

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
You are ever eager to socialise, and today especially, you may want to mix business with pleasure. You will be welcomed to join in group activities because you can work and play with equal enthusiasm. In fact, you may learn a lot from such a healthy exchange of ideas, says Ganesha.

TAURUS
Light bulbs will flash relentlessly today, as you ideate in the fervour of a creative mood. Your business acumen will help you negotiate problems with ease. The Leo charms will ring out loud in your laughter as you deal with bosses and colleagues at the workplace, says Ganesha.

GEMINI
You will let your personal likes and dislikes cloud your judgement today. Don't let that happen, or you may lose a worthy friend. You are likely to have a chance meeting with your soul mate or maybe even your ex-sweetheart. A romantic evening is on the anvil. But it remains to be seen whether it will be your past, present or future lover.

CANCER
Today may not be a productive day for you. Though there may not be any major loss, you may feel a little lost and would like to be left alone. If you have kids, you may suffer from the empty nest syndrome with your kids not at home.

LEO
You may wear the trendiest suit, drive the swankiest car and dine at the costliest restaurant, but if luck is not on your side, you can forget becoming a business tycoon. Fortunately, that is not the case with you today. With a favourable alignment of the cosmos, you are set for a day where your business proposals will be the hardest thing to overlook.

VIRGO
Family matters. And matters of family matter more. Your negotiation skills are supreme and you shall bring harmonious ends to disputes today. Life has taught you to be balanced and level-headed, and you strongly believe that there is progression in opposition.

LIBRA
It's a full platter today, and you have to manage it all somehow. The day promises to be full of activities, especially those that involve writing letters and reviving old contacts. Expect a call to appear for an interview for a better job.

SCORPIO
In all probability, you are set to shine out as a man of care and kindness. Ganesha advises you to shut the doors on worries and open the windows to let merrymaking and happiness sweep you off your feet today. The social bug will bite you hard, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
Providence smiles upon you today, predicts Ganesha. Catching a film with your beloved today is a very good idea. Chances are you may have a nice outing along with your friends or family. In either case, the load in your wallet is likely to lessen, steadily if not dramatically.

CAPRICORN
Not many can match you when it comes to living a healthy lifestyle, and as Ganesha says, health won't be an issue today either. On the work front, you are likely to complete pending projects successfully and your boss, who may be furious because of the delay caused, will reluctantly admit that you did justice to the work and that it was worth the wait.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will wish there were two of you! You are deluged with pending work, and even doubling up efforts will not seem enough. You may even cancel your movie date, deciding to deal with your sweetheart's tantrums later. It's your boss you are worried about, says Ganesha.

PISCES
Bright prospects will greet whatever new ventures you decide to focus on today, says Ganesha. It is a good time to implement your plans. Apart from short-term monetary gains, you may also find yourself pursuing activities which bring you intangible rewards, like goodwill for example.



PAMELA WANTS TO CHANGE HER NAME

Baywatch star Pamela Anderson has revealed she often thinks about taking on her late grandfather's surname to embrace her family's heritage. The 58-year-old star has revealed she often wants to reclaim the moniker previously held by her late Finnish grandfather Herman Hyytiäinen, which was changed when the family arrived in Canada.

REASONS PALTROW STEPPED AWAY FROM HOLLYWOOD

Academy Award-winning actress Gwyneth Paltrow has talked about why she stepped away from Hollywood. "I felt a lot of loneliness when I was doing it in my 20s. I didn't know myself well yet, and I was travelling all the time. I needed to grow up. These are a few reasons I stayed away," she told *variety.com*.



PeeCee's mission

Mumbai: Priyanka Chopra Jonas, also known as PeeCee among her fans, today one of the most recognisable Indian stars globally.

Despite her growing global presence, she admits she still feels like a novice in her English-language career. Yet for Priyanka, the bigger mission lies in representation. "But pushing boundaries and pushing culture is very important to me. Wherever I go, India goes with me," she said.

At the heart of her producing career is her company, Purple Pebble Pictures she founded to give voice to stories and filmmakers from India's diaspora and beyond. She explained, "With my production house, I try to make sure stories and filmmakers from our diaspora who want to tell our stories get a platform."

Priyanka emphasised her commitment to empowering under-represented creatives especially women and young talent to showcase their work internationally. "Whether it's supporting women, or filmmakers from India who want an international platform... Whatever I can do to help get their stories and work out there, I try to do in my own small way."

She remains humble despite her stellar global achievements. As she put it, she doesn't yet see herself as "super established," but is proud of what Purple Pebble Pictures has achieved so far. With her dual identity as both actor and producer, Priyanka Chopra Jonas continues to build bridges between worlds charting a path that honours her roots while embracing a global canvas.

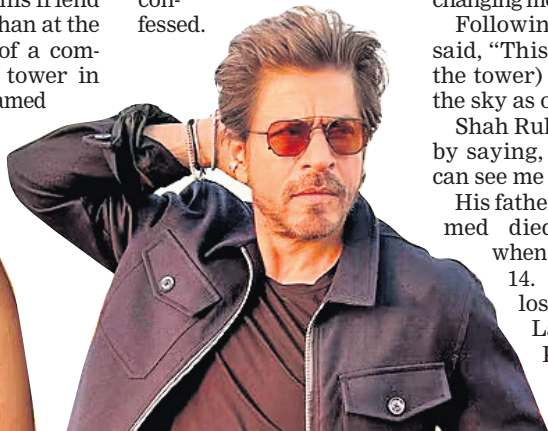
AGENCIES

AGENCIES

SRK bares life's turning point

Mumbai: Superstar Shah Rukh Khan recently attended an event in Dubai, where he spoke about the turning point in his early life. The 60-year-old looked back at his life when he joined his friend Farah Khan at the launch of a commercial tower in Dubai named after

him at a glitzy event. "My life changing moment, Farah, because we are talking about that, was the passing away of my parents at a very young age. I thought they had become stars in the sky. Mujhe laga woh tara ban chuke hain and they will not be able to see me," Shah Rukh confessed.



The actor continued, "So, I worked harder to become a bigger person. God has been very kind. I just put a bronze statue of myself from *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* in London. I won a National Award, and now I have a building in Dubai which is my name. The idea was to become so big on Earth that my parents can see me from heaven. For me, that is the life changing moment."

Following this, Farah said, "This (referring to the tower) is as close to the sky as one can get."

Shah Rukh responded by saying, "I hope they can see me from there." His father Taj Mohammed died of cancer when the actor was 14. Shah Rukh lost his mother, Lateef Fatima Khan, when he was 24.

AGENCIES



Nia shows her rebellious side

Mumbai: Popular television actress Nia Sharma, who is an avid social media, showcased her rebellious side.

Sharing a video on Instagram, the *Naagin* actress confidently showcased her bold side, proving she isn't afraid to go against rules. In the clip, Nia can be seen showing off her dance moves while striking poses for the camera.

For the caption, she wrote, "When you're told not to do something.. But you're going to do it anyway."

Nia looked sexy in a stylish see-through white outfit. She also added Rayelle's trending song "Mona Lisa" as background score for the video.

Notably, the *Ek Hazaron Mein Meri Behna Hai* actress often makes headlines for her striking posts.

From sharing glimpses of her glamorous photoshoots to giving a peek into her work and personal life, she frequently keeps her followers engaged with updates

from all aspects of her life.

A few days ago, Nia shared a glamorous and sassy video in which she was seen doing her makeup.

Alongside it, she wrote, "When the Baddie B##** in me wakes up!."

On the professional front, Nia was most recently seen in *Laughter Chefs Fun Unlimited*, hosted by Bharti Singh.

She also starred in *Suhagan Chudail* where she portrayed Nishigandha, a witch, in the fantasy-thriller-romance series.

Ankita's take on self-love

Mumbai: Television actress Ankita Lokhande has shared a powerful message on self-love. She urged women to choose themselves without seeking external validation or permission.

Emphasizing confidence, boundaries, and inner strength, the *Pavitra Rishta* actress celebrated the idea that true self-love comes from prioritising one's own worth every single day.

Taking to Instagram, Ankita shared a series of her photos and captioned them, "When a woman chooses herself...she blossoms. No validation. No permission. No dependence. Just fullness, self-respect, and fearless love. Self-love is not makeup. It's a voice. It's a boundary. It's choosing YOU — every single day."

On the professional front, Ankita rose to fame with her portrayal of Archana in Ekta Kapoor's popular daily soap Pavitra Rishta. Later, she forayed into mainstream cinema and appeared in movies like

Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi, biographical drama *Swatantrya Veer Savarkar* and *Baaghi 3*.

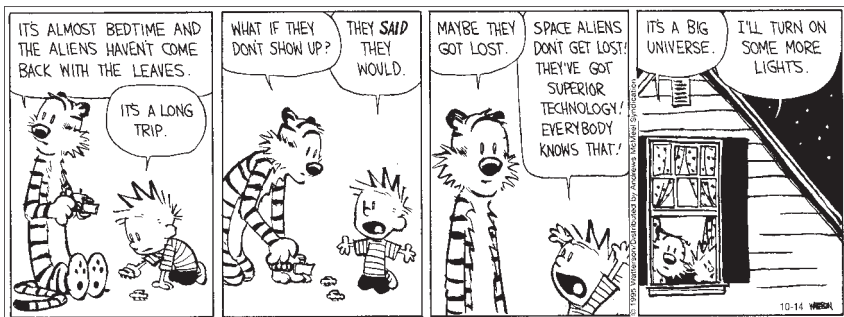
IANIS



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

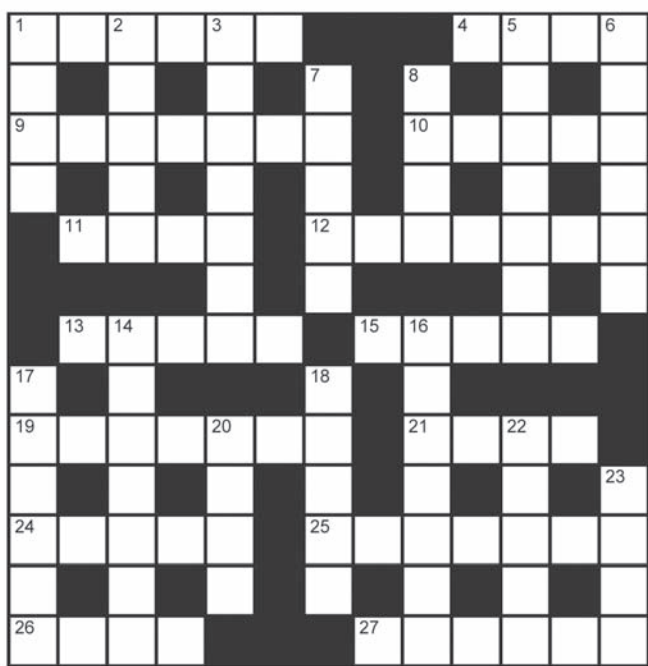


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



Across

- Inhabit
- Cigar butt
- Former Venezuelan statesman
- Fresh from the shower
- Kind of phone
- Casablanca locale
- Antique auto
- Girder material

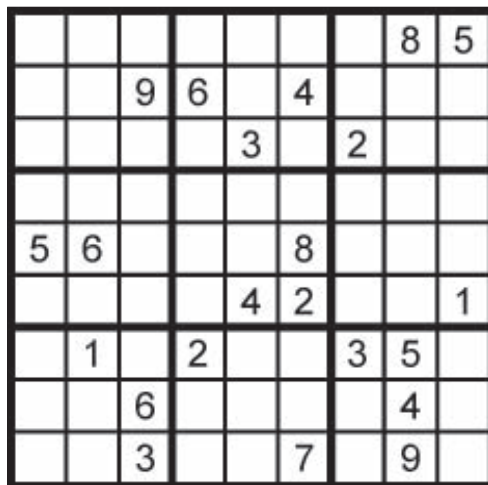
Down

- Simple protein
- Type of tide
- Ogre
- Worsen
- Self-images
- Naval unit
- Choir attire
- Figure out
- Let the cat out of the bag
- Thick dark syrup

- Confection
- Oven emanation
- Kind of tissue
- Temperature in the Arctic
- Firebird
- Confuse
- Like helium
- Fashion
- Circus site
- Away from port

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Early closure of House session sparks criticism

OPTCL-NABARD ink pact to boost power network

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 10: With an aim to ensure quality and reliable power supply for upcoming industries as well as consumers across the state, a long-term loan agreement between Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Ltd (OPTCL) and NABARD was signed here Wednesday for development of power infrastructure in Odisha.

Under this agreement, NABARD has extended a loan of ₹1,685.27 crore to OPTCL at an interest rate of 7.75 per cent per annum. Of the total loan amount, ₹900 crore will be utilised for new transmission projects, while the remaining amount will be used for swapping existing high-cost loans. This initiative marks the first-ever project financing by NABARD to any state PSU in Odisha, making it a landmark development in the state's power sector.

The ceremony was graced by Deputy Chief Minister and Energy Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo and OPTCL CMD Bhaskar Jyoti Sarma who appreciated the collaborative efforts.

The agreement was formally exchanged between OPTCL Di-



◀ NABARD has extended a ₹1,685.27-crore loan to OPTCL at 7.75% interest per annum

◀ Of this, ₹900 crore will be used for new transmission projects, while the rest will go toward swapping high-cost loans

◀ This is NABARD's first-ever project financing to a state PSU in Odisha, marking a milestone for the power sector

rector (Finance) SK Sahoo and NABARD Odisha Regional Office General Manager VK Nag. Other functional directors and senior officials from OPTCL and NABARD were also present on the occasion.

“Today in Bhubaneswar, I witnessed the signing of a landmark MoU between OPTCL and NABARD – the first-ever project financing by NABARD to any State PSU in Odisha. Through this strategic finan-

cial partnership, NABARD has extended a long-term loan... at a reduced interest rate of 7.75 per cent per annum,” Singh Deo said in a post on X.

This collaboration will accelerate the development of critical transmission infrastructure, ensuring reliable and quality power supply for industries and consumers alike, and strengthening Odisha's economic growth story, the Deputy CM said.

H&UD Min reviews key urban projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 10: A high-level review meeting, focused on accelerating project implementations under Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department and ensuring visible improvements in urban infrastructure ahead of the upcoming monsoon season was held under the chairmanship of H&UD Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra at Kharavela Bhavan here Wednesday.

The meeting focused on ‘Gangua Nala Improvement Project’, comprehensive improvement of Nicco Park and its surrounding areas, along with ways to strengthen storm



water management and addressing the long-standing urban drainage concerns. Ekamra-Bhubaneswar MLA Babu Singh, H&UD Principal Secretary Usha Padhee, BMC Commissioner Chanchal Rana

and other senior officers of concerned departments attended the meeting.

Minister Mahapatra directed officials to adopt an integrated approach so that the revitalisation of Nicco Park precincts,

enhancement of public amenities, and restoration of Gangua Nala ecosystem progress simultaneously. Padhee emphasised coordinated inter-agency action for effective drainage solutions, while Rana briefed on the ongoing works, bottlenecks, and proposed timelines.

Meanwhile, the Minister Mahapatra also visited Town Planning (TP) Schemes No. I, II and III at Bijapur, Paikrapur and Sahajpur, and inspected the site of the upcoming New City project. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to expanding TP Schemes in the peripheral areas of the Capital as part of its broader vision for developing Greater Bhubaneswar.

16-day ‘Sahasa Utsava’ on GBV prevention concludes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 10: The state-level workshop on gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, titled ‘Sahasa Utsava: Ama Swara, Ama Shakti’, concluded Wednesday. The 16-day programme was organised by the Women and Child Development (W&CD) department in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Attending the closing ceremony as chief guest, Deputy Chief Minister Pravat Parida reiterated the Odisha government's commitment to ensuring respect, safety and rehabilitation for survivors. She noted that significant progress has been achieved in women's lives through various state initiatives aimed at social and economic empowerment.

Parida encouraged survivors to move beyond the violence they have faced and embrace a new life, saying their journey could inspire society and motivate members of Shakti Sadan.



Women and Child Development department Principal Secretary Shubha Sarma highlighted the department's commitment to making Shakti Sadan a hub of safety, health, and economic rehabilitation.

The ‘Sahasa Utsava’ workshop, designed as an experiential, self-reliance-focused programme, used theatre, music, expressive arts, interactive shelter models, and leadership podcasts to show that survivors are not helpless, but agents of change.

During the event, Parida viewed exhibitions of income-generating activities and artistic work by Shakti Sadan residents. She also unveiled a Survivor Story Booklet highlighting experiences of transformation and resilience. UNFPA Project Officer Noor Malik attended the programme.

Residents of Shakti Sadan from across Odisha, along with representatives from shelters in 30 districts, showcased their experiences through art, exhibitions, handicrafts, podcasts, and expressive activities.

By CM reviews progress of rice, millet factory

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 10: Deputy Chief Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo attended a meeting on the development of specialty rice and a millet factory at Baramunda here Wednesday.

The project focuses on ICAR rice with ultra-low Glycemic Index (GI) varieties, aiming to produce rice with a lower GI than the normal. The total project cost is estimated at ₹91,22,91,287 for setting up first of a kind millet factory across India, which will process rice with a protein content of 10 to 12 per cent in low GI rice.

“Production of low GI rice and millet in a large scale will be more beneficial for diabetic people and rice lovers. Similarly, production of millet in a large scale will be beneficial for health, and economy, as its demand rises day by day,” the Deputy Chief Minister said.

The meeting was attended by Agriculture Principal Secretary Arabinda Kumar Padhee, Director Subham Saxena and Mission Shakti Director Monica Priyadarshini. Padhee said that the initiative aims to make more Lakhpati Didi's (beneficiaries) as SHGs will be directly connected with this and promote nutritional low GI content rice varieties nationwide.

Key features of specialty rice and millet factory includes purification and release of low GI varieties, marketing strategy involving aggregation, cluster production and profiling. A market study will be done by International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and financial monitoring through CFMS. The other attendees included representatives from ICAR, IRRI, OAIC, OUAT, IMAGE and senior officers from department of Agriculture.

INT'L HUMAN RIGHTS DAY Human chain to raise awareness on rights



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 10: A massive human chain was formed in the Capital city Wednesday to mark the 77th International Human Rights Day and raise awareness on the importance of human rights in everyday life.

The event was jointly organised by the Institute of Human Rights Education (IHRE) and the Civil Society Forum on Human Rights (CSFHR), with active support from the Bharat Scouts and Guides. School students, intellectuals and human rights activists participated enthusiastically, forming a long chain along the road in front of the Exhibition Ground.

Distinguished linguist Debi Prasanna Pattanayak and Madhusudan Mishra attended as chief guests and administered

an oath to students, urging them to uphold constitutional values and commit to protecting human rights.

Prominent human rights activists, including Baghambara Pattanayak, Pradeepta Nayak, Debendra Sutar, Chandranath Dani, Gayatri Mishra, Ranjit Sutar, and Mihir Pattanayak, Joint Secretary of the Bharat Scouts and Guides, also addressed the gathering.

Action Aid, CCWD hold meet

Action Aid Association, in collaboration with the Center for Child and Women Development (CCWD), held a mass awareness meeting at Nilamadhab Awas community centre in Bhubaneswar's Ward No-13 to mark Human Rights Day and the culmination of the 16-day activism against gender-based violence.

College principal held for sexual harassment

Bhubaneswar: A 57-year-old college principal was arrested Wednesday on the charge of sexually harassing a female lecturer in Khurda district, a police officer said. The principal of the college at Bolagarh was arrested for criminal intimidation, sexual harassment and stalking, on the basis of a complaint lodged by the victim's father. While talking to media persons, the victim's father alleged that his daughter started receiving indecent text and voice messages from the principal from November 22. “Yesterday, my daughter told me that she will leave the job at the college as the principal is harassing her. So, I lodged an FIR at the police station,” he said. The principal was sent to judicial custody after a local court rejected his bail plea, a police officer said.

TPSODL to hold Lok Adalat Dec 13

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Dec 10: Tata Power Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL) will organise the 4th National Lok Adalat and Enforcement Settlement Camp December 13, across its operational regions. The initiative aims to offer consumers a simple and accessible platform to settle cases related to unauthorised electricity usage, malpractice, and electricity theft, ensuring timely resolution of pending enforcement matters.

The Lok Adalat will be held simultaneously across all TPSODL Divisions, Sub-Divisions, Section Offices, and designated



Court premises covering the districts of Ganjam, Gajapati, Kandhamal, Boudh, Koraput, Rayagada, Malkangiri and Nabarangapur. The camps will remain open from 9am to 5pm, enabling consumers to avail full-day guidance and support.

The initiative is part of

TPSODL's ongoing efforts to strengthen compliance, promote responsible electricity usage, and streamline the settlement of enforcement-related cases. By providing a structured, consumer-friendly mechanism for dispute resolution, the Lok Adalat is expected to help consumers regularise their electricity usage and prevent future complications. Special teams consisting of enforcement officers, legal experts and consumer-support personnel will be deployed at each location to assist with necessary documentation, clarify procedures and facilitate smooth case settlement.

Goa fire puts spotlight on safety in hotels, clubs

Fresh guidelines and a state-wide review of fire safety compliance have been launched for all hotels, restaurants and malls, with action planned against any establishment found violating norms

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 10: The recent nightclub fire in Goa, which claimed 25 lives and shocked the nation, has triggered serious concern over fire safety standards in clubs, hotels and restaurants across Odisha. This raises a critical question: Are the Smart City's hospitality establishments adhering to safety norms to prevent such tragedies?

To explore this, **Orissa POST** spoke with hotel and pub owners as well as the Fire Service DG, who shared their views on the current fire safety protocols.

Managing Director of One Peg Down (OPD) club and restaurant, Sai Prakash, said, “We have been following all fire safety measures since the club opened. Sprinklers and fire extinguishers are installed on every floor and along the emergency exit route. We also ensured the use of non-combustible materials during construction to minimise the risk of fire accidents.”



Prakash further noted that the Goa incident may have been aggravated by the interior materials used in the club, which likely fuelled the flames and caused the fire to spread rapidly before many victims could escape.

CEO of Lyfe Hotels, Bhubaneswar, and Secretary General of the Hotel & Restaurant Association of Odisha (HRAO), Dhiman Mazumdar, said that hotels are strictly

adhering to fire safety standards prescribed by the state fire department.

“All hoteliers are paying special attention to fire safety measures. We are following every guideline issued by the state government and the fire department. In fact, the government holds periodic review meetings with hoteliers to assess fire safety protocols and offer necessary guidance,”

he added.

State Fire Services DG Sudhanshu Sarangi said, “All major hotels, restaurants and clubs under our jurisdiction are complying with fire safety protocols. We are now identifying other establishments that may not be following the norms. It will take 10 to 15 days to receive a report on unsafe hotels and clubs. Smaller places like stalls are not required to meet the same criteria as big hotels, but we are checking them as well. A hotel, pub or restaurant receives certification to operate only after meeting the fire department's safety standards.”

According to the state fire and emergency services department, fresh guidelines have been issued and a review process has been initiated for all hotels, restaurants and malls across Odisha to assess their fire safety compliance. Action will be taken against any establishment found violating the norms. The exercise was launched immediately after the Goa fire incident.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate, Kanas, dated - 12.06.2025, I, Prakash Kumar Jena, Address AT-KHUNTIABANAPUR, P.O.- OLHAN, P.S.- GADISAGODA, KANAS BLOCK, PURI, ODISHA, PIN - 752019 declare that I have changed the name of my son from ABHINNA JENA to ABHIN KUMAR JENA. Henceforth, he shall be known as ABHIN KUMAR JENA for all purposes. Prakash Kumar Jena

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	90.12 ▲ 0.09	SENSEX	84391.27 ▼ 275.01	GOLD	₹129,614 ▼ ₹493
EURO	105.03 ▲ 0.10	NIFTY	25758.00 ▼ 81.65	SILVER	₹188,330 ▲ ₹266

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	27.8°	26.2°	Fog or Mist in the morning and mainly clear sky later
Min Temp	13.0°	12.6°	
Humidity	82%	81%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

Tender Value: ₹ 4,18,28,827.94, EMD : ₹ 3,59,200/-

Bidding Start Date: 12.12.2025.

Tender Closing Date and Time: At 1100 Hrs. of 26.12.2025.

No manual offers sent by Post/ Courier/ Fax or in person accepted against such e-tenders even if they are submitted on or after the closing and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : www.ireps.gov.in

Note : The prospective tenders are advised to revisit the website 15 days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigendum issued for this tender.

Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer,
PR-884/D/25-26 Khurda Road

FOCUS PUTIN'S INDIA VISIT

SUBSTANCE & SYMBOLISM



Given the context and background, India hosting the Russian President has conveyed a message of strategic autonomy. A message that the ties between India and Russia cannot be held hostage to external pressures and wishes

work on a Free Trade Agreement on goods between India and the Eurasian Economic Union covering sectors of mutual interest". According to the Statement, two sides also agreed to "deepen cooperation in building stable and efficient transport corridors, with the focus on expanding logistics links for improving connectivity and enhancing infrastructure capacity to support the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), the Chennai-Vladivostok (Eastern Maritime) Corridor, and the Northern Sea Route. They welcomed the signing of the MoU on the Training of Specialists for Ships Operating in Polar Waters".

In short, it may seem like there was not much in terms of substance. However, the summit was more successful with regards to diplomatic messaging. But that alone will not be sufficient. As the progress in the peace process gets delayed and Russia acquires more territories, the EU and Washington will try to impede negotiations. Demands would be made on Russia that Moscow has already rejected. In this scenario, both Russia and its partners would be under pressure. The sanctions and tariffs would be further tightened to the detriment of not just Russia, but its partners like India. Thus, both countries need to prepare for the adversities ahead. Their only option is to diversify trade and trading partners outside the West.

Given the context and background, India hosting the Russian President has conveyed a message of strategic autonomy. A message that the ties between India and Russia cannot be held hostage to external pressures and wishes.

The writer is a retired Professor, Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies at the Jawaharlal Nehru University

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The visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin was strategically significant for both countries. Right since the war in Ukraine started, Moscow has been facing Western pressures through sanctions and campaigns to isolate Russia. New Delhi has also been under pressure to condemn Russia on international platforms, reduce its oil purchase from that country and then faced additional US tariffs for buying oil from Russia. At a time when Russia is gaining ground in the war and expanding its control over more territories, the West is left with nothing substantial to contribute to Ukraine except assurances about the international isolation of Russia which has sabotaged Trump's peace efforts. Thus, for Russia it is not enough to gain in the war, but to demonstrate that beyond the West there is a world that matters.



Ajay Patnaik

AS INDIA AND RUSSIA NEED TO PREPARE FOR THE ADVERSITIES AHEAD, THEIR ONLY OPTION IS TO DIVERSIFY TRADE AND TRADING PARTNERS OUTSIDE THE WEST

BRICS, SCO and countries in the Global South have been undeterred so far by the Western position and have shared platforms with Russia. Putin's visit to New Delhi on 4-5 December 2025 was very significant from this perspective. For India, despite pressures from the West and punitive tariffs, it has been imperative to demonstrate strategic autonomy while not taking sides in the Ukraine-Russia conflict. So far there has been a strategic balancing act: not condemning Russia and talking about peace. Thus, for New Delhi, the visit was not just about oil, nuclear power, labour migration or weapons and fighter planes. These issues were significant and discussions were taken forward. Similarly, the issue of a huge trade deficit that India faces in bilateral trade had to be addressed. The opening of Russian markets to Indian goods and services and the adoption of the Programme for the Development of Strategic Areas of India - Russia Economic Cooperation till 2030 are

intended to address the trade disparity. This year alone, Putin visited China (SCO summit), Tajikistan (CIS summit), Kyrgyzstan (CSTO summit). All these summits were attended by many important non-Western leaders. But this is different and the West has taken note that Putin was not in India for a multilateral summit. He was here to attend the 23rd Bilateral Summit of Leaders of Russia and India. The response from the Western world reveals discomfort with the continuing closeness of New Delhi and Moscow.

An op-ed was jointly published on the eve of Putin's visit by the ambassadors of the United Kingdom, France, and Germany to India. The tone and tenor of the article clearly did not welcome the visit and blamed Russia for escalating the Ukraine crisis. The Ministry of External Affairs expressed strong displeasure, calling the move 'very unusual' and 'an unacceptable breach of diplomatic norms' to publicly advise India on its relations with a third country. There was a rejoinder from the Russian Ambassador who said that the problem began with the 'Western-backed' ouster of the

Ukrainian President in 2014. Such negatives apart, the red carpet was rolled out for the visiting Russian leader with traditional Indian dancers on the tarmac, a close hug between the two leaders and the optics of travelling together in the car of the Indian Prime Minister. The events that followed were meant to demonstrate the bonhomie and friendship in the ties.

The visit also enhanced expectations. The focus was on trade, investment and expansion of economic relations between the two countries. Russia has assured India about energy supplies including nuclear reactors and fuel.

But what may be the most crucial elements of India-Russia relations are infrastructure and transport corridors and market access. From this point, a focus on INSTC (International North-South Transport Corridor) and the Free Trade Agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union, would help. These two alone would enormously expand India's trade with Russia and some of the CIS countries. In the Joint Statement it was mentioned that "The Leaders appreciated the ongoing intensification of the joint

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

Decoding progress in women's higher education

India's journey towards gender parity in education has reached a significant milestone, one that is both cause for celebration and a stark reminder of the long road ahead. The surging enrolment of women in higher education institutions has crossed the 50% mark, transforming the demographic landscape of university campuses. This unprecedented growth is not merely a statistical anomaly but a reflection of evolving societal aspirations, greater awareness and the targeted interventions of successive governments. Yet, as the classroom fills with bright, ambitious young women, a troubling disconnect persists between educational attainment and genuine empowerment in the broader economic and social spheres.

The quantitative shift is remarkable. Recent reports indicate that in the 2023-24 academic year, female enrolment in higher education surpassed that of men, rising to over 50% of the total student body. This growth rate has been particularly pronounced in certain specialised areas, with women's participation in work-linked and direct admission programmes seeing exponential increases, laying a critical foundation for an equitable future workforce. In many undergraduate, postgraduate and diploma

courses, the number of female students per 100 male students has steadily climbed, showcasing a definitive desire among young women to pursue academic specialisation and career-oriented degrees. This is a powerful testament to the shift away from archaic cultural norms that once prioritised early marriage and domesticity over intellectual pursuit.

Recognising education as the most potent vehicle for social change, the government, through bodies like the University Grants Commission (UGC), has introduced a slew of schemes and advisories aimed at bolstering this trend. This demonstrates a formal commitment to transforming the educational landscape into a multidisciplinary, inclusive and learner-centric ecosystem.

However, the real scenario is one of deep-seated structural friction. Despite women steering the education sector both as students and increasingly as teachers, these educational gains have not translated proportionally into the formal workforce. The glaring gap between the rising educational qualifications of women and their significantly lower Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) is a national policy challenge. The policy imperative for creating an accessible eco-

system for women in learning, innovation and entrepreneurship is essential to ensure their contribution to nation-building. For instance, in many urban centres, while women's enrolment in higher education is high, their worker population ratio remains dramatically lower than the national average for men, indicating a massive withdrawal from the labour market. This chasm is often driven by persistent cultural and economic constraints, including societal expectations that impose a disproportionate burden of household and care responsibilities on women, concerns about personal safety during commute and at the workplace and a lack of flexible, high-quality job opportunities that align with their needs. The reality is that an educated young woman may still find herself constrained by a social structure that values her education primarily as a pre-marital asset rather than a key to lifelong economic autonomy.

To truly realise the promise of these encouraging enrolment figures, policy must pivot from merely encouraging entry into higher education to ensuring successful and sustained transition into the professional world. The conclusion, therefore, must be suggestive: the next generation of reforms should focus on structural

adaptation of the labour market and institutional culture. This includes a concerted push for gender-sensitive infrastructure and implementing stronger legal frameworks against workplace discrimination. The UGC's emphasis on promoting leadership and empowerment on campus is a welcome move, but this spirit must be extended by having institutions invite senior figures from the National Commission for Women and Parliamentary Committees to participate in these initiatives, lending them greater authority and visibility. Crucially, it requires promoting shared parental and domestic responsibilities through greater male engagement and more family-friendly work policies across all sectors. The battle for women's higher education is being won, but the real war is the fight for equality in earning and societal leadership, requires us to not just educate women but to fundamentally reshape the world they are entering. Only when the classroom's success is mirrored in the marketplace will India truly harness the full potential of its educated women.

The writer is a former college principal and founder of Supporting Shoulders, an NGO



Bhaskar Nath Biswal

THE BATTLE FOR WOMEN'S HIGHER EDUCATION IS BEING WON, BUT THE REAL WAR IS THE FIGHT FOR EQUALITY IN EARNING AND SOCIETAL LEADERSHIP

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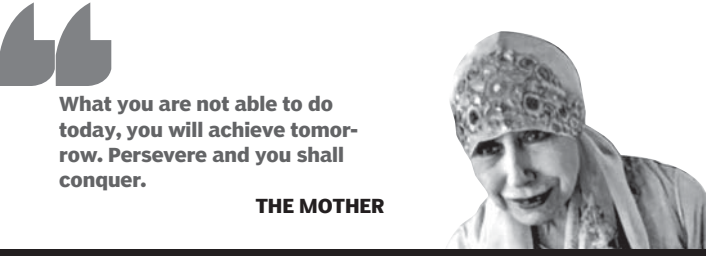
Letters TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Gopalaswamy J, CHENNAI

Avinash Godbole, DEWAS (MP)



THE MOTHER

Treason of Populists

Until a few days ago, it had never crossed my mind that people across Europe – including Londoners like me – were living in a strife-afflicted hell hole, “suffocated” by regulations, stripped of political liberties, and bound for “civilizational erasure.” So, it was with some surprise that I read this assessment in the new US National Security Strategy – a document that echoes pseudo-intellectual propaganda more than resembling any serious foreign-policy analysis.

As US President Donald Trump's administration informed Europe of its misery and decline, he also announced its salvation: “cultivating resistance” by “patriotic” political parties capable of confronting the sovereignty-destroying European Union and reversing migration policies that threaten to make their countries “unrecognizable.” The clear implication is that the United States wants far-right Trump toadies to lead Europe: the National Rally's Jordan Bardella succeeding French President Emmanuel Macron; Alice Weidel of the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) replacing German Chancellor Friedrich Merz; and Reform UK's Nigel Farage instead of British Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

Of course, the last thing Europe needs is to take advice from a US regime that sends armed thugs into the streets to snatch up suspected immigrants, and treats matters of war and peace as opportunities for self-enrichment. It certainly should not heed an administration that takes its policy cues from mendacious propagandists, even if they present themselves as “philosophers,” such as the far-right conspiracy theorist Renaud Camus, and “theologians,” such as US Vice President JD Vance's “British sherpa” James Orr.

These pseudo-intellectuals, and the media that amplify them, are the political descendants of the “useful idiots” who helped foster sympathy for the Soviet Union in the West. Just as the journalist Walter Duranty touted the wonders of Soviet life as Stalin marched millions off to the gulag, the useful idiots advancing right-wing populism today have little understanding of the issues they discuss. Instead, they simply make things up, as Camus did with his “great replacement theory.”

The stakes, in their view, are not that high: pandering to power is generally alow-risk, high-reward activity nowadays. (The same was not true in, say, the 16th century, when Niccolò Machiavelli was strung up by his wrists for crossing the Medici family, and Thomas Cromwell was beheaded by the king, Henry VIII, to whom he had long been a trusted adviser.) The French novelist Julien Benda, in his eponymous book about the luminaries who welcomed authoritarian and fascist regimes, described such sycophancy as “the treason of the intellectuals.” Today's cast of “treasonous intellectuals” is distinctly undistinguished. There might be sophomore “tech bros,” like Dominic Cummings, the failed chief adviser to British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, and the American software guru Curtis Yarvin, whose incoherent jottings on Substack tantalize the likes of Vance and the increasingly unhinged billionaire Peter Thiel. Many, like the American political scientist and AfD/National Rally cheerleader Henry Olsen, have abandoned any pretense of scholarly neutrality. Olsen's work has been featured on Brussels Signal – a right-wing news platform founded with the backing of American political strategist Patrick Egan – alongside commentary from disgraced media kingpin and convicted fraudster Conrad Black (who received a pardon from Trump in 2019).

The far-right activist Matt Goodwin, a former academic, has been hired as a presenter on evangelical billionaire Sir Paul Marshall's imitation Fox News cable channel, GB News, and named “honorary president” of Students4Reform, Reform UK's youth wing. Together with the far-right podcaster Tucker Carlson, Goodwin has become a key player in the foreign propaganda operations of Hungary's autocratic prime minister, Viktor Orbán.

A key pillar of those operations is the Mathias Corvinus Collegium, Hungary's largest private educational institution, which received an endowment of more than 1.3 billion (\$1.5 billion) from the government in 2021. The MCC's Brussels satellite branch is run by yet another “treasonous intellectual,” Hungarian-Canadian sociologist Frank Furedi, who, as a university student, co-founded the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), a leftist sect that promotes a muddled brand of Leninist libertarianism.

Far from “canceling” these figures, supposedly “woke” establishment media outlets regularly feature them, in the name of a spurious “balance.” The BBC invites Baroness Claire Fox, head of the portentously named “Academy of Ideas,” to weigh in on the issues of the day. Mick Hume, Editor-in-Chief of europeanconservative.com, and Brendan O'Neill, a former RCP member who calls Trump an “anti-fascist hero,” also appear in mainstream newspapers.

One can find a number of commonalities among these populist ideologues, not least their almost pathological fear of migrants. As the Dutch populist Geert Wilders recently learned, however, ordinary people can grow tired of aggressive anti-migrant and Islamophobic rhetoric. The jaunty Farage, with his fake countryman garb, should take note.

In any case, one feature seems to dominate the rest: a deep resentment of so-called liberal elites. Many populists behave as if they have spent their lives with their noses pressed against the windows of grand buildings, peering at glamorous parties to which they were not invited. For some in the United Kingdom, this has translated into a near-obsession with joining the House of Lords (as Fox has done).

The modern media landscape has afforded these figures a salience beyond their wildest dreams, as Trump's National Security Strategy shows. (Given that Trump does not read, they are probably eagerly anticipating the rise of the intellectually pretentious Vance.) But their pseudo-intellectualism will never pass as the real thing, especially when viewed alongside distinguished thinkers – such as Anne Applebaum, Giuliano Da Empoli, Timothy Garton Ash, and Timothy Snyder – who see through them.

What they see is that these “intellectuals,” who pretend to be courting the working class – or, as Trump put it in 2016, the “poorly educated” – are simply serving financiers and tech billionaires keen to evade regulations and taxes. In a world where machines are doing the learning, these are the players for whom the idiots might turn out to be the most useful.

The writer is a senior fellow at LSE Ideas at the London School of Economics.

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REAL ESTATE REFORMS

J&K unveils single-window, district cells

RERA came into force in Jammu and Kashmir in 2018, while its operations began in January 2024 to regulate and promote the real estate sector, ensure transparency in projects, protect the interests of consumers and establish an adjudicating mechanism for speedy dispute redressal

PRESS TRUTHS OF INDIA

Jammu, Dec 10: The Jammu and Kashmir Real Estate Regulatory Authority (JKRERA) has proposed the establishment of a single window system for integrated approvals and registrations, and the constitution of district-level enforcement cells to strengthen monitoring and enforcement of violations across the Union Territory. RERA came into force in Jammu and Kashmir in 2018, while its operations began in January 2024 to regulate and promote the real estate sector, ensure transparency in projects, protect the interests of consumers and establish an adjudicating mechanism for speedy dispute redressal. “To address multifarious challenges, JKRERA Monday proposed clearer delineation of approval authorities in rural areas, the establishment of a Single Window System for integrated approvals and registrations, and the constitution of district-level enforcement cells under the Deputy Commissioners to strengthen monitoring, reporting and enforcement of RERA violations,” a senior official said. These measures, the Authority said, would ensure trans-



parent, regulated and planned development of the real estate sector in Jammu and Kashmir. The Authority is battling grassroots-level issues related to approvals among various organisations, with non-compliance of the Act leading to haphazard development, often without basic facilities and statutory safeguards mandated under law, the officer said. Officials pointed out that challenges faced by the Authority include a lack of clarity regarding layout approvals for colonies in rural areas, delays

due to multiple departmental clearances, and the need for improved inter-departmental coordination. Chairperson JKRERA Satish Chandra said the Authority has jurisdiction over all residential and commercial real estate projects in the Union Territory, including plotted developments exceeding 500 square metres or eight apartments, as prescribed under Section 3 of the Act. He said registration of eligible real estate projects and agents with JKRERA is man-

datory, and no promoter is permitted to advertise, market or sell any project without obtaining registration. The Act, he added, safeguards the rights of homebuyers and mandates developers to provide requisite infrastructure and facilities to curb unplanned and substandard development. Authority officials said any aggrieved person, including allottees, promoters and agents, can file complaints under Section 31 of the Act through both online and offline modes. “JKRERA is empowered to

conduct inquiries and recover penalties as arrears of land revenue in cases of non-compliance,” they said. The Act provides for stringent penalties, including fines of up to 10 per cent of the project cost and imprisonment for promoters for violations such as non-registration of projects and failure to comply with the orders of the Authority or the Appellate Tribunal. Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo had earlier underscored the importance of strengthening enforcement mechanisms to ensure transparency, accountability and protection of homebuyers’ interests in the real estate sector across the UT. He called upon the divisional and district administrations to extend all necessary assistance for the effective implementation of the Act in both municipal and rural areas. The Jammu and Kashmir housing and urban development department has also directed all administrative secretaries, heads of departments, and managing directors of public sector undertakings and corporations to register all new and ongoing real estate projects with RERA before commencement of any work.

Jammu airport set for low-visibility ops

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Dec 10: Jammu airport is now equipped for low-visibility operations after upgrading its navigation system to CAT-II (Category II) and the facility is also technically ready for night operations, pending clearance from defence and security agencies, a senior official said Wednesday. Jammu airport director Devender Yadav said the new terminal building—with expanded parking, six aerobridges and a five-fold increase in capacity—will be completed by the end of next year, with structural work and the elevated access road already finished and the remaining construction moving on “war footing”. “We have seen in the last winter that there were a lot of problems with flight operations (due to poor visibility owing to dense fog). To address this particular issue, the airfield navigation system has been upgraded from CAT-1 to CAT-2. In CAT-2, there are more sophisticated instruments. In that, you can perform flight operations in less visibility. The procedures for low-visibility flight operations have already been implemented and we had a preparatory meeting with all the stakeholders. We are prepared for low-visibility flight operations,” Yadav told reporters here. On the long-pending demand for late night operations, Yadav said the airfield is technically ready for the night operations. “It (being ready for night operations) is just one aspect but there are many other aspects as well. In Jammu, things are more complicated because of the security and defence angles. But yes, we are working on it,” the airport director said. Asked about the ongoing work on modernisation of the airport and the expected date for its completion, Yadav said the work was slated for completion by June next year but will be completed by the end of 2026 as work was delayed due to various reasons including the launch of Operation Sindoor. “The new airport’s architecture is modern and advanced. The size of the building is five times bigger than the present terminal building. Like Delhi’s T3, an elevated bridge for departure is being laid here,” he said. He said the expanded work will also ensure 10 aircraft parking stands and six aerobridges, while the parking area of the airfield will be triple compared to present airfield.

Set out to ‘see the world’, 2 missing minors visit Nepal, Mumbai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jalna, Dec 10: After an intensive nine-day search across multiple states and even international borders, police have traced and rescued two minor girls who had gone missing from a village in Jalna district of Maharashtra, police officials said Wednesday. The girls, aged 14 and 15, and residents of Manjargaon village under Badnapur tehsil, had travelled to Nepal and later

Mumbai, influenced by social media and a desire to “see the world,” they said. The teenagers have been reunited with their families. According to police, the girls, classmates studying in Class 10, left their respective home December 1 after telling their parents they were going to attend a school programme and would return late. When they did not come back, their worried parents lodged a missing complaint at

the Badnapur police station. Their mobile phones were switched off most of the time, though they briefly became active on WhatsApp, giving police crucial leads, they said. During their journey towards Nepal, the girls met a man named Aditya Jha from Mumbai and took his contact number. After reaching Janakpur in Nepal -- chosen by them because it is a “safe country” accessible without a passport -- they eventually

travelled back to Mumbai, where Jha and his family sheltered the duo, unaware cops had been looking for them, police said. Following technical analysis, police traced the hotspot location used by the girls through Jha’s device. A Badnapur police team rushed to Mumbai and located them at Kalwa in adjoining Thane district. “If we had reached ten minutes late, the girls would have left again,” an officer said.

Cadets fund fallen mate’s sister’s medical dream



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, Dec 10: In a display of military camaraderie of NDA, coursemates of the late Cadet Pratham Mahale have united to realise his sister’s dream of completing her medical education, providing crucial support after she went into shock following the tragedy. Pratham, who was serving as Squadron Cadet Captain of Oscar Squadron at the prestigious National Defence Academy, died two days after receiving a head injury during a boxing championship at the premier institute here October 16, 2023. The newly commissioned officers have come together to ensure the dream that Pratham harboured of his sister completing her medical education is fulfilled. “After commissioning into their respective armed services, these coursemates once again got in touch with us. They invited us to witness the IMS Pipping and POP (Passing Out Parade) ceremony in Dehradun and even visited our house in Jalgaon,” said Pratham’s father, Gorakh Mahale. When Pratham was in the NDA, his sister Rujuta was preparing for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) to pursue medical education. “However, after the tragic incident, we all sank into shock, and that affected her preparation. It was his coursemates who came forward and encouraged her to continue. They assured us that even though Pratham is not here, they stand firmly by her,” said Gorakh Mahale. His daughter resumed her preparation, and appeared for NEET. “To

support her, Pratham’s coursemates regularly sent money to my wife’s account, Rs 30,000 to Rs 35,000 each time,” he said. When Rujuta secured admission to a medical course in Bareilly, the coursemates assured the family that they need not worry about money. “They were even ready to pay the entire fee. I tried to stop them, but they didn’t listen and together contributed around Rs 30,000 for her admission,” said Mahale. “We are overwhelmed by the gesture of these young officers who continue to show such affection for Pratham. Their emotional and financial support means a lot to us,” he added. One of Pratham’s coursemates, now a Flying Officer posted in Chandigarh who preferred not to be named, told PTI that there were 22 cadets in Oscar Squadron. “During one of the boxing competitions, our squadron was short in the low-weight category. Pratham stepped up to fill the gap but unfortunately suffered a head injury and died two days later,” he said. Pratham often spoke about his parents and his sister who was preparing for medical studies, the officer recalled. “After commissioning, we decided to support his family. We contribute a small amount every month, and even visit them whenever possible to spend time with them.” “During NDA training, we created countless memories together. Though Pratham is not with us today, we will keep him alive in our hearts by standing with his family and supporting them emotionally,” he said.

MAHATMA GANDHI CENTRAL UNIVERSITY
(A Central University established by an Act of Parliament)
Motihari, East Champaran, Bihar - 845401
Website: www.mgcub.ac.in | Email: osdadmin@mgcub.ac.in

Notification For Ph.D. Admission (2025-26)

Online applications are invited for Ph.D. Programmes (Academic Year 2025-26) through the **SAMARTH Portal:**
https://mgcubadm.samarth.edu.in

For eligibility, programme details and guidelines, visit: **www.mgcub.ac.in**

Last Date for Online Submission: 26th December 2025 (Friday)
cbc 21336/12/0002/2526

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, ROURKELA (KL) DIVISION
(Phone No.0661-2950169// E-mail: dfokl1973@gmail.com)
Order No.217/ Date. 09.12.2025

No.MM-362: INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
E-Procurement Bid Identification No.03 RKL-KL-F.E.&C./2025-26, Dtd.09.12.2025

1. Name of work	- Construction of Range Office-cum-Residence at Bonai (KL) Range under Rourkela K.L. Division, District-Sundargarh
2. No. of Works	- 01 Nos.
3. No. of Covers	- Double Cover
4. Estimated Cost (Excluding GST)	- Rs.54,51,350.00
5. Period of Completion	- 03 Calendar Months
6. Date & Time of availability of bid documents in portal	- From 10.00 A.M. of Date 12.12.2025 to 05.00 P.M. of Date 26.12.2025
7. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal	- Upto 5.00 P.M. of Date 26.12.2025
8. Date of Opening of bid documents	- At 11.30 A.M. of Date 29.12.2025
9. Class of Contractor	- 'B' Class Contractor
10. Name and address of Officer Inviting Bid	- Divisional Forest Officer, Rourkela K.L. Division, Panposh

Further, details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**. The Addendum/ Corrigendum if any will be hosted in the website only

Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer Rourkela K.L. Division

OIPR-08072/11/0005/2526

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର
ନିର୍ବାହୀ ସ୍ୱସ୍ଥତା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ, ଜନସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଖଣ୍ଡ, ବାଲେଶ୍ୱର
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION, BALASORE
AT-SAMALPUR, P.O-BALIA, DIST-BALASORE, PIN-756056
(e-mail: eephbls@gmail.com, Phone-9438660004)
No.6635/DATE 04.12.2025

2nd CORRIGENDUM
TENDER FOR THE WORK
No.C-1762:“Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of DG Sets (CPCB IV+GEN Set with AMF Panel) with Movable Trolley including shed for Soro Town”.

In continuation to this office Bid-Identification No.SEPHLS-28 of 2025-26 dt 12.11.2025. The following amendments have been made to Critical Dates.

Item/ Clause	Description	Existing Critical Dates	1st time corrigendum of critical dates	2nd corrigendum of Revised/Amended Critical Dates
1	Last date and time of seeking clarification	17.00 Hr. of dt.28.11.2025	17.00 Hr. of dt.05.12.2025	17.00 Hr. of dt.10.12.2025
	Last date & time of bidding on-line	17.00 Hr. of dt.03.12.2025	17.00 Hr. of dt.10.12.2025	17.00 Hr. of dt.15.12.2025
	Date & Time of opening Bid	12.00 Hr. of dt.04.12.2025	12.00 Hr. of dt.11.12.2025	12.00 Hr. of dt.16.12.2025
	DTCN			

All other terms and conditions un-altered.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer P.H. Division, Balasore

OIPR-13053/11/0043/2526

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
Office of the Superintending Engineer
Bhanjanagar (R&B) Division, Bhanjanagar
(Phone/Fax : (06821) 241133 / E-mail : sebnbngr@yahoo.in)
Ltr. No. /1881/Dtd.05.12.2025

No.B-812 INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)
E-Procurement Bid Identification No. S.E - BNJ-R&B-19/2025-26

1. Name of work	: Building Works
2. No. of works	: 2 Nos. Building Work
3. No. of Covers	: Double Cover
4. Estimated cost	: Rs.61.98 to 66.66 lakhs
5. Period of Completion	: Six Calendar Months
6. Date of time of availability of bid document in the portal	: From 12.00 Noon of dated 12.12.2025 to 5.00 P.M. of dated 22.12.2025
7. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal	: Up to 5.00 P.M. of dated 22.12.2025
8. Date of opening of bid documents	: At 11.00 A.M. of dated 23.12.2025
9. Class of contractor	: "B" Class Contractor
10. Name and address of Officer inviting bid	: Superintending Engineer, Bhanjanagar (R&B) Division, Bhanjanagar

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**. The Addendum/Corrigendum if any will be hosted in the website only

Sd./- Superintending Engineer Bhanjanagar (R&B) Division

OIPR-34015/11/0034/2526

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
M.I.DIVISION, GANJAM NO-I, BERHAMPUR
E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE

Bid Identification No. : Online Tender /07/GMID-I/2025-26

Name of Work : Civil Construction Works
No. of Work : 3 (Three)
Estimated Cost : Varies from Rs.71.50 lakh to Rs. 98.60 lakh

Period of Completion : 03 (Three) Calendar Month
Availability of Bid-document for sale and receipt through online : From 12.12.2025 at 10.00 Hours to 26.12.2025 upto 17.00 Hours
Date & time of opening of technical bids : 26.12.2025 At 17.15 Hours

Date & time of opening of Financial bids : 02.01.2026 At 11.00 A.M.

Name & Address of the Officer inviting Tender : **Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division Ganjam-I, Berhampur**

Further Details can be seen from the website : **https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in**. Any Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of can also be seen in the said website.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer, M.I. Divn. Ganjam-I, Berhampur

OIPR-32104/11/0046/2526

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RWS&S DIVISION, BARGARH
Email: eerrwss_bgh@nic.in, Ph.(O):-06646 233220, Fax:06646 234626
No.4539, Dt.03.12.2025

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA "e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE
Bid Identification No. 07, Dt. of 2025-26

No.O-1683: The Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Division, Bargarh on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites tenders from the valid licensed holder contractors of class 'C' or 'B' registered with any department of State Government or equivalent class of Central Govt. etc. to be eventually drawn up in P1 Contract Form for the below work as per terms and condition noted below.

1. Name of the Work: Construction of Government Quarter for Assistant Engineer, RWS&S Section-II at Sohela under RWS&S Division, Bargarh.

2. Approx. Estimated Cost: Rs.27.45 Lakh.

3.Date and time of availability of document in the portal: Dt.11.12.2025 to Dt. 29.12.2025 upto 5.00 P.M.

4. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal: Dt.29.12.2025 upto 5.00 P.M.

5. Date & time of Opening of Tender: Dt.30.12.2025 at 11.00 AM

6. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid: Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Division, Bargarh, District-Bargarh.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "http://tendersorissa.gov.in". The authority reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer RWS&S Division, Bargarh

OIPR-25018/11/0007/2526

of the day **quote**

Under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, we raised the issue of water scarcity and assured that Rajasthan will not face any further problems. Works worth ₹26,000 crore have been launched in the Ramjal Setu link project. Other water-related initiatives are underway across the state

BHAJAN LAL SHARMA | RAJASTHAN CM

Today, we can solve these problems because the BJP is in government at all three levels. It took us 27 years to reach this point. Now we finally have an opportunity to resolve long-standing difficulties

REKHA GUPTA | DELHI CM

Celebrating the 36th Anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize conferred on His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama at Chamlang, Tawang Monastery

PEMA KHANDU | ARUNACHAL CM

SHORT TAKES

Salman Khan moves Delhi HC

New Delhi: Bollywood actor Salman Khan has approached the Delhi High Court seeking protection of his personality rights. The plea is scheduled to be heard Thursday by Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora. Khan has moved the high court seeking to restrain various social media platforms and e-commerce websites from unauthorisedly using his name, images, persona and likeness and to protect his personality rights.

Kin attack hospital after patient's death

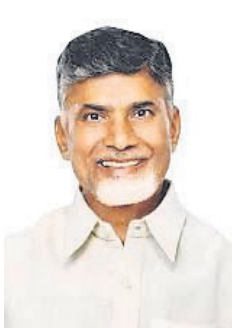
Pune: Angry relatives of a patient pelted stones at a private hospital and damaged its glass facade in Pune city after his death during treatment at the medical facility Wednesday, an official said. While the patient's kin alleged negligence, the hospital condemned the vandalism and asserted that it followed national and international guidelines for managing "high-risk" cases.

Chargesheet against 2 Chinese nationals

New Delhi: The CBI has filed a charge sheet against two Chinese nationals who were allegedly the masterminds of the HPZ Token Investment Fraud case in which over ₹1000 crore were siphoned off through shell companies during Covid, officials said Wednesday. The CBI has alleged that Shigoo Technology Pvt. Ltd., owned and controlled by Chinese, allegedly cheated the public during the Covid lockdown using a fake mobile application titled "HPZ Tokens", claiming that investments would be used for cryptocurrency mining and would yield very high returns.

BLO attempts suicide

Jhansi (UP): A gram rozgar sewak posted as a booth level officer (BLO) in the Mauranipur development block of Jhansi district allegedly attempted suicide Wednesday by consuming pesticide, reportedly due to work-related pressure. He was first taken to the Mauranipur primary health centre and later referred to Jhansi Medical College, where his condition is stated to be stable. All special intensive revision (SIR) work assigned to the employee, Nathuram Arya, had already been completed last week.



When we have amended the constitution itself several times in the country, what's wrong in changing the business

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | ANDHRA PRADESH CM

ED RAIDS MULTIPLE LOCATIONS IN MAHA

The Enforcement Directorate Wednesday conducted searches at multiple locations in Maharashtra as part of a money laundering probe against a dairy and agro company accused of defrauding investors of more than ₹100 crore, officials said



ED seizes 13 bank accounts of Reliance Infra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 10: The Enforcement Directorate Wednesday said it has seized more than a dozen bank accounts holding about ₹55 crore worth deposits, of Anil Ambani Group company Reliance Infrastructure as part of a hawala-linked FEMA investigation. It alleged in a statement that Reliance Infrastructure Ltd (R-Infra), through its special purpose vehicles (SPVs), siphoned public funds from highway construction projects awarded by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and sent them to the UAE illegally.

The investigation pertains to a 2010 tender that was awarded to the company as an EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) contract to build the JR Toll Road (Jaipur-Reengus highway).

The agency said 13 bank accounts having a balance of ₹54.82 crore of R-Infra have been seized for "contravention" of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

R-Infra said in a regulatory filing Wednesday that it has received an order from the ED "whereby it has placed lien in the Company's bank accounts for ₹77.86 crore in relation to alleged violations under FEMA".

The ED had summoned Ambani's spokesperson last month said this was "a purely domestic contract with no foreign exchange component involved whatsoever".

"The JR Toll Road has been fully completed and, from 2021 onwards, has been with the NHAI," the statement had said.

Foreigner alleges harassment at Post Malone's concert

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Dec 10: Two foreigners were allegedly harassed and "touched without consent" at American rapper Post Malone's first Indian concert in Guwahati two days ago, one of them claimed in her social media account.

Guwahati Police said the victims have filed no complaint, but the force is trying to contact the women through their social media platforms for more details about the incident.

Emma, who described herself as a backpacking travel vlogger across South East Asia, in a video post on Instagram, claimed that she and her friend were harassed and "touched without consent" in the concert held at Veterinary College Playground in Khanapara.

Malone had his debut Indian concert in Guwahati Monday as part of the Assam government's 'Policy for Concert Tourism'. More than 20,000 tickets were sold for the programme.

"Do you think concerts are a safe place for women in India? Last night at the Post Malone concert in Guwahati, things turned serious very quickly. As two women in the crowd, both me and @amina_finds were touched without consent within minutes of entering the packed area," Emma said in her post on Tuesday.

After just 10 minutes, they had to force their way out and move to the back near the vendors because they no longer "felt safe", she added.

"Sadly, because of what happened, we were no longer able to enjoy the concert. This isn't normal crowd pushing. It's part of a wider issue of violence against women and the way harassment is minimised in public spaces," said the woman, who seems to be from Bangkok as per her social media account.

Deepavali now on UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list

The decision was taken during a key meeting of UNESCO being hosted at the Red Fort in Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 10: India's Deepavali, the festival of lights, was Wednesday inscribed on the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, sparking celebrations on earning the coveted tag.

The decision was taken during a key meeting of UNESCO being hosted at the Red Fort in Delhi.

Chants of 'Jai Hind', 'Vande Mataram' and 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' rent the air as UNESCO announced that the festival has been added to the prestigious list after a discussion by its committee.

Artistes dressed in different traditional attire performed in front of the main stage while images of the Deepavali festival played on the big screen.

Prime Minister Narendra



Modi welcomed the addition of Deepavali to UNESCO's Intangible Heritage List, saying it will contribute to the festival's global popularity.

"People in India and around the world are thrilled," PM Modi said in a post on X, responding to a post from UNESCO listing Deepavali in its intangible heritage list.

Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat de-

livered a statement on behalf of the country right after the inscription was announced during the 20th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).

This is the sixteenth element from India to be inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Nehru, Indira did 'vote chori': Shah



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 10: In a stinging attack at the Opposition over its criticism of the SIR, Home Minister Amit Shah Wednesday said they are worried because they can no longer win elections by corrupt practices and claimed that the reason for Congress' defeat in polls was its leadership and not EVMs or "vote chori".

Intervening in a debate on election reforms in the Lok Sabha, Shah alleged that the Opposition is raising the issue of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls to keep "avaidh ghushpathiye (illegal immigrants)" in the voters' list.

When the Opposition MPs walked out later, Shah said no matter how many times the Opposition boycotts, the NDA will continue with its policy of detect, delete and deport 'ghushpathiye'.

The Opposition wants to normalise and formalise the 'ghushpathiye' and add them in electoral rolls, he said. The BJP leader cited three instances of alleged "vote chori" by Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi.

"Post Independence, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was backed by 28 persons while Jawaharlal Nehru by two persons and yet Nehru became the prime minister, this was vote chori," he

said. The minister said that the second "vote chori" was by Indira Gandhi, when she granted herself immunity after court set aside her election.

He said the dispute of third "vote chori" has just reached civil courts on how Sonia Gandhi became a voter before becoming citizen of India.

Shah also took a dig at the Congress and said the reason for its poll losses was its leadership.

"If someone asks a question in a presser he is dubbed as a BJP agent, if they lose a case, they accuse the judge, if they lose an election, they blame EVMs. Now when EVM blame does not hold, they brought up vote chori...still they lost Bhar. Now the reason for your defeat is your leadership and not EVM or voters' list," the home minister said.

Shah also accused the Opposition of spreading falsehoods on SIR and launched a strong defence of the exercise, asking whether democracy can be safe when the prime minister and the chief ministers are decided by 'ghushpathiye'.

The BJP leader said the Opposition thinks that it is tarnishing the image of the government but in reality they are tarnishing the image of India's democracy.

Opposition worried as people of country do not vote for them and SIR will delete names of illegal immigrants who back them, he said.

Tradition of electoral loss began in 1914 and the Congress blamed EVMs, which were brought by Rajiv Gandhi in 1989, he said.

The EVMs were used for first time in 2004 and then in 2009 elections and on both occasions, the Congress won, but they started complaining only after 2014 loss, he said.

He stressed that Parliament is the biggest panchayat for discussions and the BJP-NDA people never run away from a discussion.



A view of boats moored at the 'Sangam', in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

India, US step up talks on trade ties

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 10: India's Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal met US Deputy Trade Representative Rick Switzer to discuss bilateral trade and economic ties, the government said Wednesday.

"The two sides exchanged views on matters related to India-US trade and economic ties including on the ongoing negotiations for a mutually beneficial Bilateral Trade Agreement," India's trade ministry said in a post on X.

Switzer is leading a US team in New Delhi for two days of trade discussions, as India seeks relief from punitive tariffs imposed by Washington over its purchases of Russian oil.

In August, US President Donald Trump doubled tariffs on imports from India to as much as 50%, hitting exports of textiles, chemicals and food items such as shrimp.

Exports to the US fell nearly



9% year-on-year in October to \$6.31 billion from \$6.91 billion a year ago, though they were higher than \$5.47 billion in September, Indian government data showed.

Washington is also pushing India to lower tariffs and non-tariff barriers on US goods and open its market to American farm products, including soybean and grain sorghum.

US Trade Representative Jameson Greer told lawmakers Tuesday that India had resisted greater imports of US farm and meat products but had been "quite forward leaning" in the latest round of talks.

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Women's share in civil services rises to 35%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 10: The proportion of women qualifying for the Civil Services Examination (CSE) has increased from 24 per cent in 2019 to 35 per cent in 2023, the government told Lok Sabha Wednesday.

Engineering graduates consistently accounted for more than 50 per cent of successful candidates, data presented by Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh showed.

Responding to a question, the minister presented five-year data showing a steady rise in the number of female candidates in the final merit



list — from 220 out of 922 candidates in 2019 to 397 out of 1,132 in 2023.

At the same time, engineering stream candidates con-

tinued to dominate the merit list, with 554 engineers recommended in 2023, far outnumbering those from humanities (368), science (137), and medical

The government reports an increase in the number of bachelor's degree holders selected, rising from 672 in 2019 to 848 in 2023

science (73). The data shows that engineering graduates formed the largest cohort every year from 2019 to 2023.

The government also reported an increase in the number of bachelor's degree holders selected, rising from 672 in 2019 to 848 in 2023.

According to the answer, "Details with regard to CSE-2024 is under compilation as Reserve List has been declared October 28, 2025 and result of CSE 2025 is not yet declared."

The Civil Services Examination (CSE) is an exam conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to recruit candidates for for All India Services like the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS), and various other government services.

It is a three-stage process that includes a preliminary exam, a main examination (written), and a personality test (interview).

Some are fighting on the basis of religion. The Waqf property law has been made by the BJP. We resisted it in the state Assembly and filed a case in the Supreme Court, which is ongoing

SUVENDU ADHIKARI | SENIOR BJP LEADER

Manufacturing of the Hydrogen Train-set has been completed. For providing hydrogen for use in this train-set, a hydrogen plant has been conceived at Jind. In this plant, hydrogen is being produced using electrolysis process which is key element of green hydrogen generation

ASHWINI VAISHNAW | RAILWAY MINISTER

Another significant feature of South Korea visit was meeting with Nongshim in which the company acknowledged India as a high-priority market and expressed interest in Punjab for future expansion

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

X

POST OF THE DAY

The 1st stanza of Vande Mataram demands Clean water, Clean air and Good food

Irony is the water is 500 TDS, AQI is 900 and the food is Adulterated.

@Nher_who

SHORT TAKES

BJP questions Rahul's foreign trips

New Delhi: The BJP Wednesday raised questions on Rahul Gandhi's foreign trips and asked the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha about his "compulsion" to often embark on "secret travels" abroad. Alleging that the itinerary of Gandhi's "official or unofficial" trips is not shared when he goes abroad, BJP national spokesperson Tuhin Sinha also asked the Congress leader what he is "hiding" from the country.

PM-led panel meets to select new CIC

New Delhi: The committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to select the new Chief Information Commissioner met here on Wednesday and is learnt to have decided on the appointment of CIC and eight Information Commissioners, with Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi apparently giving a dissent note. The meeting that lasted over an hour and a half was held at the office of the Prime Minister and was attended by Gandhi and Home Minster Amit Shah.

Ex-IPS officer held

Lucknow/Deoria: Former IPS officer Amitabh Thakur was arrested Wednesday in connection with an alleged fraud and forgery case related to the allotment of an industrial plot in Deoria district in 1999 and was later remanded to 14 days' judicial custody by a court, officials said. Thakur was arrested in the early hours from the Maholi border in Sitapur district after being taken into custody by police in Shahjahanpur while he was travelling by train from Lucknow to Delhi, they said.



Muslims are not there, they are not reflected in the secular parties for example if Muslim-majority seats like Wayanad can elect non-Muslims, surely Rae Bareilly, Amethi and Etawah can elect Muslims

ASADUDDIN OWAISI | AIMIM MP

SEX WORKERS THRONG SIR ASSISTANCE BOOTH

The West Bengal CEO's office Wednesday organised camps in three red-light areas in Kolkata to help sex workers fill up enumeration forms as part of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the state, an official said



DGCA to deploy staff inside IndiGo HQ

The DGCA has formed an oversight team of eight senior captains, and two of them, along with two government officials, will be stationed at IndiGo's Gurgaon headquarters to monitor cancellation status, crew deployment, unplanned leave, and routes hit by staff shortages

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Mumbai, Dec 10: Aviation watchdog DGCA will station its personnel at IndiGo's headquarters as it steps up oversight on India's largest airline, which continues to cancel dozens of flights despite saying operations have stabilised.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has formed an oversight team of eight senior captains, and two of them, along with two government officials, will be stationed at IndiGo's Gurgaon headquarters to monitor cancellation status, crew deployment, unplanned leave, and routes hit by staff shortages.

"Both these teams will submit a daily report," the DGCA said in the two page order. DGCA also summoned IndiGo Chief Executive Pieter Elbers to appear at its office on Thursday and submit a complete report, along with comprehensive data and updates, relating to the recent operational disruptions, according to a statement.

Meanwhile, DGCA has decided to carry out immediate on-site inspections to assess IndiGo's operations across 11 domestic airports, according to an official order Wednesday.

All assigned officers will visit their respective airports in the next 2-3 days, and submit a comprehensive report to the Director of Operations for the flight safety department at the DGCA in New Delhi within 24 hours of their visit, the order said.

IndiGo has already submitted its revised flight schedule to DGCA after the government slashed its winter schedule by 10 per cent.

Since last week, IndiGo cancelled thousands of flights nationwide after failing to plan for tighter safety regulations. The cancellations peaked on December 5 and have declined since. The airline Tuesday said its operations have stabilised and were back to normal levels.

But the cancellations continued with nearly 220 flights at three major airports, including Delhi and Mumbai, cancelled.

As part of the winter schedule for 2025-26, the airline has been operating over 2,200 flights per day.

The latest order is part of a suite of actions by authorities that followed IndiGo, which controls over 65 per cent of the market share, cancelling more than 4,000 flights since December 2 that left tens of thousands of passengers stranded, upending their vacation plans, important meetings, and weddings.

Separately, the Delhi High Court Wednesday questioned the central government for not taking timely action to check the crisis, asking why the situation was allowed to precipitate.

"The question is why, at all, this crisis arose and what have you been doing?" a bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar



Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said and directed the government and the airline to take steps to adequately compensate the affected persons.

The bench directed that by January 22, the next date of hearing, if the inquiry initiated by a committee into the disruption in flight operations over the past week is complete, its report should be submitted to the court in a sealed cover.

DGCA, which previously issued a show cause notice to IndiGo's CEO and chief operating officer to explain the disruptions, has set up a four-member panel to probe the lapses.

Civil Aviation Minister Ram-mohan Naidu has ordered a 10 per cent cut in planned flights of the airline to help match schedule with pilots available.

The personnel deployed at IndiGo's corporate office will monitor "cancellation status - domestic and international, refund status, on time performance, compensation to passengers and baggage return", the DGCA order said.

The two captains deployed at IndiGo's corporate office will on a daily basis look into the airline's total fleet, average stage

length, total number of pilots, network details, crew utilisation in hours, all unplanned leaves per day (like sick leave, casual leave and emergency leave), flights per day and available crew, total number of sectors affected on account of crew shortage and standby crew per day per base (cockpit and cabin).

DGCA said it has been decided to constitute an oversight team "in view of passenger inconvenience caused due to large-scale disruptions in the operations of IndiGo Airlines at various airports across the country".

For decades, IndiGo relied on aggressive scheduling and max night-flight utilisation -- a business model that collapsed when tighter safety regulations that increased the mandatory weekly rest period for pilots and sharply reduced permissible night-landings and any extended night-duty hours came into force.

The result was catastrophic: on-time performance plunged, hundreds of flights were cancelled daily, and major airports saw chaos with stranded passengers, overloaded terminals, and long queues.

Meanwhile, DGCA has directed Pieter Elbers to appear at its office on Thursday and submit a complete report, along with comprehensive data and updates, relating to the recent operational disruptions.

As per the regulator's order, the airline has been asked to present information on the flight restoration, recruitment plan of pilots and crew, with updated position of pilot and cabin crew strength, number of flights cancelled and refunds processed, among others.

GOA CLUB FIRE

MEA may revoke passports of Luthras

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 10: The Ministry of External Affairs is considering revoking the passports of Gaurav Luthra and Saurabh Luthra, co-owners of the Goa nightclub where 25 people were killed in a fire December 6, following a request from the state government.

Sources said Wednesday that the ministry has received a communication from the Goa government with regard to Gaurav and Saurabh Luthra.

It is examining the request to revoke their passports under the Passports Act of India, in accordance with the rules, they said.

Brothers Saurabh and Gaurav Luthra, who are co-owners of 'Birch by Romeo Lane' nightclub in North Goa, left for Phuket, Thailand shortly after the fire incident. An Interpol Blue Corner Notice has been issued against them.

A Delhi court Wednesday refused to give any interim protection from arrest to the duo, while their partner was held in connection with the fire incident. In the court, the Luthras' lawyer refuted allegations that they had fled, claiming the trip was for a business meeting, and argued that the brothers are only licensees, not the actual owners of the nightclub.

Five managers and staff members have already been arrested by Goa Police in connection with the fire that broke out at the nightclub located in Arpora, 25 km from Panaji, around midnight December 6.

Meanwhile, a Delhi court Wednesday refused to give any interim protection from arrest



to Saurabh and Gaurav Luthra. In the court, the Luthras' lawyer refuted allegations that they had fled, claiming the trip was for a business meeting and argued that the brothers are only licensees, not the actual owners of the nightclub.

In his bail plea, Saurabh requested four weeks of transit anticipatory protection, arguing that returning to Goa posed an "imminent threat to his life, liberty and safety" due to angry mobs. NMeanwhile, new details emerged regarding the escape of Luthras, against whom an Interpol Blue Corner notice has been issued.

Officials said that the duo booked their tickets for Phuket, Thailand, through a travel portal at 1:17 AM December 7, within an hour of learning about the devastating fire. At the time when police and administration were still battling the blaze and attempting to rescue staff, the two left India in the early hours of Sunday by an IndiGo flight.

In a related development, the Goa Police Wednesday arrested Ajay Gupta, who claimed to be a silent partner and investor in the 'Birch by Romeo Lane' nightclub in North Goa, with the help of Delhi Police Crime Branch. A Look Out Circular (LOC) had been issued against him.

Bill to curb hate speech tabled in K'taka Assembly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Belagavi (Karnataka), Dec 10: The Karnataka government Wednesday tabled in the state Assembly a Bill to curb hate speech that proposed a jail term of up to 10 years and a maximum fine of Rs 1 lakh amid strong Opposition from the BJP, which alleged that the move was aimed at "snatching freedom of expression" of political opponents.

The Karnataka Hate Speech and Hate Crime (Prevention) Bill, cleared by the cabinet December 4, was tabled in the Assembly by State Home Minister G Parameshwara. According to the Bill, "any expression, which is made, published or circulated in words either spoken or written or by signs or by visible representations or through electronic communication or otherwise, in public view, with an intention to cause injury, disharmony or feelings of enmity or hatred or ill-will against person alive or dead, class or group of persons or community, to meet any prejudicial interest is hate speech."



Indian military personnel show skills during 'Vijay Diwas' celebration at Air Force Station Mohanbari, in Dibrugarh district, Assam

PTI PHOTO

NETANYAHU CALLS PM MODI, BRIEFS ON WEST ASIA SITUATION

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday spoke with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu and discussed ways to further strengthen the strategic partnership between the two nations. Netanyahu called Modi and shared views on the situation in West Asia. "PM Modi reaffirmed India's support for efforts towards a just and durable peace in the region, including early implementation of the Gaza Peace Plan," a statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said. It said both leaders expressed satisfaction at the continued momentum in India-Israel Strategic Partnership and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening these ties for mutual benefit. "The two leaders strongly condemned terrorism and reiterated their zero-tolerance approach towards terrorism in all its forms and manifestations," the statement said. The two leaders also agreed to remain in touch, it added.

‘Over 1bn women faced childhood sexual violence in 2023’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 10: Over a billion individuals worldwide aged 15 and above had experienced sexual violence during childhood, while around 608 million females were exposed to intimate partner violence in 2023, according to estimates published in The Lancet journal.

Highest prevalence of both intimate partner and sexual violence were found to be concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. In these regions, the health impacts of violence are compounded by high rates of HIV and other chronic conditions, researchers noted.

In India, prevalence of intimate partner violence was estimated at 23 per cent among women aged 15 and above. Over 30 per cent of women and 13 per cent of men aged 15 and above

are estimated to have experienced sexual violence as a child.

The researchers analysed data from the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2023, the "largest, most comprehensive effort to quantify health loss across places and over time". The US' University of Washington coordinates the GBD study.

"Globally, in 2023, we estimated that 608 million females aged 15 years and older had ever been exposed to IPV (intimate partner violence), and 1.01 billion individuals aged 15 years and older had experienced sexual violence during childhood," the authors wrote.

The study provides new evidence linking sexual violence against children and intimate partner violence to a wider



range of health outcomes than previously recognised, resulting in significantly higher levels of health loss and disability, they added.

Anxiety and major depressive disorders were among the eight

leading causes of disability developed as a result of intimate partner violence, while experiencing sexual violence as a child was associated with 14 health outcomes, including mental health and substance use disorders and chronic illnesses.

Intimate partner violence was linked to 145,000 deaths worldwide, mostly from homicide, suicide, and HIV/AIDS. The researchers also estimated nearly 30,000 women to have been killed by their partners in 2023.

Exposure to sexual violence as a child was associated with 290,000 deaths worldwide in 2023, predominantly from suicide, HIV/AIDS, and type 2 diabetes, the study found.

Self-harm and schizophrenia were found to be the leading causes of disability among men -- and anxiety the leading cause among women -- due to sexual violence during childhood, especially in south Asia.

Addressing violence against women and children is not only a matter of human rights but also a crucial public health priority that can save millions of lives,

improve mental health outcomes, and build resilient communities, the researchers said.

The findings also underscore an urgent need for preventive measures such as strengthening legal frameworks, promoting gender equality, and expanding support services for survivors to reduce health toll caused due to violence, the team said.

The World Health Organization, in a global report published in November, estimated that over a fifth of females in India aged 15-49 were subjected to intimate partner violence in 2023, while nearly 30 per cent have been affected during their lifetime.

Worldwide, nearly one in three, or 840 million, have suffered partner or sexual violence during their lifetime -- a figure that has barely changed since 2000, it said.



In combating the Belarusian hybrid attack, we must take the strictest measures and defend the areas most affected by this attack

INGA RUGINIENE | PRIME MINISTER, LITHUANIA

UN RIGHTS CRISIS

The UN human rights office faces a \$90 million shortfall in 2025, forcing 300 staff cuts, or 15%. High Commissioner Volker Turk says the Geneva-based agency is in “survival mode” as major donors, including the US and European countries, reduce contributions



of the day quote

We had a meeting and I said, Why is it we only take people from shithole countries, right? Why can't we have some people from Norway, Sweden?

DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT, USA



This is the day when Australian families are taking back power from these big tech companies and they're asserting the right of kids to be kids and for parents to have greater peace of mind

ANTHONY ALBANESE | PM, AUSTRALIA



We will try to convince India to send her back to Dhaka

MD TOUHIJ HOSSAIN | FOREIGN ADVISOR, DHAKA



SHORT TAKES

UK sanctions Russia, China firms

London: Britain announced sanctions against Russian media and ideas outlets Tuesday as the UK's top diplomat warned Western nations must raise their game to combat information warfare from “malign foreign states”. Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper said the UK was imposing sanctions on the microblogging Telegram channel Rybar, the Foundation for the Support and Protection of the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad — described by Estonian intelligence as a front for the GRU spy agency — and the Centre for Geopolitical Expertise, a think-tank run by far-right Russian writer Aleksandr Dugin. Two China-based firms also were sanctioned “for their vast and indiscriminate cyber activities against the UK and its allies,” Cooper said.

Nigerian soldiers kill 9 protesters

Abuja: Nigerian Army soldiers opened fire and killed nine women protesting the army's handling of communal clashes in the northeastern Adamawa state, witnesses and Amnesty International told The Associated Press Tuesday. The women were protesting Monday along a major road in Adamawa's local government Lamurde when the soldiers shot at them after being blocked from passing, witnesses and victims' relatives told the AP in details first reported Tuesday. Ten others were injured in the shooting, witnesses said. The Nigerian Army in a statement denied killing anyone and blamed the deaths on a local militia it said opened fire in the area. Amnesty International's Nigeria office said the agency confirmed soldiers killed the nine protesters, citing accounts from witnesses and families of victims.

2 advisers of B'desh interim govt resign

Dhaka: Two student leaders turned advisers of the interim government in Bangladesh tendered their resignations Wednesday ahead of the Election Commission's announcement of the schedule for the polls in February. The resignation by M Mahfuj Alam and Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain comes in wake of the Election Commission's (EC) decision that no adviser can contest the polls while holding a position in the interim government. “Adviser for Information and Broadcasting M Mahfuj Alam and Adviser for Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperative and Youth & Sports Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain have tendered their resignation letters at around 5 pm to the Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus,” a statement from the chief adviser's office said.

Hollywood-hungry Gulf states bankroll Paramount's Warner Bros bid

REUTERS

Abu Dhabi, Dec 10: Paramount Skydance's addition of three Gulf sovereign wealth funds to the cast of its \$108 billion hostile bid for Warner Bros Discovery marks a relatively rare alliance among the states as they build their own entertainment industries.

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF), Abu Dhabi's L'imad Holding Company, and the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) have agreed to back the deal, Paramount said Monday.

Paramount also has backing from Affinity Partners, started by Jared Kushner, which



has investments from funds in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

The decision to join forces on a single bid and grab a share

of some of Hollywood's crown jewels underscores an appetite among the oil-dependent Gulf states for assets from production to content and their grow-

- GULF SOVEREIGN FUNDS RARELY JOIN FORCES ON SINGLE TAKEOVERS
- GULF STATES EXPANDING DOMESTIC ENTERTAINMENT SECTORS
- LACK OF GOVERNANCE RIGHTS WILL BYPASS CFIUS SCRUTINY

ing clout in global dealmaking. “A joint three-way alliance is very unusual, but it allows the three countries to step outside their regional media empires

US Judge blocks Trump's Guard deployment in LA

California argued that conditions in Los Angeles had changed since Trump first took command of the troops and deployed them in June

ASSOCIATED PRESS

San Francisco, Dec 10: The Trump administration must stop deploying the California National Guard in Los Angeles and return control of the troops to the state, a federal judge ruled Wednesday.

US District Judge Charles Breyer in San Francisco granted a preliminary injunction sought by California officials who opposed President Donald Trump's extraordinary move to use state Guard troops without the governor's approval to further his immigration enforcement efforts. But he also put the

US Justice Department lawyers said the administration still needed Guard members in the Los Angeles area to help protect federal personnel and property. An email to the White House seeking comment Wednesday's ruling was not immediately returned.

Trump took command of the California National Guard following protests over his stepped-up enforcement of immigration laws.

The call up was the first time in decades that a state's national guard was activated without a request from its governor and marked a significant escalation



decision on hold until Monday.

California argued that conditions in Los Angeles had changed since Trump first took command of the troops and deployed them in June.

The administration initially called up more than 4,000 California National Guard troops but that number had dropped to several hundred by late October. Only a 100 or so troops remain in the Los Angeles area.

The Republican administration extended the deployment until February while also trying to use California Guard members in Portland, Oregon as part of its effort to send the military into Democratic-run cities over the objections of mayors and governors.

The founders designed our government to be a system of checks and balances. Defendants, however, make clear that the only check they want is a blank one

CHARLES BREYER | US DISTRICT JUDGE

in the administration's efforts to carry out its mass deportation policy. The troops were stationed outside a federal detention centre in downtown Los Angeles where protesters gathered and later sent on the streets to protect immigration officers as they made arrests.

California sued, and Breyer issued a temporary restraining order that required the administration to return control of the Guard members to California. An appeals court panel, however, put that decision on hold.



A woman walks her dog beneath dark skies on the beach as storm named Bram approaches New Brighton, Britain

REUTERS

THAILAND-CAMBODIA FIGHTING RAGES ON

Donald Trump signals intent to intervene

REUTERS

Bangkok/Phnom Penh, Dec 10: Thailand and Cambodia traded accusations of targeting civilians in artillery and rocket attacks Wednesday, as US President Donald Trump said he would try to intervene to stop the fighting and salvage a ceasefire he brokered earlier this year.

Clashes raged at more than a dozen locations along their 817-km (508-mile) border in some of the most intense fighting since a five-day battle in July, which Trump stopped with calls to both leaders to halt their worst conflict in recent history.

The Southeast Asian neighbours have blamed each other for the clashes that started Monday.

'IT CANNOT BE AS SIMPLE AS PICKING UP THE PHONE'

Trump at a rally in Pennsylvania late Tuesday said he would try to stop the renewed



hostilities, after enumerating the conflicts he said he had helped stop, such as those between Pakistan and India, and Israel and Iran.

“I hate to say this one, named Cambodia-Thailand, and it started up today, and tomorrow I am going to have to make a phone call,” he said.

“Who else could say, ‘I’m going to make a phone call and stop a war of two very powerful countries, Thailand and Cambodia?’”

Thailand's army has made clear it wants to cripple Cambodia's military capabilities and Prime Minister Anutin

Charnvirakul Tuesday said operations would not stop.

He declined to comment Wednesday on what the military's end-game was. Asked about Trump's remarks, he said the conflict was a matter between the two countries involved.

“Other national leaders may have good intentions in wanting peace,” Anutin told reporters. “It cannot be as simple as picking up the phone and calling. There must be proper appointment and agreed talking points. We still have time to prepare these issues if such discussions are to take place.”

British Indian nurse jailed for rape, sexual assaults at care home

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Dec 10: A 47-year-old nurse from Kerala has been sentenced to seven years and nine months' imprisonment after pleading guilty to rape and sexual assault offences at a care home in Scotland.

Naijil Paul admitted to raping a vulnerable colleague and sexually assaulting two other women while he was the manager of a care home in North Lanarkshire over seven years ago.

He was charged with the offences in 2018 and fled to Kochi just before his trial in December 2019. In October this year, Paul pleaded guilty to the offences after his extradition from India and was sentenced at the High Court in Glasgow Monday.



“In addition to the serious and predatory nature of your offending, notwithstanding the fact you pled guilty, the version of events given by you bears little resemblance to what you have admitted to,” Justice Lord Renucci is quoted in UK court reports as saying.

According to BBC Scotland, the court was told that despite the guilty pleas Paul had shown “quite a degree of victim blaming” in a pre-sentencing report – to the extent he claimed he thought he was doing one of the women a favour.

“The degree of victim-blaming that he has embarked upon does cause me some concern. Although he is assessed at medium risk [of re-offending], that very much underestimates his level of risk,” the judge noted.

While his sentence was somewhat reduced from eight years due to the guilty plea, Paul will be supervised for a further two years after his release and will be placed on the sex offenders list for life. He is also banned from going near any of the victims.

UNESCO recognition fuels Italy's culinary pride

ITALY IS HUNGRY FOR VICTORY AWAITING UNESCO'S DECISION TO ADD ITALIAN CUISINE TO THE LIST OF PROTECTED HERITAGE

REUTERS

Rome, Dec 10: Italians hailed UNESCO's recognition of their cuisine Wednesday as a win for cultural diplomacy but critics warned it could backfire by turning popular dishes into bland tourist fare.

A sound and light show at the Colosseum in Rome Wednesday night will celebrate a successful bid that framed Italian food not just as a set of recipes but as a living heritage rooted in seasonality, community and shared rituals.

“Italian cuisine is our most formidable ambassador,” Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said in a video message.

The listing could deliver further economic benefits to a country already renowned for its cooking and where the agri-food supply chain accounts for about 15% of the national GDP.

It could also bring some relief



to traditional family-run restaurants, long the backbone of Italian dining, which are facing a harsh economic climate in a market increasingly polarised between premium and budget options.

Neapolitan pizza-making's 2017 UNESCO listing drove a 284% jump in professional courses, according to a study by Rome's

Unitelma Sapienza University, while agritourism in the southern Italian island of Pantelleria grew 500% over a decade after its vine cultivation was inscribed in the UNESCO list.

“I'm truly happy about this recognition,” said Manuela Menegoni, who runs Trattoria Bianca and Osteria Fernanda

in Rome with her chef husband Davide Del Duca.

“I hope it will spur job creation, drive investment in innovation and deliver tax incentives across the entire food supply chain, which has long been overlooked by policymakers,” she added.

Industry groups estimate UNESCO recognition could boost tourism by up to 8% in two years, adding 18 million overnight stays.

However, researchers warn that such gains often come with overtourism pressures, as seen in Venice and the Prosecco hills in the northeast, where UNESCO status has drawn crowds beyond local capacity.

ITALIAN CITY CENTRES RISK LOSING CHARACTER

Italy's historic city centres are increasingly at risk of becoming what critics call gastro-nomic theme parks.

“Bologna has become a ‘mangificio’ (food factory). Checkered tablecloths and straw chairs are everywhere, in an invention of tradition for the benefit of external consumers,” said Alberto Grandi, a food historian and author.

In an interview with Reuters he shared his concern about the risk of food gentrification, a process where traditional, affordable, and culturally rooted foods or food practices are transformed into upscale, trendy, and often expensive versions.

“If the goal is to save Italian gastronomic culture, it will be the exact opposite,” he said.

“This is a marketing ploy that sells a standardised vision of Italian cuisine linked to a dozen dishes that must be offered everywhere because tourists expect them. This is to the detriment of a deeper understanding of Italian culinary history, which is being lost,” he added.

of the day

quote

SBI Mutual Fund, the biggest fund house, has initiated the process for the appointment of merchant bankers and other service providers to facilitate an IPO. We are very seriously working on that, and in this timeline we should hit the market... we have started the process of identifying the merchant bankers and other service providers

CS SETTY | CHAIRMAN, SBIFML

India could figure among the top five markets for Swiss multinational food conglomerate Nestle SA in the coming years, helped by the current macroeconomic trends of the country

MANISH TIWARY | CMD, NESTLE

We expect stronger earnings growth next year, supported by a solid macro environment, positive policy actions, and rising domestic flows. Even with global geopolitical and trade tensions, India's long-term market story remains strong and intact

SHRIPAL SHAH | MD AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE, KOTAK SECURITIES

SHORT TAKES

US court relief for Byju Raveendran

New Delhi: A US bankruptcy court has reversed a USD 1 billion damages ruling against Byju Raveendran, according to a statement from the founders of Think and Learn Pvt Ltd - the parent firm of ed-tech platform Byju's. The Delaware Court had, in a default ruling last month, ordered Raveendran to pay more than USD 1 billion, saying the former corporate star who set up the eponymous Indian edtech and tutoring company, had refused to cooperate with legal efforts to locate almost half the proceeds from a USD 1.2 billion US term loan made in 2021.

SpiceJet plans to add 100 more daily flights

Mumbai: Domestic carrier SpiceJet Wednesday said it is planning to introduce up to 100 additional daily flights during the current winter schedule. The airline said it is looking to ramp up its flight operations amid the growing demand across key routes this winter, and also to ensure adequate capacity in the market. The statement came a day after the government announced a 10 per cent cut in Indigo's winter schedule in a bid to help the crisis-hit airline stabilise its operations and lead to reduced cancellations following the large-scale disruptions that started December 1. "As part of this (ramping up operations) effort, we plan to introduce up to 100 additional daily flights during the current winter schedule, subject to regulatory approvals," SpiceJet said in a statement.

Bol raises ₹2,500cr from Tier II bonds

New Delhi: State-owned Bank of India (BoI) Wednesday said it has raised Basel III-compliant Tier II bonds of ₹2,500 crore to fund business growth. The bonds have a coupon rate of 7.28 per cent per annum, BoI said in a statement. The base issue size was ₹1,000 crore with a green shoe option of ₹1,500 crore, it said. The Tier II capital is raised for augmenting the overall capital of the bank and for enhancing the long-term resources in accordance with the RBI guidelines.



We're in the process of bringing a full business process reengineering exercise for India Post by which our delivery will become much more prompt, service oriented and digital oriented

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | UNION COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER

SERVIER INDIA GETS NOD FOR BRAIN CANCER DRUG

Drug firm Servier India Wednesday said it has received marketing approval from Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) for Vorasidenib (Vorani-go), for use in patients with Grade 2 IDH-mutant glioma. Servier India is a subsidiary of French pharmaceutical group Servier. The burden of the rare IDH mutated Grade 2 Gliomas is estimated to be 4,500 patients per year in India, with most being young adults, it said.



Sensex, Nifty extend losses for third day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 10: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty declined for the third straight day Wednesday to close at a nearly month's low, dragged by a last-hour selloff in consumer durables, private banks and IT shares.

In a volatile session, the 30-share BSE Sensex dropped by 275.01 points, or 0.32 per cent, to settle at 84,391.27, a level not seen since November 11. During the day, it hit an intraday high of 85,020.34 and a low of 84,313.62.

The 50-share NSE Nifty fell by 81.65 points, or 0.32 per cent, to close at a month's low of 25,758. In the intraday session, it hit a high of 25,947.65 and a low of 25,734.55.

Among the Sensex constituents, Eternal, Trent, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Bajaj Finance, Tata Consultancy Services, Bharat Electronics Ltd, Larsen & Toubro and Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles were the laggards.

However, Tata Steel, Sun Pharmaceuticals, ITC, NTPC, Reliance Industries, HCL Technologies, PowerGrid, and Asian Paints were among the gainers.

"Indian markets mirrored global caution, weighed down by persistent FII outflows, INR weakness, and uncertainty surrounding US-India trade negotiations despite ongoing discussions. In the near term, market direction will be influenced by central bank cues and clarity on trade developments," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.



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The 50-share NSE Nifty fell by 81.65 points, or 0.32 per cent, to close at a month's low of 25,758

widely expected. However, internal divisions and mixed economic indicators may temper expectations for further rate cuts in 2026," he said.

Broader markets also ended lower, with the BSE midcap gauge falling 1.08 per cent and the smallcap index slipping 0.58 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, Services and Consumer Durables declined the most by 1.18 per cent each, Capital Goods by 0.99 per cent, Focussed IT by 0.94 per cent, Information Technology by 0.90 per cent, Teck by 0.87 per cent, Industrials by 0.76 per cent, Consumer Discretionary by 0.72 per cent, and Telecommunication by 0.69 per cent.

On the other hand, Commodities, Energy, Utilities, Metal, Oil & Gas, ended in the green while FMCG settled flat.

As many as 2,332 stocks declined, while 1,857 advanced and 148 remain unchanged on the BSE.

MGM Group felicitates 4 women cricketers



Bhubaneswar: Pankaj Lochan Mohanty, Chairman and Managing Director of MGM Group, felicitated four women cricketers from Odisha who were part of the Indian women's blind cricket team that scripted history by clinching the first-ever Women's T20 Blind World Cup. India defeated Nepal

by seven wickets in the final held in Colombo. The four players from Odisha — Phula Soren of Balasore district and Parvati Marndi, Jamuna Rani Tudu, and Basanti Hansdah of Mayurbhanj district — visited the MGM Corporate Office in Bhubaneswar, where they were warmly received and honoured by Mohanty. Congratulating the players for their exceptional performance on the global stage, the MGM head said, "Their dedication, perseverance, and remarkable sporting spirit have brought immense pride to Odisha and the entire nation. They are true inspirations for countless young sportspersons across the state." As a mark of appreciation, MGM Group awarded each player a cash prize of ₹25,000, acknowledging their contribution to India's landmark victory and their role as emerging icons in the world of sports.

PNB hosts agriculture outreach programme

Sambalpur: The Punjab National Bank (PNB) organised an agriculture outreach programme at its Kulundi Branch under Sambalpur Circle Wednesday, drawing around 400 participants, including self-help group (SHG) members, farmers and local residents. The programme was chaired by Circle Head Ajit Kumar Meher, along with Branch Head Bhabani Shankar Neti, Snigdha Suman Beura, Swagatika Biswal, Agriculture Officer Swagat Pradhan and Mousumi Patel. Officials highlighted key Central and state government agriculture schemes focused on financial inclusion, rural development and livelihood enhancement. The team also explained various agriculture and social security products, while guiding participants on the process of availing different loan products offered by the bank.



Silver surges ₹11,500 to scale new peak of ₹1.92 lakh/kg

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 10: Silver prices saw the steepest single-day surge in nearly two months and skyrocketed by ₹11,500 to scale a fresh peak of ₹1,92,000 per kg in the national capital Wednesday, amid robust domestic demand fuelled by global cues.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal closed at ₹1,80,500 per kg Tuesday, and gained ₹11,500 Wednesday in the local retail markets.

So far this year, silver prices have added ₹1,02,300, or 114.04 per cent, from ₹89,700 per kg December 31, 2024.

Earlier, such a steep single-day rise in silver price was recorded on October 10 this year when the rate went up by ₹8,500 to ₹1,71,500 per kg.

Meanwhile, the price of gold of 99.9 per cent purity climbed ₹800 on Wednesday to ₹1,32,400 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) from the previous close



of ₹1,31,600 per 10 grams.

"Gold traded with a modest gain Wednesday, supported by a softer US dollar and firm expectations of a Federal Reserve rate cut. A cautious market tone, coupled with lingering geopolitical uncertainties, also provided an additional tailwind for the precious metal," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

In the international market, spot gold was trading 0.16 per cent lower at USD 4,201.70 per ounce.

"Gold continues to consolidate around USD 4,200 ahead

Labour Min inks initial pact with Microsoft



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 10: The Ministry of Labour & Employment Wednesday inked an initial pact with Microsoft to strengthen job opportunities, artificial intelligence skilling, and workforce readiness in the country.

This collaboration represents a major step in expanding employment linkages, scaling AI-led skilling, and preparing India's workforce for global opportunities, according to a ministry statement.

The ministry has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Microsoft in the presence of Union Minister for Labour & Employment Mansukh Mandaviya and Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, in New Delhi, the statement said.

A central feature of the partnership is Microsoft's commitment to encourage 15,000-plus employers and partners from its extensive international network onto the ministry's National Career Service (NCS) platform.

This will significantly broaden formal job access, support high-growth sectors, and enable India to develop a skilled workforce not only for domestic demand but also for the world, strengthening pathways for international mobility of Indian professionals and youth.

The agreement will also expand AI-driven skilling initiatives through DigiSaksham, equipping millions of young people with future-ready capabilities in AI, cloud technologies, cybersecurity, and productivity tools.

On the partnership, Mandaviya noted that it reflects a shared ambition to leverage India's favourable demographic dividend and create a globally competitive, digitally skilled, and future-ready workforce.

He emphasised that Microsoft's participation will accelerate job access, deepen skilling, and enhance India's leadership in global labour mobility.

"India has achieved a historic milestone in social protection, with coverage rising from 19 per cent in 2015 to an impressive 64.3 per cent in 2025, benefiting over 94 crore citizens. By embedding AI into platforms like e-Shram and the National Career Service, we are fortifying social security and moving closer to our goal of social protection to 100 crore citizens by March 2026," Mandaviya added.

During the discussion, Nadella appreciated India's remarkable expansion of social protection coverage, noting that India has now reached 64.3 per cent coverage, benefiting 940 million people.

Sebi relaxes re-KYC process for NRIs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 10: Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) Wednesday eased the re-KYC process for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) by removing the requirement for them to be physically present in India during digital verification.

The relaxation is aimed at making the re-KYC process smoother and more accessible for NRIs.

In its circular, Sebi has decided to modify the existing provisions to ease re-KYC access for NRIs after receiving references from multiple stakeholders.

Under this, the requirement of physical location of the client being in India during digital onboarding has been relaxed for undertaking re-KYC for existing clients, the regulator said.

Re-KYC (Re-Know Your Customer) is the process of updating or revalidating a customer's KYC details with a financial institution or intermediary.

The digital KYC app will still need to use tools like random prompts, time-stamping, and geo-tagging to ensure the interaction is genuine.

Tower in Dubai named after SRK fetches over ₹5K-cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Dec 10: Danube Group has sold a one million sq ft premium commercial tower in Dubai, named after Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan, for over ₹5,000 crore on strong demand for office space.

Dubai-based Danube Properties is developing a commercial tower 'SHAHRUKHZ' by Danube on Sheikh Zayed Road here at a total cost of around ₹3,500 crore. At an event held on late Tuesday at the Dubai Exhibition Centre, Danube group Founder and Chairman Rizwan Sajjan announced that the tower has been completely sold out. The event, which was attended by Shah Rukh Khan, saw participation of around 7,000 people, including real estate brokers. The company has

achieved sales bookings of AED 2.1 billion (over ₹5,000 crore) from the tower, much higher than initial estimates.

"To see a project of this scale in Dubai carry my name is both an honour and a reminder of how generosity and vision can come together. Dubai has always embraced me with warmth – it's a city built on courage, imagination, and the belief that nothing is impossible," Khan said.

Last month in Mumbai, Danube Group in presence of the Bollywood actor had launched the 55-storey commercial tower for sale. The company will complete this tower by 2029.

When asked about the total project cost, Sajjan Monday had told PTI that it would be around ₹3,500 crore including



land, and construction among other expenses.

He said the investment would be met through internal accruals and advances from custom-

ers against sales.

"The commercial project is set to become one of the most prestigious business landmarks in Dubai," said Rizwan Sajjan,

who is an Indian, born in Mumbai. Considering the success of this project, Both Rizwan Sajjan and Shah Rukh Khan hinted that there could be more towers named after him.

Adel Sajjan, Managing Director of Danube Group, said this celebrity tower has been conceptualised and designed after studying more than 100 prime commercial projects across the world.

Out of one million sq ft area in this upcoming tower, more than 9 lakh sq ft would be office spaces.

Adel noted that there is a scarcity of Grade A office space in Dubai while the demand is strong from multi-national companies that want to set up base here.

The MD strongly feels that

the demand for both residential and commercial space in the Dubai market would remain strong in the coming years.

Danube Properties, a subsidiary of the Danube Group, is one of the leading private real estate developers in Dubai.

Founded in 1993, Danube group entered the real estate development business in 2014. It is also into building materials.

The company has so far launched 40 real estate projects, of which 18 are already delivered and the rest are at different stages of construction.

Adel Sajjan said the company is expecting to achieve sales of properties worth ₹22,000 crore this calendar year, and out of that 25 per cent will be from customers of Indian nationality.

FIH MEN'S JUNIOR WORLD CUP

India defeat Argentina 4-2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Dec 10: India produced a brave-heart performance, nullifying a two-goal deficit to beat Argentina 4-2 and clinch the bronze medal in the FIH Men's Junior World Cup here Wednesday.

India, who won the title in 2016 in Lucknow, failed to finish on the podium on the last two occasions, ending fourth in 2021 in Bhubaneswar, and two years later in Kuala Lumpur.

India produced a valiant fightback with Ankit Pal (49th minute), Manmeet Singh (52nd) and Anmol Ekka (58th) converting penalty corners, while Sharda Nand Tiwari finding the net from the spot in the 57th minute.

Argentina were the better side on display at least in the first two quarters, scoring through Nicolas Rodriguez (3rd minute) and Santiago Fernandez (44th).

The Argentines controlled the possession of the match in the first quarter as India struggled to get a foothold.

Argentina secured their first chance in the third minute in the form of a penalty stroke following a foul by Anmol Ekka



and Rodriguez made no mistake to hand his side the lead.

The Indians were guilty of giving away the ball too easily, which put paid to their chances in the first 15 minutes.

India had their best shot at the goal in the 20th minute but Dilraj Singh's shot from top of the circle was finely saved by Argentina goalkeeper Joaquin Ruiz. The Indians start-

ed brightly after the change of ends and secured four back-to-back penalty corners in the 31st minute but failed to execute a single one with Anmol Ekka flicking the final one over the post.

Argentina kept up the pressure on the Indian defence and secured their first penalty corner in the 37th minute but Indian goalkeeper Prinedeep Singh

made a brilliant double save to keep the hosts in the hunt.

Argentina secured two more short corners in the 40th minute but failed to get past the Indian defence.

The visitors secured their fourth penalty corner in the 41st minute but Rodriguez flick was off target.

The Indians didn't lose heart and maintained the pressure in the final quarter and drew level, converting two penalty corners through deflections in the span of four minutes.

Ankit Pal reduced the margin in the 49th minute by deflecting in Anmol Ekka's flick from India's fifth penalty corner. Manmeet Singh drew parity for India four minutes later, deflecting in another Ekka's flick from India's sixth penalty corner.

With momentum on their side, India pressed hard on the Argentine defence thereafter and Tiwari scored from a penalty stroke three minutes from the final hooter.

Ekka drove the final nail on Argentina's coffin, converting a finely executed penalty corner a minute later.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mullanpur (New Chandigarh), Dec 10: Yet to stamp his authority in the shortest format, Shubman Gill would be eyeing major gains on home soil when a well-rounded India look to extend their dominance over South Africa in the second T20 International here Thursday.

With only a travel day separating the first two games of the five-match series, Gill won't mind getting straight into the middle in search of a substantial knock.

India steamrolled South Africa in the series opener but the middling returns from Gill, since his T20 comeback in Asia Cup back in September, remains a talking point.

Following an impressive debut as Test captain in the UK, Gill was brought back into the T20 setup.

Even though Sanju Samson and his Punjab teammate Abhishek Sharma were doing the job at the top of the order, the team management showed immense faith in Gill's abilities as a T20 opener. The batter from Kerala was displaced and he has since then struggled to find a place in the playing eleven.

The Test and ODI captain can seamlessly perform the role that Virat Kohli performed for India till the T20 World Cup last year but the team, batting till num-

ber eight, has down ap- with options doubled on its fearless proach since the triumph in Barba-



Injuries test you mentally: Hardik Pandya

Cuttack: India's ace all-rounder Hardik Pandya feels a positive mindset has helped him return to the ground "stronger, bigger and better" after injury setbacks led to self-doubt. Pandya's return from a nearly two-month layoff due left quadriiceps injury propelled India to a massive 101-run win against South Africa in the opening T20I here Tuesday. The 32-year-old all-rounder blazed to an unbeaten 28-ball 59 and 1/16 with the ball as he announced his return to the side after suffering the injury during the Asia Cup. "My mindset was really about coming back stronger, bigger, better. Injuries test you mentally and at the same point in time, it kind of puts a lot of doubts... and a lot of credit to the loved ones," said Pandya in a video posted on bcci.tv. Pandya says he derives a energy from the crowd, which helps him live up to the expectations. "Life has thrown a lot of lemons at me, I've always thought I'll make lemonade," he said. "Every time I walk in, I feel like all the crowd is just waiting... they've come for this moment to watch me bat," he added.

ODI rankings: Kohli rises, Rohit retains top spot

New Delhi: India great Virat Kohli continued his push to regain his place as the best ODI batter while moving up to the second spot in the latest ICC rankings released Wednesday. Kohli hasn't held the No 1 position for ODI batters since he was displaced by Pakistan's Babar Azam in April 2021, but the right-hander is closing in on the top spot once again following his superb recent efforts for India in the three-match ODI series against South Africa. The 37-year-old was adjudged Player of the Series for his 302 runs across the three matches and he was duly rewarded on the latest set of rankings as he improved two places to second overall behind teammate Rohit Sharma. Rohit amassed 146 runs across the series to hold on to his spot at the top of the rankings.

defence at home and considering the added responsibility, flow from his bat form a crucial piece of the puzzle heading into the ICC showpiece.

SQUADS

India: Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Abhishek Sharma, Shubman Gill, Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Jitesh Sharma, Axar Patel, Varun Chakravarthy, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Kuldeep Yadav, Washington Sundar, Harshit Rana, Sanju Samson.

South Africa: Aiden Markram (captain), Quinton de Kock (wk), Tristan Stubbs, Dewald Brevis, David Miller, Donovan Ferreira, Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, Lutho Sipamla, Anrich Nortje, Lungi Ngidi, George Linde, Kwena Maphaka, Reeza Hendricks, Corbin Bosch, Tony de Zorzi, Ottneil Bartman.

SHORT TAKES

SLI from Feb 16

New Delhi: The inaugural edition of the Shooting League of India (SLI) will be held from February 16 to 26 next year, the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) said Wednesday. The dates have been finalised in alignment with the International Shooting Sport Federation's (ISSF) 2026 calendar to avoid clashes with major international competitions. The league had previously been deferred to early 2026. The franchise-based league will feature several top Indian and international shooters competing in a mixed-team format across pistol, rifle and shotgun disciplines. "The SLI is a milestone for our sport, franchise-built, athlete-first, and aligned to the global calendar to maximise participation," NRAI President Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo said in a release. The competition will feature mixed team events in multiple categories -- pistol (10m, 25m), rifle (10m, 50m 3P), and shotgun (trap and skeet). The franchise-based teams will be divided into two pools for the league stage, followed by knockout rounds. Players are drafted across four tiers -- Elite Champions, World Elite, National Champions, and Junior & Youth -- ensuring a mix of international stars, top Indian shooters, and emerging talent.

Commonwealth Kho Kho in March 2026

New Delhi: Over 24 countries will compete in the inaugural Commonwealth Kho Kho Championship from March 9 to 14 next year, for which the venue is yet to be finalised in India. The Kho Kho Federation of India is in talks with several states to finalise the venue after Commonwealth Sport (CS) gave the approval for the event to take place in India. The event, which will see 16 men's and as many women's teams competing, will be organised on the lines of the first Kho Kho World Cup held in January this year in Delhi in which 23 nations participated. "We are in talks with several states for the finalisation of the venue. Ahead of the Commonwealth Games in 2030, we are hopeful that this championship would prove to be a stepping stone towards Kho Kho's inclusion in the Doha Asian Games (2030), Commonwealth Games (2030) and Brisbane Olympics (2032)," said Upkar Singh Virk, general secretary, Kho Kho Federation of India.

Prez felicitates female boxers



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 10: President Droupadi Murmu honoured the Indian women boxers Wednesday for their achievements at the 2025 World Boxing Championships in Liverpool.

India's impressive showing at the 2025 World Boxing Championships in Liverpool earned praise from the President, who commended the medalists for elevating the nation's presence on the international boxing stage. The Indian squad wrapped up their campaign with four medals, two of them gold, marking a landmark moment for the country.

"Indian women boxers who brought laurels to the nation at the 2025 World Boxing Championships in Liverpool called on President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Jaismine

and Minakshi won gold medals, Nupur brought home the silver medal, whereas Pooja Rani bagged bronze. The President congratulated them for their exceptional performances.

Jaismine Lamboria (57kg) and Minakshi Hooda (48kg) clinched historic world titles, becoming the first Indians to be crowned champions under the revamped federation. Minakshi delivered a standout performance in the 48kg final, defeating Paris 2024 bronze medallist Nazym Kyzaiabay with a commanding 4-1 verdict.

In addition to the gold medals, Nupur Sheoran earned silver after a narrow 3-2 split-decision loss to Poland's Agata Kaczmarek in the 80+ kg final, while Olympian Pooja Rani secured bronze following a 4-1 semifinal defeat to England's Emily Asquith.

ODISHA MASTERS

Hooda, Tanvi, Mannepalli, Kiran enter pre-quarterfinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, Dec 10: Top seeds Unnati Hooda and Tharun Mannepalli as well as other leading Indian shuttlers progressed comfortably to the pre-quarterfinals across singles categories of the Odisha Masters Super 100, here Wednesday.

In women's singles, Unnati began her campaign in commanding fashion, defeating UAE's P. Bharath 21-12, 21-18.

Sixth seed Anmol Kharb survived a stern test from Thailand's Y. Ketklieng, prevailing 21-17, 19-21, 23-21, while third seed Tanvi Sharma outlasted Japan's Aika Iwaki 21-8, 17-21, 21-18.

Fifth seed Anupama Upadhyaya barely broke a sweat as she brushed aside Indonesia's Dalila Aghnia Puteri 21-14, 21-13 to enter the pre-quarterfinals.

The men's singles draw also saw emphatic performances from the seeded players.

Mannepalli dismantled Manav Choudhary 21-5, 21-8, while second seed Kiran George eased past Rajesh Srikar 21-12,



21-13. Fourth seed Priyanshu Rajawat was stretched by Saneeth Dayanand, but he held his nerves for a 21-19, 14-21, 21-13 win. Seventh seed S Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian overcame Darshan Pujari 21-19, 23-21, and eighth seed Ritvik Sanjeevi Satish Kumar advanced with a straight-game victory over Numair Shaik.

Govind Krishna, Orijit Chaliha, Siddhant Gupta, Rounak Chouhan, Varun Kapur, Arya Bhiwpathaki also won their respective matches whereas AR Rohan Kumar eliminated sixth seed Manraj Singh 21-6, 21-12.

In other women's singles

matches, Aditi Bhatt edged out Hong Kong's Liang KW 21-19, 24-22, while Aditi Rao got the better of Indonesia's Catharine Handoyo 23-21, 21-9.

Isharani Baruah produced one of the standout results of the day by thrashing Thailand's second seed Pornpicha Choeikeewong 21-15, 21-8.

Aakarshi Kashyap registered a convincing 21-9, 21-10 win over Chinese Taipei's Yi En Hsieh, eighth seed Shriyanshi Valishetty defeated Alisha Naik 21-17, 21-12, while T Hemanth and Tasnim Mir progressed after hard-fought three-game victories.

JUNIOR WOMEN'S WC HOCKEY

Nidhi's brilliance helps India beat Uruguay

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Santiago (Chile), Dec 10: Goalkeeper Nidhi made several brilliant saves as India defeated Uruguay 3-1 in shootout after an intense 1-1 draw to stay in contention for a ninth place finish in the hockey Junior Women's World Cup here.

Manisha (19') scored for India while Justina Arregui (60') slammed the equaliser for Uruguay Tuesday in the 9/12 qualification match.

The first quarter saw India control the game, creating multiple chances early on. However, Uruguay won the first penalty corner in the fifth minute but squandered the chance.

India earned a penalty corner in the 18th minute and played an interesting variation by passing the ball to Sakshi Rana on the near post. But her shot was blocked by the rival goalkeeper.



Moments later, India broke the deadlock with Manisha (19') striking the ball from a distance as India took the lead.

The game opened up in the final quarter with Uruguay playing a lot more freely. With two minutes left on the clock, Uruguay switched their goalkeeper for an outfield player to push ahead in numbers and it paid off.

With two seconds left on the clock, Uruguay won a penalty stroke. Justina Arregui converted the it to take the game into shootout.

India emerged victorious in the shootout as Punima Yadav, Ishika and Kanika Siwach scored while goalkeeper Nidhi denied Uruguay thrice to ensure her team progresses in the tournament.