh): A fire broke out at a cotton processing unit here in Kurnool district Tuesday, causing significant damage to stored cotton, though no casualties were reported, a police official said. The incident occurred when sparks erupted from machines that were in continuous use during the peak cotton harvesting season, leading to the blaze spreading rapidly due to the highly inflammable nature of cotton.

Man held for sending threat emails to police

New Delhi: A 22-year-old web developer in south Delhi's Saket area has been arrested for allegedly sending terror-linked threat emails to the commissioners of police in Delhi and Bangalore as part of an online vendetta against a man, an official said Tuesday. The accused, identified as Abhay Shee, allegedly targeted the victim, Mohit, after a personal dispute involving a woman known to both. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Harsh Indora said at a press conference.

National capital's AQI improves marginally

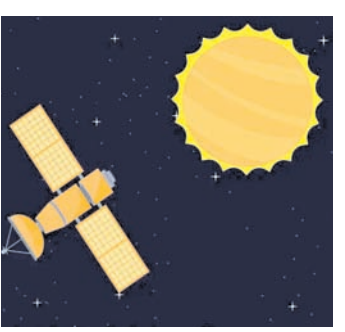
New Delhi: After a nine-day spell of 'very poor' air, Delhi Tuesday recorded a marginal improvement, with the average AQI recorded below 300, in the 'poor' category. However, the relief may be short-lived, with pollution levels likely to rise in the coming days and the Air Quality Index (AQI) expected to plummet to the 'very poor' to 'severe' range, according to the six-day forecast issued by the Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi.

It is not just khadi fabric, but a symbol of India's pride and dignity. The flag contains three colours and the Ashoka Chakra. The saffron, white and green colours convey messages of national pride, economy, sacrifice and peace, while inspiring patriotism among Indians

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

ISRO: ADITYA-L1 JOINS GLOBAL EFFORT IN LANDMARK SOLAR STORM STUDY

India's first solar observatory Aditya-L1 played a key role in helping scientists decode why the strongest solar storm in more than two decades that struck Earth in May 2024 behaved so unusually, ISRO said Tuesday



Rahul slams 'BJP-EC collusion'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: In a no-holds-barred attack, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi Tuesday accused the BJP of indulging in the "biggest anti-national act" by committing "vote chori" in collusion with the Election Commission and destroying the idea of India.

Participating in a discussion on election reforms in the Lower House, Gandhi posed three questions which he claimed make it clear that the BJP is "directing and using" the Election Commission (EC) to damage India's democracy.

Making suggestions, Gandhi called for providing machine readable voter list to all parties one month before elections, taking back the



law that allows destruction of CCTV footage after 45 days,

The biggest anti-national act you can do is vote 'chori'. Because when you destroy the vote, you destroy the fabric of this country, you destroy modern India, you destroy the idea of India. Those across the aisle are doing an anti-national act

RAHUL GANDHI | LEADER OF OPPN IN LS

giving access to EVMs, and changing the law that allows the election commissioners "to get away with whatever they want to do".

He asserted that there is no bigger anti-national act than "vote chori".

The former Congress chief also asked why the chief justice of India was removed from the selection panel for the appointment of the chief election commissioner and the election commissioners.

"Why is it that the CJI was removed from the selection panel for (appointing) the

election commissioners? What motivation could there be to remove the CJI? Do we not believe in the CJI? Of course, we believe in the CJI. Why is he not in that room?" he said.

"I sit in that room. It is a so-called democratic decision. On one side, there is Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. On the other side, the leader of the Opposition. I have no voice in that room. What they decide is what happens," he said.

So, why are the Prime Minister and home minister so keen on choosing exactly who

the election commissioner is going to be, Gandhi asked.

"What does electoral reform require? Nothing more than what we've been saying. Give machine-readable voter lists to all political parties one month before the election. Take back the law that allows the destruction of CCTV footage."

"While you're doing that, also tell us what the architecture of the EVM is. Give us access to the EVM. Let our experts go and see what is inside the EVM. Till today, we have not had access to the EVM," he said.

Elaborating on the "result of controlling" the chief election commissioner and the EC, Gandhi said "we have a set of election campaigns that are tailored for the prime minister".

Ramdev, Prasanna Sagar lead fasting movement



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 9: A two-day "International Janmangal Convention" will be held 12-13 December, under the guidance of prominent spiritual leaders Yog Rishi Swami Ramdev ji Maharaj and Jain saint Acharya Prasanna Sagar ji Maharaj. The event will focus on the theme: "The Right Vision of Public Welfare: Fasting, Meditation, Yoga, and Indigenous Thought."

The convention will coincide with the launch of the "One Fast Every Month" mega campaign, aimed at promoting fasting for public welfare. Notable figures attending include Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, and Bhupender Yadav, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, and various other political and spiritual leaders.

Prominent spiritual figures like Pujya Bageshwar Sarkar Dhirendra Shastri ji, Acharya Balkrishna Maharaj, and Mahant Balknath Yogi will also be part of the event.

Swami Ramdev, renowned for his global yoga mission, and Acharya Prasanna Sagar ji Maharaj, known for his record-breaking fasts, are leading this campaign to uplift humanity through fasting, meditation, and indigenous practices.

The "One Fast Every Month" initiative encourages people worldwide to adopt fasting as a tool for physical, mental, and spiritual wellness, continuing their efforts to enhance public welfare globally.

BANK FRAUD CASE

CBI books ADA firms, Jai Anmol Ambani

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: The CBI registered two FIRs against Anil Dhirubhai Ambani (ADA) group companies -- Reliance Home Finance Ltd. (RHFL) and Reliance Commercial Finance Ltd -- in separate bank fraud cases, naming Jai Anmol Anil Ambani in one of them and bringing alleged loan defaults worth ₹14,852 crore under scanner, officials said Tuesday.

Following the registration of the FIR against Jai Anmol Anil Ambani, the son of industrialist Anil Ambani, the CBI teams carried out a search at his residence on the seventh floor of the Sea Wind building, Anil Ambani's home in Cuffe Parade, Mumbai.

The CBI has named Jai Anmol Ambani, the then Director of Reliance Home Finance Ltd. (RHFL), along with ex-CEO Ravindra Sharad Sudhakar in connection with the case of allegedly cheating the Union Bank of India of ₹228 crore.

In a separate case, the CBI has booked Reliance Commercial Finance Ltd (RCFL) and its former directors in a case of allegedly cheating Bank of Maharashtra to the tune of ₹57 crore. Jai Anmol has not been named in this case.

The CBI also conducted searches in Bank of Maharashtra case at the premises of the RCFL and residence of its former director Devang Mody in Pune Tuesday.

RHFL had availed loans to the tune of ₹5572.35 crore from

18 banks and financial institutions including the Union Bank of India, while RCFL availed loans to the tune of ₹9,280 crore from 31 banks and financial institutions including the Bank of Maharashtra, CBI Spokesperson said in a statement.

"A thorough investigation will be conducted into allegations of defrauding all the banks and financial institutions by the accused companies," the CBI Spokesperson said.

In the case against Jai Anmol, the CBI acted on a complaint from the erstwhile Andhra Bank (which merged into Union Bank of India in 2020), alleging that RHFL did not repay the credit availed from the bank that turned the account into a non-performing asset in 2019, they said.

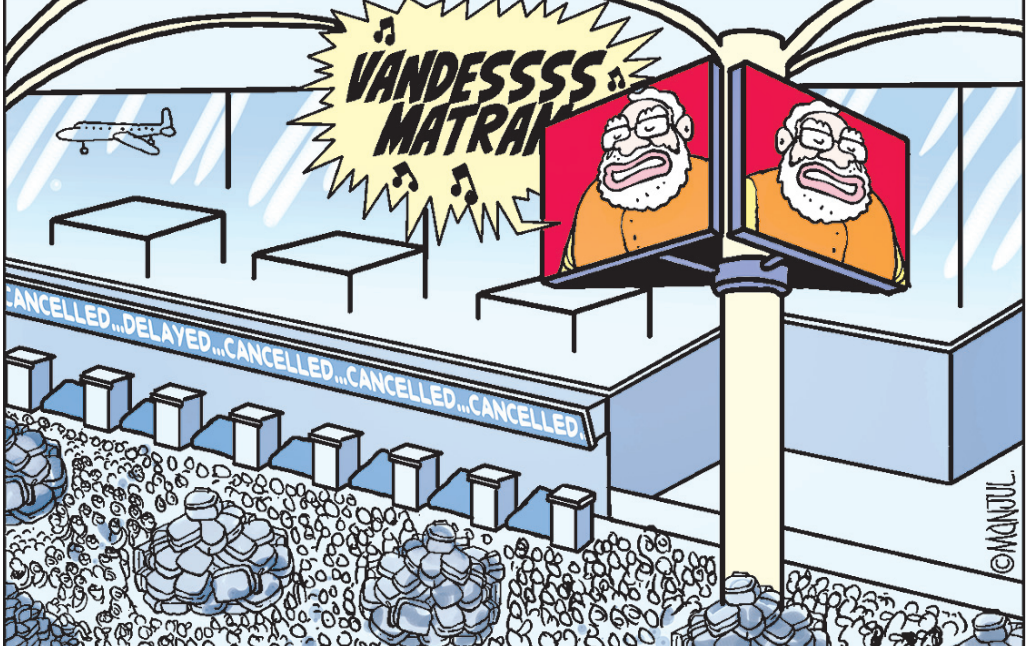
Queries for reaction from the Ambanis' spokesperson went unanswered.

"The CBI obtained search warrants from the court of Special Judge for CBI, Mumbai and has commenced searches at two official premises of Reliance Home Finance Ltd., residential premises of Jai Anmol Ambani..., the then Director of Reliance Home Finance Ltd. and residential premises of Ravindra Sudhakar, Ex-CEO and Whole Time Director of RHFL, all at Mumbai on 09.12.2025," the CBI spokesperson said in a statement Tuesday.

The case pertains to credit facilities worth ₹450 crore availed by the company in 2015 from Andhra Bank's SCF branch in



POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Lockheed Martin to set up C-130J hub in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: US aerospace major Lockheed Martin Tuesday said it plans to set up a facility for the co-production of the C-130J Super Hercules heavy-lift military transport aircraft in India that will be the first such global hub outside the United States.

With the Indian Air Force (IAF) beginning its hunt to procure up to 80 tactical lift transport aircraft, Lockheed Martin pitched the C-130J plane as the best choice for the force as it has been a "reliable workhorse" in India and over 20 other nations.

Robert Toth, the vice president (business development, air mobility and maritime missions) at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics, said the IAF's Medium Transport Aircraft (MTA) programme gives the company an opportunity not only to bring capability to India, but also to further its industrial base.

"We are continuing to invest ahead of MTA in the C-130Js and posturing ourselves for building aircraft in India," he told PTI in an interview.

Union minister V Somanna flags off Tirupati-Sainagar Shirdi Express

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: Union Minister of State for Railways and Jal Shakti, V Somanna flagged off the Tirupati-Sainagar Shirdi Express through video conferencing from Rail Bhawan, New Delhi, Tuesday.

Describing the occasion as historic for the devotees in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Maharashtra, Somanna said the new train service will boost pilgrimage tourism, connectivity and stimulate economic activity across these states.

"Tirupati and Shirdi are now connected by a direct train with 31 stops at important places, including Nellore, Guntur, Secunderabad, Bidar, Manmad, and others," he said.

"This new train will provide direct connectivity from Maharashtra, North Karnataka, and Secunderabad. Along its route, it will also connect Parli Vajinath, an important Shiva temple," Somanna said.

According to the railway ministry, the new train is the



first direct train service to Shirdi from the south coastal belt of Andhra Pradesh.

"By directly linking two of India's most prominent pilgrimage destinations, Tirupati and Shirdi, the service enhances convenience for pilgrims," the ministry said in a press note.

"The new train is also expected to boost pilgrimage tourism, promote economic activity along the route, and support regional development," the ministry said, asserting that the

move will improve the overall rail travel experience for pilgrims. "A new weekly train will offer pilgrims a seamless journey with a travel time of about 30 hours each way," it stated.

The Union minister highlighted that Andhra Pradesh has witnessed remarkable growth in rail infrastructure since 2014, noting that while the average rail budget during 2009-14 for Andhra and Telangana was ₹886 crore, it has risen to ₹9,417 crore in 2025-26, an eleven-fold increase.

RED FORT BLAST

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: Clocks have ticked, days have passed but grief sits in homes of Red Fort blast victims like dust that refuses to lift.

What looked like a single violent moment has unfolded into an entire month of numbness -- of unanswered questions, hollow rooms, and lives permanently scarred.

Among those killed was Amar Kataria, a pharmaceutical businessman who worked in Chandni Chowk's Bhagirath Palace.

That evening, Kataria stepped out after finishing work, unaware that within minutes the world he had built will fall apart. In the first days

after the tragedy, his three-year-old son kept running to the door at every tiny sound.

"He used to turn around every time someone walked past," Amar's relative Swadesh Sethi had said.

"You could see he thought his father was coming." A month later, the child's confusion has not eased but has simply changed shape.

While he no longer waits by the door, he still does not know that his father will never return. He thinks he is out somewhere and will return soon.

Inside the Kataria home, Amar's wife Kriti has barely spoken since that fateful night.

Trapped in a silence so deep that she has not been able to leave home since the blast.



«A massive blast rocked Delhi November 10 when a Hyundai i20 car exploded at 6.52 pm near the Red Fort, killing 15 people and injuring several others

«The impact of the explosion left several vehicles damaged, with visuals from the site showing mangled bodies and scattered debris

Kriti now sits at one place for hours, her eyes fixed somewhere far away, Sethi said. He also requested the government

to help Kriti find a job as that would distract her from the grief and also provide financial stability to the family.

NIA arrests 8th accused

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has made the eighth arrest in connection with last month's car blast near the Red Fort, officials said Tuesday. An NIA spokesperson said a team from Delhi has arrested key accused Dr Bilal Naseer Malla of Baramulla in Jammu and Kashmir. He was arrested from the national capital.

Amar's body was charred beyond recognition but tattoos reading 'Mom my first love', 'Dad my strength', and 'Kriti' helped the family identify him. Another victim's family is stuck in the same month-long night.

Noman, a 23-year-old who had come to Delhi from Uttar Pradesh's Jhijnjhana to buy supplies for his cosmetics shop, never returned home.

His friend survived with injuries and is still recovering at a hospital.

Noman's elder brother Sahil, who suffers from a kidney ailment and is admitted to a hospital, still does not know that his younger brother is dead. He believes Noman is injured and recovering in another ward, Sonu said.

In Shahdara's Rohtas Nagar, Ankush Sharma, who went to visit the Gauri Shankar temple with his neighbour and friend Rahul Kaushik on the evening of November 10, is fighting a different battle.

of the day

quote

Our priority is to position Rajasthan as a leading state in the mining sector. Officials must ensure optimal utilisation of mineral resources while achieving revenue targets within the stipulated timeline

BHAJANLAL SHARMA | RAJASTHAN CM

Is there any true Indian who would want a weak or poor India? Every true Indian wants a secure, developed and self-reliant nation. If we want to build such a Bharat, the five resolutions must become part of our lives

YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CM

Education is not just about books or degrees, it is about building character. It instils discipline, faith, patriotism, and respect for elders, hard work, commitment, and a sense of purpose. True education nurtures children into individuals of strong character

CONRAD K. SANGMA | MEGHALAYA CM

X

POST OF THE DAY

Nirav Modi: Defrauded Punjab National Bank, escaped India in 2018 under BJP Mehul Choksi: RS 14,000 crore PNB scam; fled India in 2018, now in Antigua under BJP
Vijay Mallya: accused of bank loan default and fraud of RS 9,000 crore, fled India in March 2016 under BJP
Now Luthra brothers left India for Thailand to escape arrest for a fire caused due to negligence that killed 25 people in Goa under BJP.
BJP : BHAGAO JANTA PARTY
@RoshanKrRaii

SHORT TAKES

Sharjeel Imam seeks bail in SC
New Delhi: Activist Sharjeel Imam Tuesday urged the Supreme Court to grant him bail in a February 2020 Delhi riots case, saying he had neither participated nor had any role in the violence and was incarcerated for almost six years as an undertrial. Sharjeel's counsel told a bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and N V Anjaria that the only thing the prosecution has placed before the apex court against the activist is the alleged "inflammatory speeches" given by him.

Bihar cabinet approves creation of 3 new depts

Patna: The cabinet of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Tuesday approved proposals to create three new departments and change the names of three others, officials said. The decision was taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Kumar Tuesday. The newly created departments are the Youth, Employment and Skill Development Department, the Higher Education Department and the Civil Aviation Department, they said.

Three killed in road mishap
Nagari (Andhra Pradesh): Three people were killed and three others injured Tuesday when two cars collided head-on here, police said. "Three victims died on the spot, while the injured were shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment," Nagari DSP Mohammad Aziz told PTI, adding that two of the deceased were employees of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD).

Revenue services must be simplified and free of complications... the auto-mutation system must be implemented in real time for pattadar passbooks

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | ANDHRA PRADESH CM

GOA NIGHTCLUB FIRE

Interpol Blue Notice issued against owners

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Panaji, Dec 9: The Interpol has issued a Blue Notice against Saurabh and Gaurav Luthra, the owners of a Goa nightclub, who are believed to have fled to Thailand just hours after a Saturday blaze claimed 25 lives, while the Goa Police put out a Look Out Circular against another set of owners.

The LOC was issued against Ajay Gupta and Surinder Kumar Khosla, a British citizen, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Varsha Sharma told reporters.

Saurabh Luthra and Gaurav Luthra, the two primary owners of the nightclub, are believed to have fled to Phuket in Thailand following the Saturday night tragedy at 'Birch by Romeo Lane' nightclub in Arpora.

Two days after the horrific tragedy, state authorities Tuesday demolished a beach shack illegally constructed by the Luthras in Vagator area, and appointed a fire safety audit panel for tourist establishments.

The Goa Chief Minister's office said that an Interpol Blue Corner Notice, meant to gather information about the accused, has been issued against the Luthras.

"A Look Out Circular (LOC) was issued against another set of owners of the nightclub, Ajay Gupta and UK citizen Surinder Kumar Khosla, hours after the Luthras fled," said Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Varsha Sharma.

"All attempts are being made to get the Luthra brothers back to India...they were not in Goa at the time of the incident," she added. Then Director of Pan-



Police officials arrest the fifth suspect in nightclub fire case, at Anjuna Police Station, in Goa

THE LOC WAS ISSUED AGAINST AJAY GUPTA AND SURINDER KUMAR KHOSLA, A BRITISH CITIZEN, DEPUTY INSPECTOR GENERAL (DIG) OF POLICE VARSHA SHARMA TOLD REPORTERS

SAURABH LUTHRA AND GAURAV LUTHRA, THE TWO PRIMARY OWNERS OF THE NIGHTCLUB, ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE FLED TO PHUKET IN THAILAND FOLLOWING THE SATURDAY NIGHT TRAGEDY AT 'BIRCH BY ROMEO LANE' NIGHTCLUB IN ARPORA

chayat Siddhi Halarnkar and then Goa State Pollution Control Board Member Secretary Shamila Monteiro have been asked to join the investigation, the DIG said.

The Goa Tourism Department demolished 'Romeo Lane', a beach shack illegally constructed at Vagator by the Luthras, on the directive of Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, and reclaimed the 198 sqmt of land.

The structure, made of wood, was razed using machines, a senior official said, adding the

demolition was carried out within two hours in the presence of police.

Police have so far arrested five persons -- the nightclub's chief general manager Rajiv Modak, general manager Vivek Singh, bar manager Rajiv Singhania, gate manager Riyanshu Thakur and employee Bharat Kohli.

Kohli, a resident of Delhi, was allegedly responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the nightclub and was arrested in the national capital.

With the investigation brought to the fore several violations at the nightclub, Pradeep Ghadi Amonkar, the original landowner, claimed he had fought a legal battle for 20 years against Khosla, alleging persistent illegalities on the property.

Talking to PTI, Amonkar said he had purchased two plots of land in Arpora village in 1994 and signed an agreement for sale with Surinder Kumar Khosla in 2004, but it was withdrawn within six months as the latter failed to pay the money.

WISHES POUR IN AS SONIA TURNS 79

Birthday wishes poured in for Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi as she turned 79 Tuesday, with the Congress saying her visionary leadership did not just guide the party but transformed India through landmark rights-based laws such as MGNREGA and the National Food Security Act



Belgium SC rejects Mehul Choksi's appeal against extradition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: Belgium's supreme court -- the Court of Cassation -- Tuesday rejected the appeal of fugitive diamond trader Mehul Choksi challenging the extradition request of India in connection with the ₹13000-crore alleged bank fraud in Punjab National Bank, authorities in that country said.

Choksi, who escaped to Antigua and Barbuda in January 2018, days before the scam was detected, was spotted in Belgium, where he had purportedly sought treatment. India had sent an extradition request to Belgium August 27, 2024, based on arrest warrants issued by a special court in Mumbai.

Responding to PTI, Spokesperson for Court of Cassation, Advocaat-generaal Henri Vanderlinden, said, "The Court of Cassation rejected the appeal. So, the decision of the Court of Appeal stands." The process of his extradition will begin now, officials said.

A four-member indictment chamber at the Court of Appeals in Antwerp did not find any infirmity in the orders issued by the pre-trial chamber of the district court November 29, 2024, terming the arrest warrants issued by the Mumbai special court in May 2018 and June 2021 as "enforceable", allowing Choksi's extradition.

The Court of Appeals had ruled that Choksi, the main accused in a ₹13,000 crore PNB scam, faces "no risk" of being denied a fair trial or subjected to ill-treatment if he is extradited to India. The Court of Cassation only checks the decision of the court of appeal "on legal aspects" such as whether the court of appeal correctly applied the legal dispositions, and whether they follow the right procedure, Vanderlinden had said in response to PTI questions last month.

Top court quashes HC order on revenue map correction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: The Supreme Court Tuesday stressed that any unnecessary remand of a matter for fresh consideration by a higher court should be avoided as it generates fresh round of litigation.

The idea is to curtail the litigation and not generate it, a bench of Justices Rajesh Bindal and Manmohan said, as it set aside an order of the Allahabad High Court, which had remanded back a matter -- related to authorities rejecting a man's application for correction of a revenue map -- for fresh consideration after hearing all parties concerned.

While dealing with the appeal, the top court noted that court had taken the wrong premise and interpretation of Section 30 of the Uttar Pradesh Revenue Code, 2006, which deals with maintenance of map and the field book. The bench said this could have generated unnecessary further litigation.

"We may also add that earlier view by this court was that in case there were violations of principles of natural justice, the matter was to be remanded for affording opportunity of hearing to the party concerned. However, with the passage of time, the view changed," the bench said.

It further said, "The idea is to curtail the litigation and not generate it. Any unnecessary remand by a higher court generates fresh round of litigation, which should be avoided."

Initially, the application filed before the collector seeking correction of map for a plot was dismissed. Later, the Additional Commissioner also dismissed the appeal against the collector's order. After around 17 years, again an application was filed seeking correction of revenue map but the same



was rejected by the concerned authority.

The matter had then reached the high court which remanded the issue for fresh consideration after affording due opportunity of hearing to all concerned.

Referring to Section 30 of the Code, the apex court bench noted the collector is duty-bound to maintain, in the manner prescribed, a map and a field book for each village and any changes made in it have to be recorded annually or after such longer intervals as may be prescribed.

It said after the purchase of the land, an effort made by the private respondents to get the revenue map corrected had failed and they could not be permitted to raise the same issue after a gap of over 17 years.

The bench said it was not a case where any error was found in the revenue record which deserved correction under Section 30 of the Code.

While allowing the appeal, the bench set aside the order passed by the high court.

SNIPPETS

Cong MP slaps legal notice over Navjot Kaur's remarks

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Congress leader Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa Tuesday served a legal notice on suspended party leader Navjot Kaur Sidhu, asking her to apologise for making "defamatory" remarks against him or face legal action. In the notice, Randhawa, who is also the party's in-charge for Rajasthan, took exception to Kaur's statements in the media, levelling corruption charges against him. Navjot Kaur is the wife of former Punjab Congress president and ex-India cricketer Navjot Singh Sidhu.

UP plans 'surgical strike' against infiltrators to boost security

LUCKNOW: The Yogi Adityanath government has prepared a comprehensive blueprint to carry out a "surgical strike" against infiltrators, aimed at strengthening the state's internal security. According to an official statement issued here Tuesday, under its zero-tolerance policy, the government has launched a campaign to identify and act against infiltrators. "This decisive step will not only enhance security but also ensure that government schemes reach eligible beneficiaries in a transparent manner," the statement said, emphasising that the focus of the blueprint is to carry out a "surgical strike" against infiltrators.

Mamata seeks PM's apology over 'Bankim da' reference

Cooch Behar (WB): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Tuesday demanded an apology from Prime Minister Narendra Modi for allegedly insulting legendary novelist Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay by referring to him as "Bankim da" in Parliament, and accused the BJP of repeatedly denigrating Bengal's cultural icons and freedom fighters. Addressing a public rally in Cooch Behar district, Banerjee said the author of the national song Vande Mataram was not shown the "minimum respect" he deserved by being addressed casually.



People skate on an ice rink, at Lakkar Bazar in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

'2025 set to become 2nd or 3rd warmest year on record'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: 2025 is currently tied with 2023 to be the second-warmest year on record, according to new data published by Europe's climate agency Copernicus.

Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said the year is virtually certain to end as the second- or third-warmest ever recorded, behind 2024.

C3S said the global average temperature anomaly for January to November 2025 stands at 0.60 degree Celsius above the 1991-2020 average or 1.48 degree Celsius above the 1850-1900 pre-industrial level.

The agency also said November 2025 was the third-warmest November globally.

The month saw notably warmer-than-average temperatures across northern Canada and the Arctic Ocean, along with several extreme weather



events, including tropical cyclones in Southeast Asia that caused widespread and catastrophic flooding and loss of life. "For November, global temperatures were 1.54 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and the three-year average for 2023-2025 is on track to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius for the first time," said Samantha Burgess, Strategic Lead for Climate.

"These milestones are not abstract -- they reflect the accelerating pace of climate change and the only way to mitigate future rising temperatures is to rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions," she said.

November 2025 recorded an average surface air temperature of 14.02 degree Celsius, which is 0.65 degree Celsius above the 1991-2020 average for the month.

It was 0.20 degree Celsius cooler than the warmest November on record, in 2023, and 0.08 degree Celsius cooler than November 2024.

C3S said November 2025 was 1.54 degree Celsius above the estimated 1850-1900 average used to define the pre-industrial level. It was the second month this year, after October 2025, to exceed 1.50 degree Celsius since April 2025.

The agency said that while 2025 may not cross 1.5 degree Celsius above the pre-industrial benchmark on an annual

basis, the 2023-2025 average is likely to exceed 1.5 degree Celsius for the first time in the instrumental record. However, a permanent breach of the 1.5-degree Celsius limit under the Paris Agreement refers to long-term warming over a 20- or 30-year period, not a single year.

The Berlin-based climate science and policy institute Climate Analytics, in a report published Thursday, said the world will very likely reach 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming by the early 2030s.

K'taka HC recalls stay on govt notification on menstrual leave

BANGALORE: Hours after staying a government notification mandating one day menstrual leave to working women in the state, the Karnataka High Court Tuesday recalled its order. Post lunch, Advocate General Shashi Kiran Shetty appeared before Justice Jyoti M and urged her to reconsider her order. Responding to it, the judge recalled the order. The matter will now be heard Wednesday. The November 9 notification made provision for one day paid menstrual leave per month to women employees aged between 18 and 52 years working in permanent, contractual and outsourced jobs. The petitioners contended that the Karnataka government did not consult them before making such provisions. The government December 2 had ordered the granting of one day of menstrual leave every month to female government employees of the state with immediate effect.

international

of the day quote

We have to have critical mineral supplies and supply chains that are reliable, and that are diverse, and not overly invested in one place where they can be used as leverage against us or our partners of the world

MARCO RUBIO | SECRETARY OF STATE, US

That the Americans want to save democracy in Europe now, I don't see any need for that. If it needed to be saved, we would manage that alone

FRIEDRICH MERZ | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

Starting from the beginning of this year, we've seen the stick of tariffs being wielded around the world with growing restrictive measures on the economy and trade, which have dealt a severe blow to the global economy

LI QIANG | PREMIER, CHINA

SHORT TAKES

Pak, Indonesia ink 7 MoUs

Islamabad: Pakistan and Indonesia Tuesday inked seven agreements to further bolster bilateral cooperation in diverse fields as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held "productive" talks with Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto here. This is Subianto's maiden visit to Pakistan. The last presidential visit from Indonesia to Pakistan was undertaken by President Joko Widodo in 2018.

UN to grant \$4.5mn to help cyclone-hit SL

Colombo: The United Nations Tuesday announced the release of \$4.5 million from its Central Emergency Response Fund to assist Sri Lanka in recovering from the devastation caused by Cyclone Ditwah. "Cyclone Ditwah has upended lives across the country, and many families are still struggling to meet their basic daily needs," said Marc-André Franche, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Sri Lanka. He said that the UN is working closely with the Government, civil society partners and the humanitarian community in Sri Lanka to ensure a coordinated response guided by evidence and priority needs.

Crew killed in crash of military plane

Moscow: The crew members of a Russian An-22 military transport aircraft that crashed in the Ivanovo region northeast of Moscow were killed in the crash, the Russian Investigative Committee said on Tuesday. The plane went down near the village of Ivankovo. The committee has not disclosed how many people were on board.

US, Mexico to meet today

Mexico City: Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said Tuesday she expects to reach an agreement with the United States over a water dispute as Mexican officials will meet with their US counterparts later in the day. US President Donald Trump Monday accused Mexico of violating a treaty that outlines water sharing between the neighbors and threatened to impose an additional 5% tariff on goods from Mexico if it doesn't immediately provide additional water. Sheinbaum said during her morning press conference that Mexico is limited in delivering more water by the country's own needs under the treaty and by the size of the pipeline carrying water to Rio Grande, which she described as a physical constraint.

Border battle expands

Thailand, Cambodia clash for second day

REUTERS

Bangkok/Phnom Penh, Dec 9: A fierce border battle between Thailand and Cambodia raged for a second day and spread to new frontiers Tuesday, as both countries accused each other of shelling civilian areas and Bangkok vowed to push on with its planned military operations.

With the neighbours trading blame for starting Monday's renewed clashes, it was unclear how or if a fragile ceasefire brokered by US President Donald Trump in July could be salvaged.

Thailand's military said its tanks fired shells into a border casino complex being used by Cambodia's army as a firing position and weapons storage area, while fighter jets conducted air strikes for a second day on what the air force said were strategic military targets.

Cambodia's defence ministry said its troops had no choice but to take defensive action Tuesday and accused Thailand of "indiscriminately and brutally targeting civilian residential areas" with artillery shells, allegations Bangkok rejected.

'WE CAN'T STOP NOW,' SAYS THAI PM

Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul ruled out dialogue and said the military had a plan that it would carry



We can't stop now. We've already given our commitment to the armed forces that they can fully carry out the planned operations. The government is providing support in every way

ANUTIN CHARNVIRAKUL | PRIME MINISTER, THAILAND

out in full.

"We can't stop now. We've already given our commitment to the armed forces that they can fully carry out the planned operations. The government is providing support in every way," Anutin told reporters.

Both countries have said they have evacuated hundreds of thousands of people from border areas. Cambodia's Defence Ministry said nine civilians were killed since Monday and 20 seriously injured, while Thai officials said three soldiers had been killed and 29 people were injured.

The fighting is the most intense since a five-day exchange



Undoubtedly, Russia insists that we give up territories. We, clearly, don't want to give up anything. That's what we are fighting for

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

ICC SENTENCES SUDANESE MILITIA LEADER TO 20 YEARS

Judges at the International Criminal Court sentenced a leader of the feared Sudanese Janjaweed militia to 20 years imprisonment on Tuesday for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the catastrophic conflict in Darfur more than two decades ago



India should not be dumping rice into US market: Trump

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York/Washington, Dec 9: US President Donald Trump has said that India should not be "dumping" rice into the United States market and he will "take care" of it, while stressing that tariffs will solve the "problem" easily. Trump held a roundtable in the White House Monday with representatives of the farming and agriculture sector as well as key members of his cabinet, including Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins.

He announced \$12 billion in federal aid for farmers.

Meryl Kennedy, who runs her family's agribusiness Kennedy Rice Mill in Louisiana, told Trump that rice producers in the southern part of the country are "really struggling" and that other nations are "dumping" rice into the US.

When asked by Trump which countries are dumping rice into America, Kennedy, sitting next to the President, replied, "India, and Thailand; even China into Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico used to be one of the largest markets for US rice. We haven't shipped rice into Puerto Rico in years."

Kennedy said that this has been happening for years and did not start during the Trump administration. "But unfortunately, we're seeing it in a much bigger way now," she said.



She said that tariffs imposed by the Trump administration are working, "but we need to double down", to which Trump said, "You want more, I understand".

Trump then turned to Bessent and said, "India, tell me about India. Why is India allowed to do that? They have to pay tariffs. Do they have an exemption on rice?" "No sir, we're still working on their trade deal," Bessent replied. Trump then said, "But they shouldn't be dumping. I mean, I heard that. I heard that from others. They can't do that."

Kennedy then told Trump there's a World Trade Organisation case against India.

Trump asked Kennedy to give him the names of the countries dumping rice into the US and instructed Bessent to note down the names. "India. Who else?" Trump said. "India, Thailand, China into Puerto Rico, not in to the continental US, but into Puerto Rico. Those are the main culprits," Kennedy said, adding that American farmers can feed the US as well as nations around the world, but "we need fair trade, not free trade".

Lithuania declares state of emergency

REUTERS

Vilnius, Dec 9: Lithuania Tuesday declared a state of emergency and asked parliament to authorise military support for police and border guards after a wave of smuggler balloons from Belarus repeatedly disrupted air traffic in recent months. Vilnius airport has been closed several times due to the weather balloons, which Lithuania says are sent by smugglers transporting cigarettes and constitute a "hybrid attack" by Belarus, a close ally of Russia. "The state of emergency is announced not only due to civil aviation disruptions but also due to interests of national security," Interior Minister Vladislav Kondratovic told a government meeting broadcast live Tuesday.

Belarus has denied responsibility for the balloons and accused Lithuania of provocations, including sending a drone to drop "extremist material", which Lithuania denies.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said Tuesday that Lithuania was exaggerating incidents with smuggler balloons and that Minsk did not want a war with its neighbours.

"What the Lithuanians are saying today is impossible and unrealistic," Lukashenko said in a speech broadcast by state-run news agency Belta.

Fire rips through seven-storey building in Jakarta, killing 22



REUTERS

Jakarta, Dec 9: A fire swept through a seven-storey office block in Indonesia's capital Jakarta Tuesday, killing 22 people, police said.

The fire has now been extinguished and the recovered bodies have been sent to a hospital for identification, Susatyo Purnomo Condro, the head of Central Jakarta police, told reporters. The fire erupted on the first floor at around midday and then spread to the upper floors, Condro said.

The building houses the office of Terra Drone Indonesia, a unit of Japanese firm Terra Drone Corporation which provides drones for aerial survey activities with clients in the mining to agriculture sectors.

Some company employees were having lunch in the building at the time while others had

left the office, Condro said.

Footage broadcast by Kompas TV showed dozens of firefighters trying to evacuate people, and some were carrying body bags from the building. Some employees were seen escaping from the upper floors using portable ladders.

"A police forensic laboratory team has arrived to investigate the cause of the fire," Condro said. "Based on information gathered so far, batteries from a drone caught fire, but the cause of the fire, the point of origin is still being investigated," he said, adding that police would question the business owner as well as the building owner.

Terra Drone Co apologised in a statement for the stress and inconvenience caused to the local community and customers, adding that it was investigating the impact of the blaze on its business.



Employees wearing Santa Claus costumes perform during a parade for celebrating Christmas at Lotte World Adventure in Seoul, South Korea, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

Japan assesses damage from 7.5 magnitude quake that hurt 34

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tokyo, Dec 9: Japan was assessing damage Tuesday and cautioning people of potential aftershocks after a late-night 7.5 magnitude earthquake caused injuries, light damage and a tsunami in Pacific coastal communities.

At least 34 people were injured, one seriously, the Fire and Disaster Management

Agency said. Most of them were hit by falling objects, public broadcaster NHK reported.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told reporters an emergency task force was formed to urgently assess damage. "We are putting people's lives first and doing everything we can," she said.

At a parliamentary session Tuesday, Takaichi pledged the government would continue its utmost effort and remind-

ed people they have to protect their own lives.

The 7.5 magnitude quake struck around 11:15 pm in the Pacific Ocean, around 80 kilometres (50 miles) off the coast of Aomori, the northernmost prefecture of Japan's main Honshu island. The US Geological Survey measured the quake at 7.6 magnitude and said it occurred 44 kilometres (27 miles) below the surface.

Australia's social media ban for children takes effect in world first

REUTERS

Sydney, Dec 10: Australia has become the first country to ban social media for children under 16, blocking access to platforms including TikTok, Alphabet's YouTube and Meta's Instagram and Facebook from midnight.

Ten of the biggest platforms were ordered to block children from midnight Wednesday (1300 GMT Tuesday) or face fines of up to A\$49.5 million (\$33 million) under the new law, which drew criticism from major technology companies and free speech advocates, but was welcomed by parents and child advocates.

The ban is being closely watched by other countries considering similar age-based measures amid growing concerns about the impact of social media on children's

health and safety.

In a video message that Sky News Australia said would be played in schools this week, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the ban aimed to support young Australians and ease the pressure that can come from endless feeds and algorithms.

"Make the most of the school holidays coming up. Rather than spending it scrolling on your phone, start a new sport, learn a new instrument, or read that book that has been sitting there for some time on your shelf," he said.

"And importantly, spend quality time with your friends and your family, face to face."

AUSTRALIA COULD SET PRECEDENT

The rollout ends a year of speculation about whether a country can block children



from using technology embedded in modern life.

It also begins a live experiment that will be studied globally by lawmakers frustrated by what they say is a tech industry too slow to implement harm-reduction measures.

"While Australia is the first to adopt such restrictions, it is unlikely to be the last," Tama Leaver, a professor of internet studies at Curtin University, said.

"Governments around the world are watching how the

First in world to ban social media for under-16s

Ten major platforms ordered to block children or face fine

Closely watched by others considering similar moves

power of Big Tech was successfully taken on. The social media ban in Australia ... is very much the canary in the coal mine."

Governments from Denmark to Malaysia - and even some states in the US, where platforms are rolling back trust and safety features - say they plan similar steps, four years after a leak of internal Meta documents showed the company knew its products contributed to body image problems among teenagers. Meta has said it has tools to protect children.

BEGINNING OF THE END

The ban initially covers 10 platforms, but the government said the list would change as new products emerge and young users switch to alternatives. Of the initial 10, all but Elon Musk's X have said they will comply using age inference - guessing a person's age from their online activity - or age estimation, which is usually based on a selfie. They might also check with uploaded identification documents or linked bank account details.

Musk has said the ban "seems like a backdoor way to control access to the internet by all Australians" and most platforms have complained that it violates people's right to free speech. An Australian High Court challenge overseen by a libertarian state lawmaker is pending.

business

of the day quote

Indian households are steadily shifting from a traditional savings mindset to a more investment-oriented approach, with mutual funds and direct equities emerging as the fastest-growing asset classes in recent years

SAURABH TREHAN | PARTNER & HEAD, BAIN INDIA'S FINANCIAL SERVICES PRACTICE

India's hiring outlook is not just strong -- it is signaling a new phase of economic confidence and capability-building

SANDEEP GULATI | MD, MANPOWERGROUP INDIA AND MIDDLE EAST

India's retail sector is entering a defining phase of growth, supported by strong consumption and a clear shift toward high-quality organised retail formats

SHISHIR BAJAJ | CHAIRMAN AND MD, KNIGHT FRANK INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Gold slumps ₹1,000; silver drops ₹4,500

New Delhi: Gold prices declined by ₹1,000 to ₹1,31,600 per 10 grams in the national capital Tuesday, tracking a muted demand in the local markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Analysts said traders stayed cautious ahead of the US Federal Reserve's policy meeting announcement also weighed on the sentiment. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had finished at ₹1,32,600 per 10 grams Monday. In tandem with gold, silver prices also slumped by ₹4,500 to ₹1,80,500 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) from the previous close of ₹1,85,000 per kg, as per the association. In the international markets, spot gold rose by \$14.83, or 0.35 per cent, to \$4,205.57 per ounce.

₹ climbs 18 paise to close at 89.87

Mumbai: The rupee pared its initial losses and settled for the day in the positive territory, up 18 paise at 89.87 against the US dollar Tuesday, as American currency and crude oil prices retreated from their elevated levels. Forex traders said the weakness of the US dollar in the overseas market, amid expectations of a rate cut by the US Federal Reserve in December, supported the rupee at lower levels. However, a negative trend in domestic equities and foreign fund outflows weighed on investor sentiment, limiting the local unit's appreciation. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 90.15 against the US dollar, down 10 paise from its previous close. The domestic unit recovered losses and settled for the day in the positive territory at 89.87, up by 18 paise from its last close. On Monday, the rupee settled at 90.05 against the US dollar.

Airpay gets nod for cross-border payments

Mumbai: Airpay Payment Services Tuesday said it has secured approval from the Reserve Bank of India to operate as a cross-border payment aggregator, completing its authorisations under the unified payment aggregator (PA) framework. With this, the company is licensed to operate as a payment aggregator across online, physical and cross-border categories, a company statement said.



Yearly issuance of \$20 billion is the new normal for India. It is the new watermark and will become an annualized run rate from here on

ABHINAV BHARTI | HEAD OF EQUITY CAPITAL MARKETS, JP MORGAN

APPLE EXPANDS INDIA PRESENCE

Apple is accelerating its retail expansion in India with the opening of a new store in Noida - its fifth in the country - as the tech giant looks to deepen its physical store footprint in a rapidly strengthening market. Apple added stores in Bangalore and Pune this year to the previously opened ones in Mumbai and Delhi



MASSIVE AI PUSH

Microsoft to invest \$17.5 billion in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella Tuesday announced plans to invest \$17.5 billion in India to help build infrastructure and sovereign capabilities for the country's AI-first future, marking the third major AI-driven investment in the country in the past two months.

Microsoft said that the \$17.5 billion (around ₹1.58 lakh crore) investment builds on the \$3 billion (around ₹26,955 crore) funding announced earlier this year, which the company is on track to spend by the end of CY (calendar year) 2026.

"To support the country's ambitions, Microsoft is committing \$17.5B—our largest investment ever in Asia—to help build the infrastructure, skills, and sovereign capabilities needed for India's AI-first future," Nadella said on X after meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Microsoft, in a statement, said it plans to invest \$17.5 billion in India over the next four years (2026-2029) to drive AI diffusion at a population scale.

The announcement follows Nadella's meeting with Modi, ahead of the Microsoft India AI tour. "In their meeting, both leaders discussed the country's AI roadmap and growth priorities," Microsoft said.

Microsoft's funding commitment is the third major AI-driven investment announced in the country in the past two months.

On October 14, Google announced plans to invest \$15 billion over the next five years to set up an AI hub in India, which will include the country's largest data centre in partnership with Adani Group. It was followed by a \$11 billion investment plan announced by Digital Connexion-- a joint venture between Brookfield, Reliance Industries and US-based Digital Realty.

In May 2023, Amazon announced plans to invest \$12.7 billion in India by 2030 into its local cloud and AI infrastructure across Telangana and Maharashtra. The company has already invested \$3.7 billion between 2016 and 22 in India.



Anant Ambani earns Global Humanitarian Award

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Dec 9: Anant Ambani has been honoured with the Global Humanitarian Award in the United States for his outstanding contribution to wildlife conservation and animal welfare through Vantara.

He becomes the youngest and first Asian to receive this prestigious American recognition, previously awarded to global leaders such as former US Presidents John F Kennedy and Bill Clinton.

The honour brings renewed global attention to Vantara, now recognised as one of the world's largest and most innovative wildlife rescue and conservation initiatives. The project focuses on rescuing, treating, rehabilitating, and protecting injured, sick, and endangered animals, while also working towards their reintroduction into safe habitats.

Receiving the award, Anant Ambani said, "This honour inspires me to move forward with greater determination on the path of 'sarva bhuta hita' (the well-being of all beings). Through Vantara, our aim is



to give every creature dignity, care, and a better life."

Event organisers from the Global Human Society praised Vantara as a model that seamlessly integrates treatment, care, and long-term conservation. They noted that the project has set a new global benchmark in large-scale animal welfare efforts and is emerging as an inspiration for conservationists worldwide.

The ceremony was attended by prominent global wildlife experts including Jon Paul Rodriguez, Matthew James, William Street, Thomas Schmid, Michael Adkesson, and Kathleen Dudzinski. Indian conservationists Neelam Chaired, VB Parkas, and KK Sharma were also present at the international event.

Vedanta Lanjigarh felicitates 22 DAV students under Merit Scholarship Awards

Lanjigarh: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest aluminium producer, honoured 22 students of DAV Vedanta International School for their outstanding academic achievements in the 2024-25 session. The felicitation was held under the company's flagship Vedanta Merit Scholarship Awards aimed at promoting education and youth empowerment in the region. The event was graced by Animesh Pradhan (IAS), Block Development Officer, Lanjigarh, who congratulated the students and appreciated Vedanta's continued efforts in strengthening education. "Such initiatives play a vital role in motivating students from all backgrounds to perform better academically. Vedanta Lanjigarh's consistent support is making a meaningful difference in the community," he said. Under the scholarship scheme, toppers of Classes X and XII scoring above 90% received ₹10,000 each, while students with over 90% in individual subjects were awarded ₹5,000. Class toppers from VI to IX were given ₹8,000 each for their exceptional performance. Speaking on the occasion, Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya, CEO, Vedanta Alumina Business, said, "Education is the strongest foundation for a progressive society. Through the Vedanta Merit Scholarship Awards, we aim to recognise excellence, inspire ambition, and empower young minds. These students represent the future of the Kalahandi region, and we are proud to be part of their journey." DAV Vedanta International School, established by Vedanta Lanjigarh as the region's first English-medium school, currently nurtures nearly 1,400 students. With modern infrastructure and a focus on holistic learning, the school has played a key role in improving literacy levels and fostering educational aspirations among rural youth.

Adani's FSTC deal marks quiet expansion into aviation

The group signed a high-stakes deal last month that could transform pilot training and defence simulation in the country

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Dec 9: Adani Group's defence and aerospace unit announced the acquisition of Flight Simulation Technique Centre (FSTC), India's largest pilot training company, for an enterprise value of Rs 820 crore recently.

Adani Defence Systems and Technologies (ADSTL) and Horizon Aero Solutions (HAS) will together buy about 73% of FSTC, with the remaining 27% held by original promoters. The deal marks a major step in Adani Group's growing focus on aviation, defence and high-technology training infrastructure in India.

FSTC is India's largest independent flight training and simulation company. It operates 11 advanced full-flight simulators and 17 training aircraft.



The move came days before IndiGo crisis which was triggered by new pilot rest/time-duty rules and a shortage of qualified pilots and crew that revealed a deeper structural problem: India lacks adequate training and pilot-supply capacity to match rapidly expanding airline demand

The company holds certifications from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DG-CA) and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).

IT stocks drag equity benchmarks lower

Stock markets fall for second day on the trot

REUTERS

Mumbai, Dec 9: Indian equity benchmarks fell for a second straight session Tuesday, led by information technology stocks, as caution ahead of the Federal Reserve's rate decision and lingering uncertainty over a US trade deal weighed on sentiment.

The Nifty 50 fell 0.47% to 25,839.65 and the BSE Sensex lost 0.51% to 84,666.28. Both indexes have lost about 1.2% so far this week and sit nearly 1.8% away from the lifetime highs hit early this month.

"Failure of the market to hold on to the recent all-time high and absence of fresh triggers for a rally have resulted in some sort of fatigue among investors," said VK Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Investments.

IT firms which earn a significant share of revenue from the US, lost 1.2% as the focus shifted to the Fed's meeting later in the day.

Eleven of the 16 major sectors logged losses. The broader small-caps and mid-caps added 1.1% and 0.3%, respectively, following sharp losses Monday.

While the Fed is expected to cut rates Wednesday, Wall Street banks have pencilled in fewer reductions for 2026 amid lingering inflation concerns and expectations of a more resilient US economy.

Higher US interest rates typically support the dollar and a lift Treasury yields, making emerging-market equities less attractive to foreign portfolio investors.

| NSE NIFTY | TOP LOSERS | December 9, 2025 | PTI |
|-----------|---------------|------------------|-----|
| % | | POINTS | |
| -4.60 | Asian Paints | 2,783.70 | |
| -1.80 | Tech Mahindra | 1,561.50 | |
| -1.82 | HCL Tech | 1,657.90 | |
| -1.53 | Wipro | 257.39 | |
| -1.52 | Tata Steel | 160.99 | |
| -1.45 | Dr Reddy's | 1,248.10 | |
| -1.23 | Jio Financial | 283.55 | |
| -1.22 | JSW Steel | 1,105.40 | |
| -1.22 | Sun Pharma | 1,774.20 | |
| -1.22 | Maruti | 15,990.00 | |

| BSE SENSEX | TOP LOSERS | December 9, 2025 | PTI |
|------------|------------------|------------------|-----|
| % | | POINTS | |
| -4.47 | Asian Paints | 2794.90 | |
| -1.87 | Tech Mahindra | 1562.05 | |
| -1.80 | HCL Tech | 1657.70 | |
| -1.74 | Tata Steel | 160.60 | |
| -1.13 | M&M | 3639.30 | |
| -1.06 | Sun Pharma | 1776.20 | |
| -1.06 | UltraTech Cement | 11409.50 | |
| -1.05 | Maruti | 16012.30 | |
| -1.04 | ICICI Bank | 1374.90 | |
| -0.99 | TMPV | 344.65 | |

Fresh tariff concerns on Indian rice exports weighed on agri-related stocks, while persistent FII outflows and the rupee's slide past 90 continued to add to investor anxiety

AJIT MISHRA | SVP, RESEARCH, RELIGARE BROKING

Meanwhile, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Washington was still working toward a deal with New Delhi, with Deputy US Trade Representative Rick Switzer also expected to visit India on December 10-11.

This comes even as reports said the US has signalled plans to impose tariffs on rice imported from India.

Budget carrier Spicejet jumped 5.6%, rising for a third straight session, amid operational crisis at larger peer IndiGo.

Indigo snapped a seven-day

losing streak and rose nearly 1% after CEO said operations were fully stabilised.

Electronics manufacturer Kaynes Technology gained 13.8%, snapping a four-session losing streak, after Macquarie and JP Morgan reiterated their positive views.

On Monday, the 30-share BSE Sensex plunged by 609.68 points to close at 85,102.69. Snapping a two-day gaining streak, the 50-share NSE Nifty declined by 225.90 points to settle at 25,960.55.

Nifty 50 fell 0.47% to 25,839.65 and the BSE Sensex lost 0.51% to 84,666.28

Both indexes have lost about 1.2% so far this week and sit nearly 1.8% away from the lifetime highs hit early this month

The step comes as governments worldwide are fast developing regulations to resolve AI-related copyright disputes, as AI companies say they are making fair use of material generated by content owners

REUTERS

New Delhi, Dec 9: An Indian government panel has proposed requiring AI companies to pay content creators a share of revenue for using their work to train models, a setback for companies such as OpenAI and Google that back free access to publicly available data.

The step comes as governments worldwide are fast developing regulations to resolve AI-related copyright disputes, as AI companies say they are

making fair use of material generated by content owners.

AI firms should be able to access Indian content for training but should pay royalties to a central body representing copyright holders, the panel, set up in April, said in a report published Monday.

India's plan marks a sharp divergence from jurisdictions like the United States, where AI giants say training models on publicly available data constitutes "fair use" for which they should not be charged.



AI firms such as OpenAI and Google Gemini, which count India among their top user markets, did not respond to requests for comment.

NO OPT-OUT

Industry and the public have 30 days to challenge the Indian plan, which faces review by government officials.

India proposes payment to content creators for AI training use

AI firms should pay royalty to a centralised pool, says document

Indian government canvasses response within 30 days

OpenAI is locked in a court battle triggered by accusations from Indian news agency ANI over use of copyrighted content. The company has repeatedly denied wrongdoing and said its use of online content amounted to fair use.

While Japan gives AI firms broad exemptions for use of such content, the European Union has stricter rules that allow content owners to opt

out of such use.

The Indian panel called the opt-out model ineffective, saying it unfairly forced creators to track down their own work in massive AI datasets.

Instead, if their work is used by AI platforms, they can claim funds from the centralised royalty pool. Nasscom, an influential tech industry body that counts Google and Microsoft among its members, has formally dissented, telling the panel in comments that the mandatory fee amounts to a "tax or levy on innovation".

The Motion Picture Association, which represents Netflix and Paramount, previously told the panel there should be no change in the copyright law, with efforts focused on licensing instead.

Pandya, bowlers light up Barabati

Ace all-rounder's blistering fifty, ruthless bowling hand South Africa historic defeat



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, Dec 9: Hardik Pandya made a memorable comeback to competitive cricket, striking a mood-lifting unbeaten fifty and then took a key wicket as India etched a dominant 101-run win over South Africa in the opening match of the five-match series here Tuesday.

The victory helped India take a 1-0 lead in the rubber and it also pushed South Africa to their lowest-ever T20I total. Their previous lowest was also against India -- 87 all out in Rajkot in 2022.

India had been pushed onto

the back-foot after SA asked them to bat first on a tacky red-soil surface, but Pandya's commanding 59 not out off 28 balls rescued them from early turbulence. India posted a competitive 175/6.

On a pitch that demanded discipline, South Africa showed none, to be all out for a mere 74 in 12.3 overs, as the hosts' bowlers ran through them with relentless accuracy.

Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Varun Chakravarthy and Axar Patel grabbed two wickets each, while Pandya fittingly chipped in with the prized scalp of David Miller.

It was also South Africa's first defeat in three T20Is in Cuttack, and if India had started shakily, South Africa began disastrously.

Arshdeep set the tone with a superb away-slinger that kissed past Quinton de Kock's tentative prod for a two-ball duck.

In his next over, Arshdeep produced another beauty -- a length ball that jagged back into the in-form Tristan Stubbs (14).

Aiden Markram, shuffling back to work a skiddy, straight delivery, was beaten on the inside edge to get bowled. At 28/3 in six overs, South Africa were

already in a hole. Pandya then added to their misery, dismissing Miller.

Marco Jansen, who had fielded brilliantly earlier, was undone by Chakravarthy's googly as South Africa slid to 68/6. The end arrived quickly thereafter with Bumrah cleaning up Dewald Brevis and Keshav Maharaj in the space of four deliveries.

Earlier, coming back after 74 days following a left quadricep injury that forced him out of the Asia Cup, Pandya walked in at No 6 and immediately changed the tempo of the match.

India had slipped in both the

MILESTONE MOMENTS

India delivered a sensational bowling display to dismiss South Africa for a record-low 74 in 12.3 overs, securing a dominant 101-run win in the first T20I

Bumrah achieved milestone of 100 T20I wickets, and also became first Indian bowler in cricket history to take at least 100 int'l wickets in all three formats



Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi greets India's skipper Suryakumar Yadav



The Barabati Stadium witnesses a 'blue flood' as cricket fans turned up in large numbers to support their favourite players against South Africa

PC- RAJIKSHORE MOHANTY

WOMEN IN BLUE VS SL

Kamalini, Vaishnavi new faces in squad for T20Is

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 9: Gunalan Kamalini and Vaishnavi Sharma on Tuesday got their maiden call-ups in the Indian women's team for the upcoming five-match T20I series against Sri Lanka at home.

The series will be played from December 21 to 30, with the first two games in Visakhapatnam and the last three in Thiruvananthapuram.

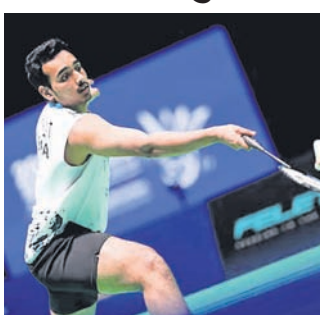
While 17-year-old wicket-keeper-batter Kamalini has featured in nine matches for Mumbai Indians in the Women's Premier League, Vaishnavi, 19, who is also a part of the 15-member India squad, was not drafted into the WPL auctions.

Kamalini and Vaishnavi came in place of Radha Yadav and Uma Chhetri, who were part of the squad that triumphed in the ODI World Cup last month.

Kamalini and Vaishnavi aside, the squad comprises all the familiar names with Harmanpreet Kaur leading the team and Smriti Mandhana doing duty as the vice captain.

ODISHA MASTERS

Tharun, Kiran among Indians advancing after first-round byes



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, Dec 9: A host of Indian shuttlers, including top seed Tharun Manneppalli and second seed Kiran George, advanced to the men's singles second round after receiving byes at the \$110,000 Odisha Masters Super 100 here Tuesday.

Besides Tharun and Kiran, fourth seed Priyanshu Rajawat, sixth seed Manraj Singh, seventh seed S. Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian, Varun Kapur, eighth seed Rithvik Sanjeevi Satish Kumar, Siddharth Gupta and Ginpaul Sonna were also handed first-round byes.

Among those who took the court, Kavin Thangam Kavin



rallied past Aryamann Tandon 21-18, 19-21, 21-16, while Tushar Suveer got the better of Alap Mishra 21-19, 8-21, 21-14 at Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium.

Saneeth Dayanand registered a straight-game win over Dhruv Negi 21-11, 21-13, and Arya Bhivpathaki edged out Shashwat Dalal 21-9, 22-21 in a close contest.

In another match, Darshan Pujari beat USA's Kevin Arokia Walter 21-9, 21-12.

The second-round match-ups will see fourth seed Rajawat take on Saneeth Dayanand, while Govind Krishna will face Kavin. Orijit Chaliha is slated to meet Suveer, and seventh seed Sankar Muthusamy will play Pujari.

FIH JUNIOR WORLD CUP

Heartbroken colts eye podium finish

Dejected India on hunt for bronze medal against Argentina today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Dec 9: The dream of reclaiming the FIH Men's Junior World Cup title might have been over, but hosts India will hope to at least finish on the podium and give the home fans something to cheer when they take on Argentina in the bronze medal match here Wednesday.

Heartbroken at missing out the title yet again, India would look to regroup, make amends of their mistakes and at least finish with a medal in the home tournament.

Two-time champions Argentina will, however, be a tough customer for India and they have already showed their prowess in the tournament.

Argentina, who won the title in 2005 and 2021, lost 1-2 in a closely contested semifinal against Spain and they too are hurt and desperate to finish the tournament on a high.

The Indians were simply ham-



pered by the ruthless Germans in the semifinals. The home team simply buckled under pressure and conceded soft goals, which they can't afford Wednesday against Argentina if they want to stand on the podium.

The Indian backbone was guilty of giving away possession easily, resulting in goals, while the forwards cut a sorry figure in front of the Germans after a superb show in the pool stages against lowly opponents.

The likes of Dilraj Singh, Arshdeep Singh, Sourabh Anand Kushwaha, Gurjot Singh and Ajeet Yadav created a lot of chances but simply failed to

convert them into goals against the Germans.

The Indian defence, led by skipper Rohit, will have to raise their game by leaps and bounds to control the Argentines.

The midfield too lacked cohesion against Germany the other day and the likes of Rosan Khujur, Ankit Pal, Manmeet Singh, Adrohit Ekka and Thounaojam Ingalemba Luwang will have to be more proactive and cohesive to create chances for the strikers.

Penalty corner is another area which continues to be India's perennial problem.

Anmol Ekka scored India's lone goal against Germany

through a penalty corner, but skipper Rohit, India's best bet from drag-flicks, simply couldn't make his mark in the tournament from set pieces.

There is no question about his solid defensive skills but India expected more from Rohit from penalty corners.

Princedeep Singh has been the stand-out performer at the Indian goal and the hosts will expect the young Punjab goalkeeper to continue his fine showing.

Meanwhile, Germany will be looking for their eighth title when they take on Spain in the summit clash, also Wednesday.

Trailblazing first transgenders' football league kicks off

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jamshedpur, Dec 9: In a landmark development in Indian football, seven transgender teams made debut in an exclusive tournament under the umbrella of Jamshedpur Super League (JSL) here.

The Transgenders' League, which began here Sunday, features seven teams -- Jamshedpur FT, Chaibasa FC, Chakradharpur FC, Jamshedpur Indranagar FC, Naomundi FC, Saraikela FC and Kolhan Tiger FC -- in a five-a-side format.

Initially, only four teams were to compete in the transgenders' league but later three more sides were added. The tournament forms a part of the Jamshedpur Super League, which also has other competi-

tions such as age-group leagues.

In the inaugural match of the Transgenders' League Sunday, Jamshedpur FT trounced Chaibasa FC 7-0, while Kolhan Tiger FC notched 3-0 win over Chakradharpur FC, and Jamshedpur Indranagar FC and Naomundi FC played out a goal-less draw.

For Jamshedpur FT's Puja Soy, scoring four goals in the opening match of the Transgenders' League was the beginning of a new identity, not as a transgender, but as a footballer finally recognised on the stage she had long dreamt of.

"Football is such a beautiful sport, and for the first time, I felt like I wasn't being seen for my gender, but for my game," she said.

"This is the first time we are playing in a proper pro-

JAMSHEDPUR SUPER LEAGUE

The introduction of the Transgender Football League marks a progressive and meaningful step in our commitment to making football inclusive, accessible, and empowering for every individual

KUNDAN CHANDRA | HEAD OF GRASSROOT AND YOUTH FOOTBALL, JAMSHEDPUR FC

fessional environment," said Aliya, another participant in the league. "The support from

the club and the fans makes us feel like we truly belong to the football family."

IPL 2026 AUCTION

350 players to go under the hammer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 9: A total of 350 players are set to feature in the IPL 2026 mini auction December 16 at the Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi as the BCCI revealed the Player Auction list for the 2026 season Tuesday.

A total of 1390 players registered for the Player Auction, out of which 350 players were shortlisted.

Of the 350 players shortlisted, 240 are Indian and 110 from overseas. The pool comprises 224 uncapped Indian players and 14 uncapped overseas players, adding significant depth and fresh talent to this year's auction roster.

Franchises will compete for 77 available slots overall, including 31 spots reserved for

- A total of 1,390 players registered for the Player Auction
- Shortlisted 350 players to battle for 77 slots available
- Out of the lot, 240 are Indian and 110 from overseas
- KKR has largest purse of ₹64.3 crore followed by CSK

overseas players.

As many as 40 players have listed themselves at the maximum base price of ₹2 crore, with Venkatesh Iyer and Ravi Bishnoi being the only two Indians among them. Earlier, a total of 173 players have been retained, across teams, including 49 overseas players. A combined purse of ₹237.55 crore will be available at the auction for a total of 77 player slots.