



### Gender bias

Actor Nushratt highlights the continuing disparity in box-office success between male and female-centric films

LEISURE | P2



### Trump's Gold Card

Trump announces launch of a million-dollar 'Gold Card', offering pathway for immigrants to US citizenship

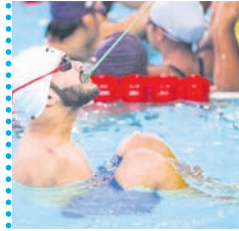
INTERNATIONAL | P10



### Silver skyrockets

Silver prices jump ₹2,400 to a fresh all-time high of ₹1,94,400 per kilogram in the national capital Thursday

BUSINESS | P11



### Golden waves

In a proud moment for India, Abdul Quadir Indori wins two gold medals at the Asian Youth Para Games

SPORTS | P12

# My govt gave appointments to 37,916 people: CM EC extends SIR time

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Thursday said his government has appointed 37,916 people after assuming office last year and is committed to fulfilling its promise of filling 65,000 government posts within the first two years.

Majhi made the remarks while handing over appointment letters to 591 newly-recruited officers and employees in three departments — Water Resources (252), H&UD (142) and Works (197) — at Nijukti Mela here.

Majhi said, “Our government has promised to fill all the 1.5 lakh vacant posts in five years and to fill 65,000 government posts in two years.” “A total of 37,916 appointments have already been made in 13 phases. Another 30,000 appointments would be completed in the next six months, while 15,000 additional posts would be filled ‘very soon’,” he said.

He advised the new recruits to remain free of corruption and committed to implementing public welfare schemes effectively. “Stay above corruption and



Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi hands over an appointment letter to a new recruit during Nijukti Mela in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, as Works Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan and H&UD Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra look on

OP PHOTO

work with dedication for the development of society and the state,” he said. Majhi said the state’s goal of becoming a ‘Viksit Odisha’ by 2036 would not be pos-

sible without the contribution of government employees. The CM also inaugurated and laid foundation stones for various irrigation-related projects.

Majhi dedicated the ‘Mukhyamantri Adibandh Yojana 3.0’ to the people. Under the scheme, Rs 2,738 crore has been allocated for the construc-

tion of 3,000 new check dams and renovation of 2,000 existing ones over the next five years, which will provide irrigation to about 48,000 hectares.

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** The Election Commission (EC) Thursday extended the timeline for Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in five states and one Union Territory (UT) following requests from the chief electoral officers.

In a statement, the EC issued the revised schedule for SIR in Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Uttar Pradesh. The enumeration period for these five states and one UT was to end Thursday, and the draft electoral rolls were to be published December 16.

The decision came against the backdrop of suggestions that several electors had not been able to fill out or submit their enumeration forms.

Several Opposition parties have been alleging that stringent deadlines have taken a toll on the mental health of several BLOs, leading them to commit or attempt suicide. The EC has, however, not acknowledged any of the BLO suicides due to work pressure.

The enumeration period for Tamil Nadu and Gujarat has been extended till December



14, and the draft electoral rolls will be published December 19, the statement said.

For Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the enumeration period has been extended till December 18, and the draft electoral rolls will be published December 23. The enumeration period for UP has been extended till December 26, and the draft electoral rolls will be published December 31.

According to the statement, the enumeration period for Goa, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, Rajasthan and West Bengal will end Thursday, and the draft electoral rolls will be published December 16. The schedule for Kerala was revised earlier. The enumeration period for the state will end December 18, and the draft electoral roll will be published December 23.

### NEW LOW FOR RUPEE

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Dec 11:** The rupee plunged 38 paise to close at an all-time low of 90.32 against the US dollar Thursday amid uncertainty over the India-US trade deal.

Forex traders said the rupee is expected to trade with a negative bias as the delay in the trade deal between India and the US may continue to dent investor confidence. Moreover, prevailing risk-averse market sentiment and sustained foreign fund outflows weighed on the local unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 89.95 against the US dollar, then lost ground and fell to a record intra-day low of 90.48, registering a 54-paise decline from its previous close.

At the end of Thursday’s trading session, the rupee was quoted at 90.32 against the American currency, down 38 paise over its last close. P11

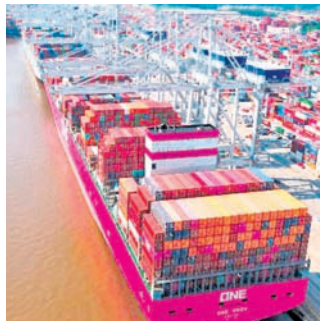
### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Don't know about the voters, but the EC is mighty satisfied with our response to the vote-chori allegations

# Now, Mexico slaps up to 50% tariffs on India

*In a blow to Indian exporters, especially automakers, Mexico has approved tariffs of up to 50 per cent starting next year on imports of hundreds of items from India, China and a few other countries with which it does not have free trade agreements. The move, which Mexico claims is aimed at protecting local jobs and manufacturing, comes at a time when Indian industries are already reeling under a steep 50 per cent tariffs imposed by the US. India exported goods worth \$5.3 billion to Mexico in the last financial year, with cars accounting for nearly \$1 billion. Analysts believe the sudden protectionist turn of Mexico is closely related to pressure from the US ahead of next year’s US-Mexico-Canada Agreement review. The North American country’s government is understood to be signalling alignment with Washington’s tougher stance on Chinese goods, hoping this might help ease the sweeping US tariffs that have hit Mexico’s own exports.*



take effect January 1, 2026, was passed by Mexico’s Senate Wednesday after the lower house approved it. The development comes months after US President Donald Trump imposed a steep 50 per cent tariffs on Indian goods entering American markets, including 25 per cent for Delhi’s purchases of Russian oil, in August.

The Bill, submitted to Congress by President Claudia Sheinbaum in September, proposes modifications to 1,463 tariff categories (or products) covering more than a dozen sectors, including auto parts, light vehicles, plastic, toys, textiles, furniture, footwear, clothing, aluminium and glass, according to Mexico News Daily.

The proposed tariffs range from 5 per cent to 50 per cent.

“Among the other countries that will be affected by the proposed higher tariffs are India, China, South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, Brazil, South Africa and

the UAE,” the daily said, adding that China will be the most affected country. It said the government believes that the proposed tariffs would generate additional revenue of USD 3.8 billion per year.

Emmanuel Reyes, a senator from the ruling Morena party, defended the measure. “These adjustments will boost Mexican products in global supply chains and protect jobs in key sectors,” said Reyes, who is chairman of the Senate Economy Committee.

The proposal to increase tariffs on China and other countries with which Mexico doesn’t have free trade agreements represents ‘an alignment with US trade policy’, Horacio Saavedra, a Mexican diplomat, was quoted as saying by news outlet La Silla Rota.

“The [tariffs] measure responds to the shared concern of Mexico and the US about practices that have affected national industries, especially textiles, clothing and certain manufacturing sectors,” Saavedra said.

India exported goods worth \$5.3 billion to Mexico in the last financial year, with cars accounting for nearly \$1 billion.

In the trade basket from India, the key items of export are automobiles and auto parts, pharmaceuticals and chemical products. From Mexican side, the crucial item is crude oil. Other products of export to India are gold, chemical compounds and telephone machinery.

# Goa fire: Luthra bros detained in Thailand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panaji/New Delhi, Dec 11:** Gaurav and Saurabh Luthra, co-owners of ‘Birch by Romeo Lane’ nightclub in North Goa where a blaze claimed 25 lives, have been detained by the authorities in Thailand, officials said Thursday, as a Delhi court rejected their transit anticipatory bail pleas citing the duo’s conduct and the gravity of the offences.

The brothers, prime accused in the case related to the tragedy that unfolded at Arpora village around midnight December 6, would be brought back to India at the earliest to face legal action, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant assured in Panaji.

A court in Goa, meanwhile, remanded Ajay Gupta, who claimed to be a silent partner and investor in the nightclub, in police custody for seven days.

A Delhi court rejected the transit anticipatory bail pleas of Gaurav and Saurabh. The duo had sought four weeks of transit anticipatory bail so that they were not immediately arrested on their return, but Additional Sessions Judge Vandana dismissed the pleas.

“They left, they concealed, and they are now seeking leniency,” the Goa government’s lawyer told the court, pointing out that they had fled immediately after the fire incident and were evading the legal process.

One of the lawyers of the Luthras submitted during the hearing that they were willing



to return immediately and face the investigation.

But the court noted that the offence was serious in nature as 25 people lost their lives in the fire. Given the ‘conduct’ of the applicants and nature of the allegations, the court was not inclined to grant them relief, the judge said.

She pointed out that documents showed that the accused booked tickets to Phuket at 1.17am December 7 (over an hour after the fire broke out), and the flight departed at 5.20am. “This fact was ‘concealed’, and their counsel instead stated that they had left for Thailand before the fire broke out,” the judge said.

The licence agreement, trade licence and lease deed of the club had expired, said the court. It also trashed the medical grounds cited by Gaurav, noting that his own lawyer stated that his condition was not such that he cannot travel to another country. The medical documents were old, and do not reflect any serious medical conditions, the judge said.

# NIA chargesheets 11 Reds for loot of 4K kg explosives

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 11:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a chargesheet against 11 accused, all Maoists, in a case relating to the loot of around 4,000 kg explosives by armed cadres of the CPI (Maoist) during transportation to a stone quarry in Sundargarh in May, an official said Thursday.

NIA said all the accused have been charged under various Sections of UA (P) Act, BNSS, Arms Act and Explosive Substances Act. The chargesheet has been filed in a special court.

“During the investigation, NIA found the 11 accused to

have been actively involved in criminal conspiracy, planning and execution of the loot of around 200 explosive packets, each containing 20 kg of explosives. The explosives were being transported from Itma Explosive Station to the Banko stone quarry May 27, 2025,” it said.

The vehicle, along with its driver, had been forcibly seized by 10-15 armed Maoists and was taken to a stronghold of the CPI(Maoist) in the nearby Saranda jungle in neighbouring Jharkhand.

The NIA took over the case from the local police in June this year.

# TIME names ‘The Architects of AI’ as ‘Person of the Year’

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**New York, Dec 11:** TIME magazine named the ‘The Architects of AI’ as its ‘Person of the Year’ for 2025 Thursday, highlighting the US tech titans whose work on cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming humanity.

Nvidia’s Jensen Huang, OpenAI’s Sam Altman and xAI’s Elon Musk are among the innovators who have “grabbed the wheel of history, developing technology and making decisions that are reshaping the information landscape, the climate, and our livelihoods,” TIME wrote.

One of two covers of the magazine is a homage to the famous 1932 photograph of ironworkers

casually eating lunch on a steel beam above New York City.

In the TIME illustration, sitting astride the city are Meta’s Mark Zuckerberg, AMD chief Lisa Su, Musk, Huang, Altman as well as Google’s AI boss Demis Hassabis, Anthropic’s Dario Amodei and Stanford professor Fei-Fei Li.

“Racing both beside and against each other, they placed multibillion-dollar bets on one of the biggest physical infrastructure projects of all time,” the magazine said of the group.

“They reoriented government policy, altered geopolitical rivalries, and brought robots into homes. AI emerged as arguably the most consequential tool in great-power competi-



tion since the advent of nuclear weapons,” it said.

Alongside popular AI models like ChatGPT and Claude, TIME credited investors like



SoftBank CEO Masayoshi Son, who has plunged billions of dollars into the technology.

TIME’s ‘Person of the Year’ selection is an acknowledgement

of the year’s most influential figure. The title last year went to then president-elect Donald Trump. Others included singer Taylor Swift and Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

According to the magazine, 2025 was the year AI shifted from promise to reality and when ChatGPT usage more than doubled to 10 per cent of the world’s population. “This is the single most impactful technology of our time,” Huang, CEO of chipmaker Nvidia – the most valuable company in the world – said.

He predicted that AI will eventually grow the global economy from \$100 trillion to \$500 trillion.

But the magazine also pointed to AI’s darker side.



# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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

**ARIES**  
You are bursting with enthusiasm about your career and relationships. At work, you will easily persuade people to jump onto your bandwagon. But look before you leap. If things take a downturn, says Ganesha, the onus will be on you.

**TAURUS**  
Your innate creativity and resourcefulness is likely to reach new heights. Your innovative ideas and endeavours will, this day, give unexpected returns both in terms of money and influence. You should however make sure that you do not upset or offend the powers that be, particularly the higher ups.

**GEMINI**  
You have excellent communication skills. Today, you will be at your communicative best, predicts Ganesha. At work, you will be given added responsibility. You may have to investigate a tricky matter and submit your report. Even in this, you will exhibit tremendous charm and efficiency. There is something magical about you today.

**CANCER**  
Your life will spring surprises, some good and some not so good, says Ganesha. You will demonstrate your effectiveness and brilliance at work. In the evening, your loved ones will show you their appreciation for being there for them in the time of need.

**LEO**  
Walk the talk, buddy! Well, what it actually means is that today, you will be just too good at communicating ideas and expressions. So if you are at work, then look forward to being assigned some investigative job that might just turn out to be quite demanding, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
A day full of sense and sensibilities in love today. Pessimism will knock more than just once throughout the day. But don't let it affect your work, warns Ganesha. At work, you will be the most wanted trouble-shooter today.

**LIBRA**  
Today shall be, let's say, different! It promises to be a resourceful day for you, says Ganesha. Chances are today you may decide to refresh your memory and knowledge by visiting a museum or a historical place later in the day. But it's not all learning for you. You don't want to be a dull Jack, do you? Ganesha expects you to indulge in some fun and frolic towards the evening, and hints that this may go a long way in improving your physical state and even work as an antidote for stressed relationships.

**SCORPIO**  
You will bank upon instinct, and spur-of-the-moment decisions will rule all action today, feels Ganesha. You will find yourself lacking focus at work and this might cause problems in the days to come. When it comes to relationships, actions will speak louder than words.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Ganesha predicts a constructive and profitable day for all you business tycoons and entrepreneurs. Loans from financial institutions may be sanctioned sometime later in the day. You will make your sweetheart know just how special and integral he/she is in your life, and that you will always cherish this love.

**CAPRICORN**  
Your despotic boss will be mighty impressed with your unique talent, and the fact that it contributed to the company earning accolades, says Ganesha. Colleagues will also be supportive of your endeavours, and will push you to go ahead with new assignments.

**AQUARIUS**  
You take inspiration from Hercules today! Your endurance will see you through adversities, asserts Ganesha. Despite this, your playful bantering will cheer your colleagues. You even manage to please your beloved, and that speaks volumes about you!

**PISCES**  
Beating deadlines, with whatever is handy, is what you will be focusing on today. No post-lunch siesta for you. The later part of the day, relaxing with your sweetheart, ought to make up for all the running around you had to do earlier, says Ganesha.



## LEONARDO DICAPRIO SLAMS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Leonardo DiCaprio says Artificial Intelligence could be an 'enhancement tool', but it lacks humanity, which eventually makes it distant from art. The topic of AI has been in discussions, with some totally opposing it, contrary to those who think it's a great technological advancement

## PAMELA ANDERSON OPENS UP ABOUT HER 'NEUTRAL ZONE'

Pamela Anderson is opens up about her special place. The actress said that her garden is a 'neutral zone' where she and her mother 'don't argue'. The actress shared that while she has had a 'complicated relationship' with her mother Carol over the years, being out in her garden, which she has nicknamed Arkady, is somewhere they can find a common ground



## Global honour for Alia

**Los Angeles:** Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt and Tunisian actress Henda Sabry were honoured by Golden Globes at a glitzy gala dinner during the fifth edition of Saudi Arabia's Red Sea Film Festival.

Alia has earned critical acclaim and box-office success for standout performances in films such as *Highway*, *Raazi*, *Udta Punjab*, *Dear Zindagi* and *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, reports variety.com.

She said, "The Golden Globes are an iconic part of the global awards universe and I am delighted to be part of it and look forward to continuing my career in telling more stories of powerful and deserving women."

Helen Hoehne, president of the Golden Globes, described Sarby as "a truly iconic performer and humanitarian whose body of work reflects the depth, power, and global impact of Arab cinema," reports variety.com.

The award for Alia, she said, celebrated "her exceptional contributions to international cinema."

Sabry was named the recipient of the Omar Sharif Award and Bhatt received the Golden Globes Horizon Award.

Talking about Alia, who is the daughter of filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt and actress Soni Razdan, will next be seen in filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Love and War*, starring Ranbir Kapoor, and Vicky Kaushal.

The film is scheduled to release 20th March 2026.

IAN S



## Nushrratt on showbiz truths

**Mumbai:** Nushrratt Bharuccha has always spoken candidly about the realities of the glamour-driven film industry, and in a recent event she addressed the longstanding imbalance between male- and female-led films.

She explained why male-oriented movies often perform better. The actress said "They are made less. Males constitute the majority of the population in our country. Change doesn't happen instantly; it will take time. But it will definitely happen. Films about women that resonate with audiences tend to perform well. *Mimi*, *Chhori*, *Dream Girl*, *Akeli* and *Pink* all did well. Heroism isn't gender-based. Females can also act as heroes, though it's rarely portrayed in our country."

Reflecting on her own career, Nushrratt acknowledged the challenges faced by women in entertainment. Her breakout role in *Pyaar Ka PUNCHAMA* led many to stereotype her as fit only for commercial comedies. But *Chhori* became her turning point, allowing her to break those assumptions and prove her versatility.

On the work front, Nushrratt Bharuccha recently made her appearance in an OTT film *Chhori 2*. Directed by Vishal Furia, she was seen playing Sakshi, a mother fiercely protecting her daughter. It also stars Soha Ali Khan, Gashmeer Mahajan and Hardika Sharma in lead roles.

AGENCIES

## Ananya's quirky insecurities

**Mumbai:** Ananya Panday recently reflected on her growing confidence as an actor during a recent interview. She spoke openly about how her early years in the industry were filled with self-doubt and discomfort, admitting that she once struggled to watch or even listen to her own work. "When I started out, I used to doubt everything that I did," she shared, recalling how she would leave the room whenever someone played her trailers because she couldn't bear to hear her own voice. She described cringing at her expressions and feeling overly critical of her appearance and performances.

With time, however, Ananya says her approach has changed significantly. She credits directors Shakun Batra and Vikramaditya Motwane for helping her evolve, explaining that their trust and creative freedom allowed her to grow. "They believe in you so much and they give you so much freedom to contribute... that as an actor, you start believing in yourself," she said.

Today, she feels far more assured in front of the camera, unburdened by the constant fear of making mistakes. She shared that she is now more confident, willing to take risks, and focused on silencing unnecessary self-judgment as she steps into the next phase of her career.

AGENCIES



## Madhuri celebrates OTT's creative freedom

**Mumbai:** Madhuri Dixit recently reflected on how her earlier web projects, *The Fame Game* and *Maja Ma*, helped prepare her for the layered storytelling of *Mrs. Deshpande*. She believes the series has arrived at the perfect stage in her career, especially with the creative freedom that OTT platforms now offer.

According to her, digital platforms have transformed opportunities for women by allowing them to take on complex roles without the pressure of box-office expectations. "OTT has done that for female leads," she said, noting how actors can now experiment freely, unburdened by commercial constraints. She added that this phase encourages her to push herself, take on difficult roles, and explore new dimensions of her craft.

Madhuri also spoke about the

broader shifts in the industry, emphasising the increasing presence of women across film and production departments. She recalled a time when film sets had very few women apart from actors and hairdressers, contrasting it with today's inclusive environment. "OTT has democratised filmmaking," she said, praising the platform for bringing fresh talent into the spotlight and expanding creative possibilities.

With *Mrs. Deshpande* releasing December 19 on JioHotstar, Madhuri continues to celebrate the empowering space that OTT has created, one that encourages risk-taking, diversity, and deeper storytelling for female artists.

AGENCIES



## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

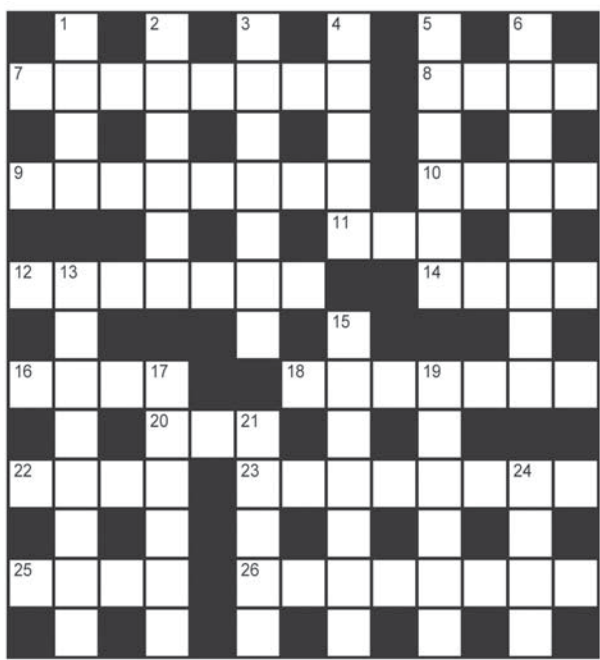


## BREVITY



## FUN post

## CROSSWORD



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- Across**
- 7 Digitalis plant
  - 8 Pawn
  - 9 Military man
  - 10 Outback birds
  - 11 Canon camera model
  - 12 Discard (4,3)
  - 14 Chows down
  - 16 Feudal worker
  - 18 Science of matter and energy
  - 20 Call for help
  - 22 Conclude, with "up"
  - 23 Blonde's secret
  - 25 Land measure
  - 26 Vindictive
  - 4 Sri Lanka export
  - 5 Provolone
  - 6 Kind of guitar
  - 13 Hinder
  - 15 Cucumber pickle
  - 17 Spotted
  - 19 Certain musical group
  - 21 Paroxysm
  - 24 Tympan, for example
- Down**
- 1 London district
  - 2 Terrestrial lizards
  - 3 Ready to explode (5,2)

## 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.

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

## SOLUTIONS

### CROSSWORD

R	E	S	I	D	E		S	T	U	B
O	O	I	A	S	R					O
B	O	L	I	V	A	R	C	L	E	A
E	L	V	U	O	A		A	E	A	B
C	E	L	L		M	O	R	O	C	C
			G	A					L	N
E	S	S	E	X		S	T	E	E	L
B	U		I		A					
A	L	B	U	M	I	N	E	A	P	
F	I	Z	O	E	A	R	A			
F	I	E	N	D	R	E	G	R	E	S
L	R	E			T	E		N	E	
E	G	O	S				A	R	M	A

### SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW











# JSW pipeline expansion to hit 150 waterbodies

PNN &amp; AGENCIES

POST NEWS NETWORK

POST NEWS NETWORK

POST NEWS NETWORK

PNN &amp; AGENCIES

# EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No. MCSW-Shotblast-25-26-23

**NAME OF WORK :** STRIPPING OF FIAT BOGIES, SHOT BLASTING OF FIAT BOGIE FRAMES & COMPONENTS WITH STEEL SHOTS AS PER IS GRADE SS-850/SAE GRADE S-330, PAINTING OF SHOT BLASTED FIAT BOGIE FRAMES & COMPONENTS (INCLUDING SUPPLY OF PAINT ITEMS) AND CLEANING & PU PAINTING OF FIAT BOGIES WITH COMPONENTS AT CARRIAGE REPAIR WORKSHOP, MANCHESWAR FOR A PERIOD OF 36 (THIRTY-SIX) MONTHS.

**Advertised Value :** ₹13,51,75,410/-  
**EMD :** ₹8,25,900/-, **Period of Completion:** 36 Months.

**Bidding Start Date:** 12.12.2025.

**Tender Closing Date and Time :** At 1500 Hrs. of 26.12.2025.


Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Complete information including e-Tender documents and corrigendum is available in website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

**By:** Chief Mechanical Engineer (POH),  
**PR-894/Q/25-26** **CRW/Mancheswar**



“ Watch the too indignantly righteous. Before long you will find them committing or condoning the very offence which they have so fiercely censured



SRI AUROBINDO

## Trump’s Betting

The new US National Security Strategy is not, in any meaningful sense, a strategy. A strategy connects means to achievable ends. What President Donald Trump’s White House published last week is something else: a 33-page confession that this administration does not believe in the future – and therefore sees no point in investing in it.

Trump’s NSS oscillates wildly between triumphalism and declinist anxiety. America is the greatest nation in history; America is being invaded. We are winning; we are losing it all. This is not simply incoherence: It is the cognitive signature of a movement that experiences demographic and cultural change as existential catastrophe.

The NSS announces sweeping objectives without specifying resources, timelines, or mechanisms. Calling it “short-sighted” suggests that a long game is being neglected. But there is no long game. A movement convinced that its world is ending does not plan for the next generation. It smashes and grabs.

The grabbiness is explicit. “All our embassies must be aware of major business opportunities in their country, especially major government contracts,” the NSS instructs. “Every U.S. Government official that interacts with these countries should understand that part of their job is to help American companies compete and succeed.” Diplomacy has been formally converted into a business development operation.

The National Security Council is tasked with identifying “strategic locations and resources” in the Western Hemisphere for exploitation. Le Monde calls it what it is: *prédation économique* – economic predation.

The Council on Foreign Relations observes that great-power competition has vanished as an organizing principle in this NSS, replaced by economics as “the ultimate stakes.” The document is more polemic than strategy, Council members say, and non-Americans would be wise to discount it as a genuine statement of intent.

Still, the disappearance of great-power rivalry as a framework is not an oversight. It reflects an administration that has quietly abandoned the project of shaping the international order because shaping that order requires believing in the future.

Consider the treatment of allies. The NSS redirects rhetorical fire toward Europe while markedly softening its language about Russia and other adversaries. It warns that Europe risks “civilizational erasure” through immigration and “regulatory suffocation.” It demands that Europeans assume “primary responsibility” for their own defense—while simultaneously announcing that the United States will “cultivate resistance” to Europe’s current political trends by supporting nationalist and populist parties in European Union countries.

This is not alliance management. It is sabotage dressed as burden-sharing.

The administration claims to reject the liberal internationalist habit of lecturing others about their internal affairs. But it then announces a hemispheric sphere of influence that denies Latin American countries the sovereign right to choose their own trading partners and security arrangements. The “Trump Corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine is nineteenth-century great-power politics repackaged for a president who cannot distinguish between national interest and personal enrichment.

The Cato Institute, no friend of liberal internationalism, identifies another contradiction: the tension between rhetoric rejecting “forever wars” and an underlying insistence that the US must remain global arbiter. An “America First veneer” overlays a de facto hegemonic project. The administration wants the benefits of primacy without its burdens—deference without commitment, access without relationships.

This is not foreign-policy realism. It is the doctrine of someone who has never had to honor a promise. What holds its contradictions together is not a theory of international order or a vision of American leadership, but rather a shared enemy: the future itself.

The NSS is suffused with demographic angst. Migration is framed not as a policy challenge but as an “invasion.” The border is “the primary element of national security.” The document blurs the line between external threats and internal political competition, treating diaspora communities and demographic change as security problems on par with hostile states. This is the “Great Replacement” theory translated into official dogma.

Why does an administration preparing to withdraw from global commitments need to demonize immigrants? Why does a strategy focused on the Western Hemisphere devote so much energy to attacking European migration policy? It is because the fear that animates this administration is not China or Russia or terrorism. Its animating fear is that tomorrow’s America will not look like yesterday’s America. The NSS is not a plan for navigating the future. It is an expression of rage at the future’s inevitability.

This explains the predatory economics. If you have given up on building lasting relationships, you extract what you can while you can. If alliances are just transaction costs, you abandon them. If the international order impedes you in anyway, you refuse to maintain it. The logic is that of a liquidation sale: everything must go.

Fear of the future also explains the Trump administration’s softness toward Russia. Vladimir Putin’s Kremlin shares Trump’s demographic anxiety, hostility to liberal institutions, and resentment of a cosmopolitan future, and he has what Trump wants: a revisionist ethnonationalist state that has embraced imperialism and suffered no meaningful consequences. The NSS does not name Russia as a serious threat because this administration does not experience Russia as threatening what it values.

What remains when policy cannot deliver what a movement craves? Demolition. Alliances that took generations to build can be wrecked in months. The NSS provides ideological justification – “civilizational” language, “great replacement” premises, “invasion” rhetoric – for severing the ties that allow democracies to work together to confront the grave challenges of the future.

The goal is not merely to ignore real threats but to redefine the threat itself as demographic change – the very presence of people Trump calls “garbage.” Why preserve alliances to manage the future if the future will not be white?

The NSS is what happens when foreign policy is drafted by those who experience the future as an enemy. Unable to stop time, they settle for smashing the clocks – and pocketing whatever isn’t nailed down.

Stephen Holmes, a professor at New York University School of Law and Berlin Prize Fellow at the American Academy in Berlin.

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Avilash Roul

WHEN THE CLIMATE COPs ATTRACT ALL THE LIMELIGHT, DESPITE THE URGENCY IN PROTECTING WILDLIFE AND THEIR NATURAL HABITATS AGAINST THE ANTHROPOGENIC ONSLAUGHT, THE WILDLIFE COPs GENERATE LIMITED ENTHUSIASM IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN



Stephen Holmes

The new US National Security Strategy bears the cognitive signature of a movement that experiences demographic and cultural change as existential catastrophe. The goal is not merely to ignore real threats but to redefine the threat itself as the presence of people President Donald Trump calls “garbage”



Bruhaspati Samal

SIMPLIFICATION IS WELCOME, BUT SIMPLIFICATION THAT SIDELINES WORKER WELFARE IS NOT REFORM—IT IS REGRESSION

For half a century, it has been institutionalised that controlled commerce in wildlife and their derivatives meets both people’s needs and the survival of the wildlife. Despite 48,000 species, out of 172,600 assessed globally, are still critically endangered, near threatened, and vulnerable in the wild, the 20thConference of the Parties (COP20) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), global body to regulate wildlife trade, met from November 24- December 5, has brought regulation of 51 species under its ambit at the historical city of Samarkand, Uzbekistan. Is CITES contributing to and supporting the conservation and management of wildlife?

Largely, when the climate COPs attract all the limelight, despite the urgency in protecting wildlife and their natural habitats against the anthropogenic onslaught, the wildlife COPs generate limited enthusiasm in the public domain, at least in India so far. From the Saiga Antelope in Kazakhstan to the whale shark in the Indian Ocean, the world’s wildlife trade regulatory body has brought more species under its purview. However, among others, the listing of Guggul (Commiphora wightii), an endangered shrub found in India, Pakistan and Oman and the withdrawal of scrutiny of Vantara, the largest private wildlife rescue and care centre in Jamnagar, are worth mentioning.

One of the least discussed in public, but highly political issues is the large-scale import of wildlife into Vantara facilities. In September, CITES raised concerns about India’s implementation of enforced mechanisms on large-scale imports of wildlife to Vantara, a privately owned facility, and asked



With the porous international borders and a large appetite for poaching and overharvesting domestically for commercial purposes, India becomes one of the high-profile routes of illegal trafficking of live wildlife and its derivatives

India not to issue any further import permits to the facility. However, India defended its laws and regulatory practices, citing a recent Supreme Court order that stated that animal acquisitions by Vantara complied with national and CITES requirements. Remember, the Supreme Court of India asked for an SIT report on compliance with international and national laws by Vantara in a ‘sealed envelope’. With support from the US, Japan and Brazil, the CITES has withdrawn the reservations against India, thereof Vantara. This is one of the high-profile private cases in the CITES defended by a host government, which otherwise has been very strict in its approach to protecting endangered species; most are rehabilitated in Vantara.

Since 1976, as a signatory to CITES, India’s active participation has been anchored in the principle of precautionary approach and science-based decision making with an effective conservation ethos and commitment to protecting endangered species. It may be noted that India is one of the 17 mega-biodiverse countries in

the world and four of 34 global biodiversity hotspots are in India. Therefore, the stakes are very high for India in CITES, in addition to its unilateral wildlife protection measures. With only 2.4 percent of the earth’s land area, India hosts 96,000 species of animals, 47,000 species of plants, and nearly half the world’s aquatic plants. Arguably, with the porous international borders and a large appetite for poaching and overharvesting domestically for commercial purposes, India becomes one of the high-profile routes of illegal trafficking of live wildlife and its derivatives.

The Illegal wildlife trade, which can be termed as green crimes or environmental crimes, is an illegal activity harming the environment by exploiting natural resources. While the legal wildlife trade is estimated to be an annual average of \$2.3 trillion in the world, the illegal wildlife trafficking has grown to an annual \$ 25 billion. Arguably, the CITES in the last 50 years have demonstrated to address the challenges in regulating legal trade and combating wildlife trafficking. Domestically, in Odisha,

profitable illegal wildlife activities, two elephant tusks were seized in the Ramla under the Champua division in Keonjhar early this week. In September, two leopard skins, a live Pangolin and a tiger skin were seized in Rayagada and Kalahandi districts, respectively. It’s being acknowledged that more than 6,900 poachers were arrested for killing and trafficking of 2,869 wildlife animals during the past 10 years in Odisha.

This covert industry is ranked as the fourth most lucrative criminal enterprise in the world. The wildlife trade is incredibly diverse, encompassing live animals, plants and a wide range of wildlife products. Despite its global significance, CITES is not bereft of its weaknesses. So far, CITES has only been focusing on regulating trade rather than addressing the root causes of declining species, such as habitat loss and socio-economic linkages. In addition, the enforcement of provisions of CITES is inconsistent across the range countries of species, leading to loopholes that poachers and traffickers are grossly abusing. For example, India and its neighbouring countries do not have equivalent laws and regulations regarding illegal trafficking or poaching of endangered species. At last, even the listing process of animals is hugely influenced by political and economic clout, overriding scientific assessments. Above and beyond, the CITES success in protecting species depends on the cooperation among range states, stronger enforcement, periodic capacity building of enforcement officials, and minimising corruption at the local level with predictable financial assistance.

The writer is an international advisor on climate change risks and transboundary rivers.

### SPECTRUM LABOUR CODES

## Labour reforms or rights erosion?

In the political economy of contemporary India, few reforms have invited such sharp polarisation as the four Labour Codes notified for nationwide implementation through the Gazette Notification dated 21 November 2025. Even before the ink on the notification dried, the streets began to reverberate with protests from Central Trade Unions, independent federations, and workers’ collectives across the country. It’s alleged that the present Government’s approach beginning 2019–20, to club the laws into the Code on Wages, Industrial Relations Code, Code on Social Security, and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code are pro-corporate. It dilutes long-established labour rights, lengthen the working day, weaken workplace safety, restrict formation and functioning of trade unions, and endanger the social security framework that evolved through 44 specialised labour laws painstakingly enacted over nearly a century, say critics. However, the Government describes it as simplification, rationalisation, and a catalyst for “ease of doing business.” The divergence between the two narratives reflects a deeper conflict—between the objective

of economic efficiency and the imperative of protecting labour rights.

The Code on Wages is the first example of this ambiguity. It unifies the Minimum Wages Act, Payment of Wages Act, Bonus Act, and Equal Remuneration Act under a single legislative umbrella. On paper, it seeks uniformity, but the core concern remains that the Code does not mandate a binding national floor wage. States may still legally fix wages below this benchmark, thereby defeating the purpose of creating minimum income security for workers. By making wage fixation a matter of executive discretion, the Code risks legitimising artificially low wages under the guise of competitiveness, a fear repeatedly expressed by trade unions.

The Industrial Relations Code is arguably the most controversial of all. It raises the threshold for the applicability of Standing Orders from establishments with 100 workers to those with 300, effectively allowing a large proportion of workplaces to hire and fire workers without due process. This single change alters the bargaining power of nearly 70 per cent of workers in the organised sector.

The Code on Social Security,

which promises universal coverage, presents another layer of concern. It claims to bring gig workers, platform workers, and unorganised workers under its ambit. However, the language of the Code is largely discretionary, allowing the Government to “frame schemes” without creating binding statutory obligations. Funding mechanisms are vague, employer contributions are uncertain, and the cap on contributions from aggregators risks making benefits too small to matter.

The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code replaces thirteen individual laws, including those governing mines, factories, contract labour, and inter-state migrant workers. While the Government argues that it reduces overlap, many of the detailed and mandatory safety requirements of earlier laws have been diluted. The threshold for application has been raised, leaving workers in smaller establishments outside the purview of formal safety regulation.

The implications of the four Labour Codes reach far beyond legal drafting and touch the core realities of India’s labour landscape, which is already marked by long

working hours, low wages, high informality, and one of the world’s highest rates of occupational injuries. Insecure workplaces often undermine productivity and long-term industrial stability.

Yet it would be mistaken to conclude that labour reforms are unnecessary. India needs modern frameworks that balance economic dynamism with social justice. This requires reforms that preserve essential rights through genuine tripartite consultation, scientific wage determination, universal and well-funded social security, stronger safety norms, and protected migrant worker benefits.

Ultimately, labour reforms must emerge from consensus, not confrontation. Simplification is welcome, but simplification that sidelines worker welfare is not reform—it is regression. If the Government embraces dialogue and addresses the substantive concerns raised by workers, the Labour Codes can be reshaped into instruments that genuinely promote growth while upholding the rights of the millions who are the backbone of the nation’s economy.

The writer is a service union representative and a columnist

## Letters TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST  
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### Strategic shift

Sir, An old adage - Put your money where your mouth is - urges people to demonstrate their conviction through concrete action rather than lofty words. Over the past few weeks, Amazon, Microsoft, and Google have done exactly that by collectively announcing more than \$67 billion in investments in India—an extraordinary vote of confidence that goes far beyond diplomatic praise or market optimism. These commitments signal a major strategic shift: India is no longer viewed merely as the world’s IT back office but as the emerging AI front office where cutting-edge innovation, scalable digital infrastructure, and a vast talent base converge. By choosing India as their largest digital investment destination outside the United States, these tech giants affirm the country’s growing role as the anchor of a new, non-Chinese digital ecosystem, one that offers stability, scale, and democratic credibility. Their actions highlight India’s accelerating journey toward becoming an AI-first economy, where artificial intelligence drives governance, industry transformation, and economic growth. In essence, global technology leaders are signalling that the future of digital innovation increasingly runs through India..

N Sathasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

### Disturbing trend

Sir, It is a matter of significant public concern that Parliamentary debates in India have been shrinking of late, a trend highlighted by data on the number of sitting days, the time spent on discussions on key issues, and the increasing frequency of disruptions. Rising political polarisation and a lack of bipartisanship have considerably reduced the scope for constructive dialogue and consensus-building. Candidly put, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership religious nationalism continues to gain strength that often diverts public attention from core issues confronting the country. While India’s economic performance, which is the essence of a growing democratic nation, remains lacklustre, despotic tactics, on the contrary, silence dissent. Parliamentary debates are the cornerstone of a truly vibrant democracy. It’s through such tools that a democracy ensures Parliamentary scrutiny of Executive’s decisions. Without debate and discussion, a democracy is reduced to a body without soul.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI



FOCUSES ON MIGRANT WORKERS, DOCUMENT-LESS VOTERS

# TMC begins groundwork for second phase of SIR

TMC sources admit that the party's grassroots economic ecosystem is closely tied to the local municipalities and panchayat, which were seen actively canvassing in neighbourhoods during the first phase

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Dec 11:** With the first phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls ending Thursday and the draft rolls set for publication next week, the ruling TMC in West Bengal has already launched an aggressive three-track strategy to protect its voter base in the second phase, party leaders said.

Senior leaders told PTI that the party has begun “early groundwork” on three crucial fronts bringing back migrant workers to ensure in-person verification, identifying and assisting document-less voters, and adding the names of newly married women who have shifted residences.

The party, they said, has instructed its organisation down to the booth and block levels to remain “on high alert.”

A senior TMC leader said, “The first phase created some wounds because of the pressure exerted by the Commission. The second phase offers us the chance to apply the balm. We cannot afford to slip.”

The first major thrust area is voters who lack the 2002 family linkage on the rolls as well



as any of the documents prescribed by the Election Commission.

TMC leaders concede that this group is vulnerable and at risk of exclusion.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has already announced that from December 12, every block will host a “May I Help You” camp where state government officials will assist citizens in generating necessary documents.

A senior TMC leader told PTI, “The state administration is willing to help but taking these document-less voters to the camps is organisational work. We have identified most such voters during the first phase. Taking them to the government camps will not be very difficult because most of the elected local representatives belong to our party.”

The party has prepared a draft list of such voters and circulated it among local leaders.

According to senior functionaries, the TMC’s internal assessment shows that several

districts in south Bengal still have a significant portion of migrant workers who did not return during the first phase.

Although family members submitted enumeration forms on their behalf, the party fears many names may not make it to the draft rolls unless the workers appear physically during hearings.

One senior TMC leader overseeing preparations said, “We had been trying for months to encourage them to return. The government even launched schemes to motivate them. The response was not huge, but the participation we saw in the first phase has encouraged us. We now have to ensure the rest appear in person in the second phase.”

District presidents and MLAs have been asked to monitor this exercise closely and ensure that local committees coordinate transport and outreach.

The third category the TMC is targeting comprises newly married women who have relo-

cated, either between districts or from other states, after marriage.

“This number may not be huge, but this category must be taken care of. Even if small, it’s an emotional and political message that we stand by them,” said a party functionary.

TMC sources admit that the party’s grassroots economic ecosystem is closely tied to the local municipalities and panchayat, which were seen actively canvassing in neighbourhoods during the first phase.

“The second phase is entirely administrative, carried out by government employees acting as Commission-nominated officers. So our organisational alertness has to be sharper,” a senior leader said.

The TMC is also wary of alleged attempts to add “fake voters” aged 18 and above to the rolls. Local-level vigilance committees have been asked to monitor all new inclusions.

At the same time, the party is preparing to challenge deletions, especially those marked as deceased, by demanding supporting documents during hearings to “put pressure on the Commission.”

Simultaneously, the TMC is maintaining a parallel dataset through the ‘Didir Doot’ app, which is being monitored jointly by the government and the party’s advisory agency. Constituency-wise tracking is already underway.

“TMC’s brass accepts that if the first phase was challenging, the second will be even more crucial,” a senior party leader said, adding, “This is where the real battle for voter protection begins.”

# India’s 1st indigenous hydrogen fuel-cell vessel in Varanasi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Varanasi (UP), Dec 11:** Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal Thursday flagged off India’s first indigenous hydrogen fuel-cell vessel in Varanasi, marking a key milestone in the country’s push towards clean, and sustainable inland water transport.

At a ceremony held at Namo Ghat, the Ports, Shipping, and Waterways minister inaugurated the vessel’s commercial operations.

Sonowal said the hydrogen-powered vessel reflects India’s growing technological capabilities and its commitment to sustainable energy. “This is not just technological progress, but a sign that we are advancing confidently towards green energy and indigenous solutions,” he said.

The minister said it was a matter of national pride that India has now joined the list of countries such as China, Norway, the Netherlands, and Japan that operate hydrogen-powered vessels.

“This proves that our technical capabilities are ready for the future. This has been made possible due to the Prime Minister’s visionary leadership. The speed and approach with which every sector has been advancing has ensured that inland waterways now play an important role in India’s development journey,” he said in Varanasi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s parliamentary constituency.

Uttar Pradesh’s Minister of State for Transport (Independent Charge) Dayashankar Singh, Minister of State for Ayush, Food Safety and Drug Administration (Independent Charge) Dayashankar Mishra, and Minister of State for Stamp and Court Fees and Registration (Independent Charge) Ravindra Jaiswal were among the public representatives present on the occasion.



**Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal says it was a matter of national pride that India has now joined the list of countries such as China, Norway, the Netherlands, and Japan that operate hydrogen-powered vessels**

Sonowal said the development marks a major step in India’s shift towards green energy and indigenously developed clean-technology solutions.

He noted that hydrogen engines are an emerging technology offering clean, sustainable energy with near-zero emissions, though research and testing are still underway before full-scale commercial adoption.

Highlighting the sector’s expansion, the minister said the number of national waterways has increased from five to 111 in the past decade. Cargo traffic on inland waterways rose from 80 million tonnes in 2014 to over 145 million tonnes at present, while tourism activities are operational on 13 waterways.

He added that the foundation for this transformation was laid by the Jal Marg Vikas Project, which created a modern navigation corridor from Haldia to Varanasi on National Waterway-1, with multimodal terminals, advanced equipment, and community jetties.

“Projects worth more than ₹300 crore have already been completed in Uttar Pradesh for

waterway development, while schemes worth around ₹2,200 crore will be launched in the coming years,” the minister said.

According to an official statement, the hydrogen vessel initiative is part of the ongoing modernisation of India’s inland waterways under the leadership of PM Modi, who has prioritised clean transport, improved connectivity and enhanced public convenience.

In recent years, the Central government and the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) have expanded navigation channels, launched modern terminals, and operationalised new passenger and cargo routes to strengthen water-based communication and reduce logistics costs, it stated.

These efforts align with long-term strategic frameworks, including the Maritime India Vision 2030 (MIV 2030) and Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 (MAKV 2047), which outline the roadmap for greener transport, smart infrastructure, and increased use of alternative fuels on inland waterways, it added.

# Noida airport to give flyers a taste UP’s heritage, Indian culture



Combining Swiss efficiency with Indian hospitality, NIA promises a seamless, comfortable, and world-class travel experience with state-of-the-art technology and facilities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow/Greater Noida, Dec 11:** Nearing inauguration, Noida International Airport (NIA) is designed to reflect Indian culture and will offer passengers an immediate sense of the state’s identity the moment they arrive, an official statement Thursday said.

Combining Swiss efficiency with Indian hospitality, NIA promises a seamless, comfortable, and world-class travel experience with state-of-the-art technology and facilities, it said. Shailendra Kumar Bhatia, Additional CEO of the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority, said the airport will enhance UP’s and India’s global profile.

“NIA will offer passengers a fast, smooth, and memorable journey at every stage. The Chief Minister is personally monitoring progress and recently visited the site to review the work and provide directives,” he said. The airport’s terminal will feature carved elements like lattice screens that will also regulating natural light and airflow, he said.

The grand entrance is inspired by the iconic ghats of Varanasi and Haridwar, reflecting the region’s spiritual and historical heritage, the statement said.

Inside, a spacious haveli-style courtyard will create an open, welcoming environment, underscoring the importance of courtyards in Indian architecture. The terminal’s white, flowing roof symbolises the calm, continuous movement of UP’s major rivers, embodying a harmonious blend of nature and modernity.

Noida International Airport will also offer a cutting-edge, digital-first travel environment.

Advanced systems such as self-bag-drop machines, self-boarding gates, and biometric-based DigiYatra at all entry points will reduce waiting time and simplify the passenger journey. Smart signage, intuitive interfaces, and fully digitised processes have been integrated to ensure maximum convenience and efficiency, it said.

The authorities’ said the airport’s retail area will showcase a mix of local handicrafts, art work, modern brands, and exclusive souvenirs.

Duty-free stores, premium outlets, and UP’s signature crafts such as Banarasi silk, chikankari, and attar will be on sale. Noida International Airport has been developed as a green airport, with sustainability integrated into every stage from construction to daily operations, the statement said.

The airport complex will rely extensively on renewable energy, particularly solar power and off-grid wind systems, to minimise dependence on conventional sources. Rainwater harvesting, advanced waste management, and modern sewage treatment plants will further strengthen its environmental safeguards.

EV charging stations will be available across the campus to encourage electric mobility and reduce carbon emissions.

## After mosque row, Ayodhya-style Ram Temple proposed in Bengal



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Dec 11:** In a sharp escalation of Bengal’s temple-mosque political duel ahead of the assembly polls, posters appeared across Salt Lake Thursday announcing plans for an Ayodhya-style Ram temple complex on the metropolis’s eastern fringes, promising a school, hospital, old-age home and other welfare facilities.

The posters, attributed to local BJP leader and former local unit president Sanjay Poyra, have come up in City Centre, Karunamoyee and several other prominent pockets of Bidhannagar.

They proclaim that a Ram temple “similar to the Ayodhya structure” will be erected on a four-bigha plot and invite residents to contribute Re 1 each as donation for the project.

The development comes just days after suspended TMC MLA Humayun Kabir laid the foundation stone of a Babri Masjid-styled mosque in Rejinagar, Murshidabad, December 6, the anniversary of the 1992 demolition, under unprecedented security.

On the same day, the BJP held a parallel ceremony in Banjatiya’s Manindra Nagar, also in Murshidabad, where local leaders initiated groundwork for a Ram temple, taking sharp aim at Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for “appeasing politics.”

With Salt Lake now entering the arena, the battleground has moved close to the state’s administrative heart, giving the political tug-of-war an unmistakable symbolic edge.

Speaking to reporters, Poyra described the initiative as a social-spiritual movement rooted in ‘Ram Rajya’.

“Ram’s kingdom must have Ram’s temple. A Ram temple will come up in Bidhannagar- just like the one in Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh,” he said. On the specifics of land, Poyra remained guarded. “We have identified land, but I will not disclose the location now. If we reveal it, obstacles will be created. Many people have offered to donate land, many have offered to supply construction materials, and some have even expressed willingness to donate idols,” he said.

Poyra announced that the bhumi puja and foundation stone-laying ceremony will be held March 26, coinciding with Ram Navami.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kolkata, Dec 11:** West Bengal Islamic Foundation of India, the trust formed for the proposed Babri Mosque at Beldanga in Murshidabad district of West Bengal, by the now-suspended Trinamool Congress leader Humayun Kabir, has received

donations to the tune of ₹3.50 crore.

The manual counting of currencies collected as cash donations filled in 11 trunks was completed Wednesday night, and the total amount accumulated was ₹87 lakh, confirmed a close confidant of Kabir. At the same time, the online

donations deposited at the designated bank account of the said trust, through the scanning of the QR code, have reached ₹2.63 crore as of Wednesday night. It was learnt that from Sunday afternoon until night, the money from a total of four boxes was counted. A sum of ₹37,33,000 was collected in

cash. The counting of money resumed using machines Monday afternoon. The counting of the remaining seven boxes was completed by Tuesday.

The total amount of donations collected from these boxes reached ₹38,34,000. In total, ₹75,67,523 were counted from 11 boxes and one sack.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER

MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, SAMBALPUR

Phone No. (0663)-2412791 (Off.), E-mail : semisbnp@yahoo.co.in

No. 4920/Date. 09.12.2025

'e' Procurement Notice

BID REF No. : SE, MID, SBP/13/2025-26

Name of work : Civil Construction works

No. of Works : 13 (Thirteen) No.

Estimated cost : Varies from approximately Rs. 4.92 lakh to Rs. 38.85 lakh for 13 Nos. of work (Rs.121.29 Lakh)

Tender paper cost : Referred to DTGN

Period of completion : Referred to DTGN

Availability of bid through online : From dt.17.12.2025 at 11.00 A.M. to dt.26.12.2025 up to 05.30 P.M. in website (<http://tendersodisha.gov.in>)

Period of receipt of bid through online : From dt.17.12.2025 at 11.00 A.M. to dt.26.12.2025 up to 05.30 P.M. through online

Date of opening of bid documents : On dt.29.12.2025 at 10.00 A.M. onwards

Digital signature certificate of Bidder : The bidder must possess compatible digital signature certificate (DSC) of Class-II or Class-III

The detail tender call notice can also be seen in the DOWR website - <http://tendersodisha.gov.in>

Name & Address of the OIT : Superintending Engineer, M.I.Division, Sambalpur At-Muljiharana, P.O.-B.S.S. Nagar, Dist.-Smbalpur. PIN-768001, Ph : 0663-2412791, E-mail ID : semisbnp@yahoo.co.in <http://tendersodisha.gov.in>

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement market place

OIPR-32036/11/0029/2526

Sd./- Superintending Engineer M.I.Division, Sambalpur

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER

MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, NAYAGARH

'e' Procurement Notice

BID IDENTIFICATION No. SEMIDN-11/2025-26

Dated: 08.12.2025

Letter No. 3223

No. A-1112: The Superintending Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Nayagarh on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage Rate Bids in Double Cover only in ONLINE mode for the construction of works detailed in the table from "B" Class contractors registered with the State Government and contractors of equivalent Grade/Class registered with Central Government/M.E.S./Railways for execution of civil works on production of definite proof from the appropriate authority. The bidders may submit bids for any or all of the following works.

1. Name of the works : Improvement to Canal Service Road of projects under CAPEX Road grant for the year 2025-26.

2. Total No. of works : 02 (Two)

3. Estimated Cost : Varies from Rs.86.70 lakh to Rs.99.97 lakh approximately

4. Class of Contractor : Class 'B'

5. Period of Completion : 03 (Three) Calendar Months

6. Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal for online bidding : On dt.12.12.2025 at 10 A.M. to 18.12.2025 upto 5 P.M.

7. Last date/time for receipt of bid only in ONLINE : 18.12.2025 upto 5 P.M.

8. Date/time of opening of Technical Bid : 19.12.2025 at 11.00 A.M. at Office of the Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division, Nayagarh

9. Date/time of opening of Financial Bid : To be intimated through website after evaluation of Technical Bid

10. Date of Transparent Lottery (if cases arise) : At 11.00 hrs. onwards of Dt.23.12.2025

11. Name & address of the Officer Inviting the Bid : Office of the Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division, Nayagarh, Tel. No. (06753) 291009, e-Mail ID : eemidivisionnayagarh@gmail.com

12. Further details can be seen from the "e" Procurement Portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.

OIPR-32260/11/0024/2526

Sd./- Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division, Nayagarh

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, ATHMALLIK (KL) DIVISION

At: Haridanali, P.O./P.S.: Athmallik, Dist.: Angul, PIN - 759125

No. MM-346 Email: [dfo.kl.alk@gmail.com](mailto:dfo.kl.alk@gmail.com), Mob. No.: 8280342716

Order No. 171

Notice Inviting Tender

Date: 11.12.2025

Bid Identification No. DFO (KL) ALK-02 (Online) 2025-26

1. The Divisional Forest Officer, Athmallik (KL) Division, Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate in Single cover system in ONLINE MODE only, for the work 1. Construction of Forest Quarter at Kadaligarh (KL) Range Office Campus. 2. Construction of Forest Guard Quarters at Nakchi KL Range. 3. Construction of Forest Guard at Anandapur CG Campus of Boinda (KL) Range. 4. Construction of Forest Guard quarters at Kurumtap CG Campus of Madhapur (KL) Range under Athmallik (KL) Division for the year 2025-26.

2. No. of Works : 4 Nos.

3. Nature of Works : Building Works

4. Class of Contractor : 'C' or 'D' Class

5. Estimated Cost : 55.53,040/-

6. Completion Period : 3 Calendar Months

7. Availability of Bid documents : 12.12.2025 (5.30 P.M.) to 23.12.2025 (5.00 P.M.)

8. Last date for receipt of Bids : 23.12.2025 upto 5.00 P.M.

9. Opening of Bids : 24.12.2025 at 5.00 P.M.

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in). The Addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation of tender, if any, will be hosted on the website only.

OIPR-08155/11/0004/2526

Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer Athmallik (KL) Division

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER

KEONJHAR (R&B) CIRCLE, KEONJHAR

No.6053 dt.04.12.2025

EOI Identification No. CCEKC-01/2025-26

Expression of Interest

No.B-801 : The Chief Construction Engineer, Keonjhar (R&B) Circle, Keonjhar (the "Authority") on behalf of the Works Department, Government of Odisha invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from Registered firms for the following works.

Sl NO.	Name of the work	EOI invitation for	Period of engagement
1	Arrangement of Venue Set-up, Logistics and other allied activities associated with state level function at different locations under Keonjhar (R&B) Circle	Non-Consultancy Services	36 Months

1. In accordance with the provisions under the Guidelines for Engagement of Non-Consultancy Services issued in the Office Memorandum No. 7480/F Dt. 04.03.2025, No. 16832 dt. 04.06.2025 & No. 21619 dt. 23.07.2025 of the Finance Department, Government of Odisha & Odisha General Finance Rule-2023, the Authority now invites eligible registered service provider to apply for above assignments.

2. Letter of Invitation of the Authority along with all other relevant details of Expression of Interest (EOI) will be available in the website: [www.odisha.gov.in](http://www.odisha.gov.in) from 10:30 A.M of 12.12.2025 to 4:00 P.M of 31.12.2025. Further details with any addendum, corrigendum and cancellation can be seen from [www.odisha.gov.in](http://www.odisha.gov.in).

3. Expression of Interest (EOI) should be submitted by Courier/ Speed Post/ Registered Post only to the following address latest by 4:00 P.M. on 31.12.2025 during office hours only. Submission of bid through any other mode and late bid will be rejected.

4. Proposals received shall be opened at 11:00 A.M. on 02.01.2026 in the Office of the Chief Construction Engineer, Keonjhar (R&B) Circle, Keonjhar-758001.

5. The Authority reserves all rights to cancel any or all proposals without assigning any reason.

Address of Authority

Chief Construction Engineer, Keonjhar (R&B) Circle, Keonjhar, Odisha

Pin - 758001, Tel : +91-6766-255226

Email : [ccekeonjharwpcircle@gmail.com](mailto:ccekeonjharwpcircle@gmail.com)

Sd./- Chief Construction Engineer, Keonjhar (R&B) Circle, Keonjhar


OIPR-34033/11/0099/2526



of the day


quote

If they had no faith in the system, Rahul Gandhi, Akhilesh Yadav, and their families should step down from Parliament and request the Election Commission to conduct their re-election in Uttar Pradesh using ballot papers




KESHAV PRASAD MAURYA | UTTAR PRADESH BY CM

We should not allow them to come. But if they are already there in some places of Upper Assam, then we will evict them from there as we did in Uriamghat



HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

People know for whom so many teachers lost their jobs in 2017, and now they have joined hands. This is political talk and I don't want to dwell much on it



MANIK SAHA | TRIPURA CM

SHORT TAKES

**Modi hosts dinner for NDA MPs**

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday hosted a dinner for MPs belonging to the National Democratic Alliance constituents (NDA) at his residence here. The MPs travelled together in batches, boarding buses which took them to Modi's residence at 7 Lok Kalyan Marg. This comes close after the NDA's landslide victory in the recently held Bihar polls, in which the coalition secured 202 seats in the 243-member state Assembly.

**MP CM declares state free of Naxalism**


Balaghat/Bhopal: With the surrender of two Naxalites in Balaghat district, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav claimed Thursday that the state was free of the Maoist menace. This became possible due to the determination to eliminate Naxalism from the country by 2026 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the guidance of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, he said. Yadav was addressing a programme organised under the 'Rehabilitation to Rejuvenation' campaign related to the surrender of Naxalites in Balaghat via video conference from Bhopal.

**Delhi cops recover 40 stolen phones**

New Delhi: The Delhi Police has arrested four alleged members of a mobile phone theft syndicate and recovered 40 high-end smartphones, more than 20 of which were stolen during the recent AP Dhillon concert at the IGI Stadium, an official said Thursday. The accused allegedly used aluminium foil to wrap stolen iPhones immediately after theft to block signals and prevent tracking through "Find My iPhone" or remote locking. Afterwards, they took the devices to Ghaziabad and sold them in the grey market within hours, the official said.

**Court grants interim bail to Umar Khalid**

New Delhi: A Delhi court Thursday granted interim bail from December 16 to 29 to former JNU student Umar Khalid to attend his sister's wedding. Additional Sessions Judge Sameer Bajpai granted interim relief to Khalid, who is an accused in the case regarding the larger conspiracy behind the 2020 Delhi riots.



The Congress government was compelled to take loan to repay the installments of already existing loans as there was a loan liability of ₹75,000 crore when he took charge

SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU | HIMACHAL PRADESH CM

'ROCKETS WILL BE LAUNCHED FROM KULASEKARAPATTINAM'

Rockets will be launched from Kulasekarapattinam in Tamil Nadu from 2027, ISRO chairman V Narayanan said Thursday. India's second space-port is currently under construction in TN's Tuticorin district to handle Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) launches



Mamata warns of dharna over any voter deletion

The CM's remarks came a day after Amit Shah warned in Parliament that those "standing with infiltrators" would "vanish from Bengal", prompting Banerjee to issue a sharp counter Thursday

and Bangladeshi," Banerjee said, dramatically intensifying the rhetoric she has been using over the past week in her public meetings.

Banerjee alleged that the SIR exercise was being "weaponised" barely two months before the polls, selectively conducted in Opposition-held areas and supervised by officials "aligned with the BJP" and sent from Delhi.

"From Delhi, BJP is sending people to pressurise the DMs with the intent of removing 1.5 crore names from the electoral list. If any name is deliberately removed, I will do a sit-in protest. I urge you to do the same. If any eligible person's name is struck off, I will sit on a dharna till it's restored," she said.

In her sharpest escalation yet, the chief minister issued an unusually strong call to women to "fight back" if their names were struck off, alleging that the revision process would be used to intimidate mothers and sisters during the polls.

"Mothers and sisters, if your names are struck off, you have things at your home the ones you use for cooking. Do you have strength in your soul? If they cut your name, will you catch them? The women will fight from the front and the men will be behind them. Bengal wants to see your strength," she said.

Banerjee claimed that dis-

trict magistrates were being pressured to remove valid names during the revision.

"In Bihar you may have managed it, but you cannot do this in Bengal," she said, alleging that the draft rolls were being prepared "at the instruction of the BJP's IT cell."

The chief minister cited reports that individuals who had submitted names of grandparents as part of their documentation would be called for hearings and risk deletion from the rolls.

Banerjee also said the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre would not be able to complete its term.

The CM reiterated that she had not filled her own SIR enumeration form, asserting that she would do so only after every citizen's form was accepted.

EC officials have clarified that as a serving chief minister, Banerjee is already enrolled as a "marked elector," a category that includes the PM, all CMs and other constitutional office-bearers, and does not legally require her to submit an enumeration form.

The first phase of the SIR concludes Thursday, with draft rolls scheduled for publication December 16.

Hearings and verification will continue through December and mid-January, with the final electoral rolls slated for publication in mid-February.

Guwahati commercial complex fire controlled after nearly 40 hours

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Dec 11: A blaze that engulfed a commercial complex housing a shopping mall and SBI's premium and commercial banking branches in Guwahati was contained Thursday evening after 40 hours, with water tenders from the Indian Air Force, Indian Army, and Guwahati Refinery assisting in firefighting efforts, officials said.



The fire broke out at Swagata Square Complex in ABC Point around 12.30 am Wednesday. Besides offices of the PSU lender, the complex also houses shopping mall 'Sohum Emporia'. "The fire was controlled at 4 pm. However, we will observe the building tonight and do a thorough search during daylight tomorrow," a senior official of the Fire and Emergency Services (F&ES) told PTI.

The official said altogether 28 fire tenders were pressed into service since the incident, with additional units arriving from Morigaon, Kamrup, Nalbari and Darrang districts. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) was also called in with high-tech smoke-reduction equipment to assist in the operation.

The Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) in its evening bulletin said though the fire is controlled, operations are still on.

OVERSEAS JOB SCAM

6,700 Indians rescued from Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 11: The Centre Thursday informed the Parliament that it has taken notice of instances of dubious firms involved in fake recruitment job offers, having lured Indian nationals mostly through social media channels to South-East Asian countries, and till date over 6,700 Indians have been rescued from Cambodia, Myanmar and Lao PDR.

Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Wadhan Singh said this in a written response to a query in Rajya Sabha.

"It has come to the notice of the government instances of dubious firms involved in fake recruitment job offers having lured Indian nationals mostly through social media channels to South-East Asian countries including Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR and made them to carry out cyber crime and other fraudulent activities from scam centres operating in these countries," he said.

"Missions/Posts take up the issue of rescue and repatriation of Indian nationals actively with the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other concerned government agencies of the host country like immigration, labour department, home affairs, defence and border affairs and law enforcement agencies," he said.

Singh, in his response, also shared the number of Indian nationals including software engineers rescued till date, with concerted efforts of Indian embassies in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar.

These figures stood at 2,265 in Cambodia, 2,290 in Lao PDR and 2,165 in Myanmar.

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'New Aravalli definition a death warrant for mountain range'

As per the new definition, "Aravali Hill" is any landform in designated Aravali districts with an elevation of 100 metres or more above its local relief and an "Aravali Range" is a collection of two or more such hills within 500 metres of each other

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Dec 11: The recent Supreme Court order adopting the Centre's 100-metre definition for Aravalli hills and permitting sustainable mining is "a death warrant" for Rajasthan's oldest mountain range, experts said.

They argued that up to 90 per cent of the Aravallis could vanish in the coming years if the decision is implemented.

As per the new definition, "Aravali Hill" is any landform in designated Aravali districts with an elevation of 100 metres or more above its local relief and an "Aravali Range" is a collection of two or more such hills within 500 metres of each other.

At a seminar organised by Bharat Seva Sansthan at Prakrit Bharati auditorium here Thursday, the experts argued that relying solely on a committee report allowed mining in an ecologically fragile belt spanning Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi and Gujarat.

Magasaysay awardee Rajendra Singh, known as the "Waterman of India," said earlier governments and courts took nature and environmental issues seriously, but that approach has disappeared.

"If this decision, meant to benefit one individual, is implemented, only 7-8 per cent of the Aravalli will survive," he said, calling for a legal battle



as well as mass public mobilisation.

Leader of Opposition in Rajasthan Assembly Tika Ram Jolly endorsed the campaign, saying, "If the Aravalli doesn't survive, nothing will."

Activist Jayesh Joshi said the first concern should be the

tribal communities who have lived off the Aravalli ecosystem for thousands of years.

Pradeep Poonia, also an activist, warned that if mining expands, "not just the hills but agriculture, wildlife and sanctuaries will be wiped out".

Congress leader Vaibhav

PM dials Trump, discusses economic ties, trade deal



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 11: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump Thursday discussed ways to sustain momentum in the bilateral economic partnership in a phone conversation amid signs of the two sides inching closer to firm up a much-awaited trade deal.

The phone talks between the two leaders came on a day Indian and American negotiators concluded two-day talks on the proposed bilateral trade agreement that is expected to provide relief to India from Trump administration's whopping 50 per cent tariffs on Indian goods.

In a social media post, Modi described the conversation as "warm and engaging". "We reviewed the progress in our bilateral relations and discussed regional and international developments. India and the US will continue to work together for global peace, stability and prosperity," Modi said without making any reference to trade ties.

US Trade Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer Tuesday said without divulging details that the US has received "best" ever offers from India on the proposed trade agreement.

Modi and Trump last spoke in October. The relations between New Delhi and Washington witnessed a major downturn after Trump doubled tariffs on Indian goods to a whopping 50 per cent in August including a 25 per cent additional duties for India's purchase of Russian crude oil.

The strain in the relations has been exacerbated by constant criticism of New Delhi by officials in Trump's administration. There have been efforts by both sides in the last few weeks to repair the ties. Modi and Trump reviewed the steady progress in India-US bilateral relations and exchanged views on key regional and global developments, an Indian readout said. It said the two leaders reiterated that India and the United States will continue to work closely together to advance global peace, stability, and prosperity.

Officials familiar with the phone conversation said Modi and Trump reviewed progress in India-US comprehensive global strategic partnership and exchange views on expanding cooperation in trade, critical technologies, energy, defence and security.

Both leaders agreed to work closely to address shared challenges and advance common interests besides expressing satisfaction at the steady strengthening of bilateral cooperation across all domains, they said.

Top court asks HCs to monitor UAPA cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 11: The Supreme Court Thursday asked chief justices of all high courts to examine the status of pending trials in their states under laws such as the UAPA, posing a reverse burden of proof on the accused.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and Nongmeikapam Kottiswar Singh also directed the State Legal Services Authority to make aware each undertrial of his/her right to representation, either by counsel of their own choice or through a legal aid counsel.

For those who choose the latter, assignments to their cases to the counsel should be made expeditiously so that the proceedings can start/continue at the earliest, it added.

The top court said when the statute like Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act imposes a reverse burden, then the State must also ensure that the trial is expedited. "A constitutional democracy does not legitimise burdens by simply declaring them; it must ensure that those burdened are meaningfully equipped to bear them, even those who are accused of the worst offences imaginable."

"If the State, in spite of all its might presumes guilt, then the same State must also, with the employment of all the resources at its command, create pathways through which the accused can reclaim their innocence," the bench said.

The top court also asked the chief justices to ascertain the number of special courts designated to try the said offences, and if special courts have not been designated, the number of sessions courts dealing with matters under these legislations and to take up the matter with the appropriate authority if it is found that they are not sufficient.

The bench asked the chief justices to discern, whether posting of judicial officers in these courts as also staffing is sufficient, thereby foreclosing a ground for delay and adjournment, and if not, then suitable order for posting be issued expeditiously.



of the day quote

Vajpayee brought transformative reforms in the telecom sector, expanded rural cooking gas connections, and demonstrated India's global strength through nuclear tests

**MOHAN YADAV** | MP CM

Terror victims will get justice and jobs, and terrorists will get bullets

**MANOJ SINHA** | J&K LT GOVERNOR

There was a debate on Vande Mataram in Parliament. How can one hold a debate on the 'rashtra geet' in its own country and why are they remembering Vande Mataram after so many years. Vande Mataram has completed 150 years, but the BJP's love for Vande Mataram is only for a day

**UDDHAV THACKERAY** | SENA (UBT) PRESIDENT

POST OF THE DAY

Ministers Should Do Weekly Press Conference and Monthly Sessions with Members of Public Share Updates About Work and Progress Done Take Relevant Questions and Feedback Same Should Be Applied To Bureaucrats This Can Greatly Improve Overall Governance

@Ravisutanjani

SHORT TAKES

Student dies in hostel fire

**Itanagar:** A six-year-old student was killed as fire ravaged the hostel of a school in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang district in the early hours of Thursday, a statement said. The fire broke out around 12.20 am at the hostel of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Awasiya Vidyalaya at Taktsang when most children were asleep, it said. Dorjee Tsomu, a student of class 8, and hostel warden Nima Lhamu managed to rescue several students, but Choine Tsomu of Class I could not be saved, said the statement issued by the district administration.

CBI chargesheet on 'digital arrest' scams

**New Delhi:** The CBI has filed a chargesheet against 13 individuals for allegedly running "digital arrest" cyber fraud scams, controlled by masterminds located in Southeast Asian countries, officials said Thursday. The agency also ran a parallel investigation into cyber-slavery and the organised digital exploitation networks in Southeast Asia, with slave compounds in Myanmar and neighbouring areas, that are emerging as incubators for the execution of such frauds.

Three held for killing leopard

**Nagpur:** The forest department in Maharashtra's Nagpur has arrested three persons in connection with the alleged poaching of a leopard in Hingna area near here. A leopard was hunted in Mauza Bhivkund in Hingna December 9, and three persons allegedly involved in its hunting were arrested from Bhivkund, Butibori and Bhivapur, Deputy Conservator of Forests (Nagpur division) Vinita Vyas said in a statement. Weapons used in the crime were also seized from them, she said.



The Arpora incident is a prime example of corruption. There was no alternative to the BJP (so far) in Goa, but now the AAP is there

**ARVIND KEJRIWAL** | AAP CONVENOR

HIMANTA LAUNCHES BICYCLE SCHEME

In an attempt to make daily commute of students faster and safer, especially those in rural and interior areas, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday launched a bicycle distribution scheme for over three lakh Class IX pupils



DGCA steps up IndiGo scrutiny

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi/ Mumbai, Dec 11:** Aviation watchdog DGCA Thursday stepped up scrutiny of the crisis-hit IndiGo with its officials stationing themselves at the carrier's headquarters to monitor the operations and CEO Pieter Elbers being grilled by an inquiry panel on a day when the airline announced a compensation of ₹10,000 in the form of travel vouchers to affected passengers.

IndiGo, on its part, said it is expected to operate 1,950 flights carrying around 3 lakh passengers, while airports reported flight cancellations.

Over 200 flights were cancelled at Delhi and Bangalore airports Thursday, according to sources.

The civil aviation ministry has also directed the airline, which generally operates around 2,300 flights, to reduce its winter schedule by 10 per cent.

IndiGo CEO Elbers, who appeared before the DGCA-constituted inquiry panel Thursday, has been asked to appear again Friday as the watchdog delves deep into the factors that led to the massive flight disruptions, resulting in hundreds of flight cancellations and impacting thousands of passengers.

The four-member panel comprises Joint Director General



Sanjay Brahamane, Deputy Director General Amit Gupta, senior Flight Operations Inspector Kapil Manglik, and FOI Lokesh Rampal, with a mandate to identify the root causes of widespread operational disruptions at the leading domestic carrier.

The committee's mandate includes assessing manpower planning, fluctuating rostering systems, and the airline's preparedness to implement the latest duty period and rest norms for pilots, which came into effect from November 1 this year.

IndiGo, in a regulatory filing, said that Elbers has been asked to appear December 12, before the Committee of Officers at DGCA, which is examining the matter related to flight disruptions.

Enhancing oversight, DGCA

■ INDIGO, ON ITS PART, SAID IT IS EXPECTED TO OPERATE AROUND 1,950 FLIGHTS CARRYING AROUND 3 LAKH PASSENGERS, WHILE AIRPORTS REPORTED FLIGHT CANCELLATIONS

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■ THE CIVIL AVIATION MINISTRY HAS ALSO DIRECTED THE AIRLINE, WHICH GENERALLY OPERATES AROUND 2,300 FLIGHTS, TO REDUCE ITS WINTER SCHEDULE BY 10 PER CENT

(Directorate General of Civil Aviation) officials on Thursday began monitoring IndiGo's operations, refunds, and other processes from the airline's headquarters, sources said. They said the officials are

expected to submit daily reports on the situation at the airline, which has been grappling with significant operational disruptions and the subsequent cancellation of thousands of flights due to planning failures related to the implementation of new pilot and crew duty norms.

With the operations slowly stabilising, IndiGo said it will offer travel vouchers worth ₹10,000 to each passenger whose flights were cancelled or delayed for long during December 3-5. The vouchers can be used for flights in the next 12 months.

While thousands of passengers were impacted, it was not immediately clear how many passengers will be getting the compensation.

"This compensation is in addition to the commitment under the existing government guidelines, as per which, IndiGo will provide compensation of ₹5,000 to ₹10,000 depending on the block time of the flight, to those customers whose flights were cancelled within 24 hours of departure time," the statement said.

In an unprecedented move, DGCA, Wednesday, decided to deploy two members from an oversight panel at IndiGo's Gurugram headquarters to monitor cancellation status, crew deployment, unplanned leave, and routes hit by staff shortages.

Congress slams Shah's 'vote chori' claim as 'lie'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** The Congress Thursday rebutted Home Minister Amit Shah's "vote chori" charge against Jawaharlal Nehru, saying the claim that he was made the prime minister despite Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel being the popular choice is a "lie" and a "figment of imagination".

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said party colleague Piyush Babele has "totally exposed" one of the home minister's "many lies" in the Lok Sabha and shared his video on X. The Congress also shared Babele's video and said it exposes the "outright lie" of Shah.

In another post, Ramesh said, "While speaking in Parliament, BJP members starting with the G2 themselves, have attacked Nehru pulling out some document or the other from their bunch of papers."

They try to give the impression that they have done some deep research and discovered something sensational that has been kept suppressed, he said.

"But the truth is almost invariably they are using material that are in the public domain especially in the 100 volumes of Nehru's Selected Works (1903-1964), now easily accessible on [nehruarchive.in](http://nehruarchive.in)," Ramesh said.

Intervening in the debate on election reforms in the Lok Sabha Wednesday, Shah cited

three instances of alleged "vote chori" by Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi.

"So, 28 votes went to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and two were cast in favour of Jawaharlal Nehru. But Nehru ji ended up being the prime minister," he had said, prompting an uproar in the Opposition benches.

In the video shared by Ramesh and the Congress, Babele said the claim that Nehru was made PM despite Patel being the popular choice is a "figment of imagination" of the RSS.

"According to this lie, it is stated that in 1946, elections to Congress presidency took place and Patel got more votes but despite Nehru getting less votes he was made Congress president and therefore went on to become the prime minister. The truth is that the election that had to take place in 1946 for Congress presidency did not take place," Babele said.

"As they (BJP-RSS) say that voting took place, there was no such voting. This is a lie that has been spread. The president was made but the situation in the country was bad due to riots and law and order was disturbed and there was tension prevailing. Shimla parleys were taking place, Maulana Azad had been the Congress president and the situation was not there that elections to elect a party president take place," he said.

ASSAULT ON FOOD VENDORS AT GITA RECITAL

Bengal is not UP: Mamata

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Krishnanagar, Dec 11:** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Thursday tore into the BJP over the assault on two food vendors at a recent Bhagavad Gita recital event in Kolkata, asserting that the state would not tolerate intimidation, communal division or attempts to dictate what people should eat.

"This is West Bengal, not Uttar Pradesh," she declared, vowing stringent action against those responsible.

Addressing a public meeting in Krishnanagar in Nadia district, Banerjee said all the accused had been arrested within hours. "They beat up poor patty sellers. We arrested everyone last night. In every gathering, hawkers sell some food or the other. You have beaten a poor hawker. I will not spare anyone who harasses the poor," she said. Linking the incident to what she described as an atmosphere of fear created in the name of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, she alleged, "From SIR to the harassment of poor vendors, everything is part of their conspiracy before elections." The CM condemned what she said was the BJP's attempt to "import a culture of communal division" and weaponise religious texts for political mobilisation.

"I do not believe in communal divisions. I respect all religions. What is the need to hold a public meeting just to read the Gita? We all read and recite Gita. Those who pray to God or seek blessings from Allah do so in their hearts," she said. Taking a pointed jab at those "chanting 'Gita, Gita' for politics," Banerjee added, "I want to ask them what did Sri Krishna say about dharma? Dharma means purity of intention, humanity and peace."

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Death to 1, life term to 9 in Maharajganj communal clash murder

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bahraich (UP), Dec 11:** A local court Thursday sent one man to death row and awarded life terms to nine people for a murder during communal violence last year in Maharajganj town during a Durga idol immersion procession.

Last year, October 13, Ramgopal Mishra, 21, was shot dead when a communal clash broke

out in the mixed-population town. According to District Government Counsel (Criminal) Girish Chandra Shukla, the court of Additional Sessions Judge, First, Pawan Kumar Sharma had December 9 convicted Sarfaraz, Abdul Hameed, Mohammad Talib, Faheem, Zeeshan, Mohammad Saif, Javed, Soeb Khan, Nankau, and Maroof Ali.

It acquitted Khurshid, Sha-

keel and Afzal for lack of evidence and reserved the verdict on the quantum of punishment for the rest. On Thursday, the judge sentenced Sarfaraz — the man who fired the fatal shot — to death, and awarded life terms to the remaining nine convicts.

Assistant government counsel Pramod Singh said the court delivered its verdict 13 months and 28 days after the incident.

Sarfaraz was awarded the death penalty under BNS section 103(2), a provision related to mob lynching, he said.

Roli Mishra, the wife of Ramgopal Mishra, told reporters that the three acquitted were also involved in her husband's killing. All of them should have got a death sentence, she said.

On the night of the killing, 13 people were named as accused in an FIR. Two of them were

killed in a police encounter while fleeing, while the rest were arrested over time.

The prosecution filed a chargesheet against the 13 on January 11, and charges were framed February 18.

Shukla said the sentences pronounced Thursday pertain to the murder charge, while imprisonment and fines have also been imposed under other offences.

Mamkootathil turns up to vote in local body polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Palakkad(Kerala), Dec 11:** Expelled Congress MLA Rahul Mamkootathil Thursday turned up to cast his vote in the local body polls at Kunnathurmedu ward here which comes under the BJP-ruled Palakkad Municipality.

The Palakkad MLA turned up to vote after he secured protection from arrest in the two cases of sexual assault against him.

He arrived to cast his ballot towards the fog end of the day at around 5 pm and was reportedly greeted by some Congress workers and the party candidate contesting from the ward and they accompanied him inside the polling booth.

Mamkootathil was absconding for the last more than two weeks after the first FIR was registered against him for sexual assault and forced abortion.

After casting his vote, as the MLA stepped out of the booth, he was surrounded by reporters who bombarded him with questions regarding where he was hiding till now and what he has to say about the allegations against him. Mamkootathil finally responded that what he had to say was before the court.

"What I have to say, what is said against me, all that is before the court. The court will take a decision. The truth will win, I am confident about that," he said. Thereafter, he immediately left the polling booth in a vehicle with the MLA board as activists of the CPI(M)'s youth wing - DYFI - held up placards with photos of cradles and roosters and hooted at him.

'Prashasan Gaon ki Ore' campaign to run from Dec19-25

The campaign 'Prashasan Gaon ki Ore', organised as part of Good Governance Week 2025, aims to take administration to the grassroots, ensure doorstep grievance redressal, promote good governance practices and document innovations across the country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** The Centre will launch a week-long nationwide campaign from December 19 to 25 for the redressal of pub-

lic grievances and improving public service delivery, an official statement said Thursday.

The campaign 'Prashasan Gaon ki Ore', organised as part of Good Governance Week 2025, aims to take administration to the grassroots, ensure doorstep grievance redressal, promote good governance practices and document innovations across the country.

According to the statement issued by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, the week-long exercise will focus on disposing of public grievances filed in the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) and state portals.



Under the campaign, the government will hold special grievance-redressal camps, clear

service delivery applications, document good governance practices with photographs,

share success stories, add new online services and prepare the District@100 Vision Document, it added.

A dedicated portal - <https://darpapps.nic.in/GGW25> - has been made operational from December 10 for uploading activities, best practices and progress reports.

Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) Secretary Rachna Shah chaired the first preparatory meeting for the 2025 campaign on Thursday with administrative reforms secretaries and district collectors/district magistrates.

The preparatory phase of the campaign has started from Thursday and will continue

till December 18, during which states and districts will plan district- and tehsil-level events and undertake publicity.

Attended by more than 700 Deputy Collectors/District Magistrates and field officers from more than 1,200 locations, the meeting sensitised officials on the priority of clearing pending grievances and documenting governance initiatives during the campaign period, the statement said.

The campaign is aligned with the objectives of Special Campaign 5.0, which focuses on cleanliness drives, reducing pendency, improving record management and systematic disposal of scrap and e-waste.



# international

## of the day quote

India calls for a pragmatic engagement with the Taliban. A coherent policy of engagement should incentivise positive actions. A focus on only punitive measures will only ensure that a 'business as usual' approach continues as we have been seeing now for the last four and a half years

PARVATHANENI HARISH | PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN AMBASSADOR, INDIA

We've just seized a tanker on the coast of Venezuela -- a large tanker, very large, largest one ever seized, actually

DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT, USA

The Somali people are known around the world for their hard work. They are known for their resilience in the face of adversity. They have faced hardships and many enemies including those who deny their existence, kill them, humiliate and insult them

AHMED MOALLIM FIQI | DEFENCE MINISTER, SOMALIA

## SHORT TAKES

### US clears advanced F-16 support package for Pak

**Islamabad:** The United States has approved the sale of advanced technology and support for F-16 fighter jets valued at \$686 million to Pakistan. The US Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), in a letter sent to Congress on Monday, gave the approval, reported Dawn on Thursday. The package includes Link-16 systems, cryptographic equipment, avionics updates, training, and comprehensive logistical support. The DSCA letter makes clear the rationale for the sale, stating that it "will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by allowing Pakistan to retain interoperability with US and partner forces in ongoing counterterrorism efforts and in preparation for future contingency operations."

### Bulgarian PM resigns

**Sofia:** Bulgarian Prime Minister Rosen Zhelyazkov handed in his government's resignation Thursday following weeks of street protests over its economic policies and its perceived failure to tackle corruption. Zhelyazkov announced his resignation in a televised statement minutes before parliament had been due to vote on a no-confidence motion. The resignation comes shortly before Bulgaria is due to join the euro zone on January 1. Thousands of Bulgarians had rallied Wednesday evening in Sofia and dozens of other towns and cities across the Black Sea nation, the latest in a series of rolling demonstrations that have underlined public frustration with endemic graft and the failure of successive governments to root it out.

### Airstrike on Myanmar hospital kills 34

**Bangkok:** An airstrike by Myanmar's military destroyed a hospital in an area controlled by a leading rebel armed force, killing 34 patients and medical staff, according to a local rescue worker and independent media reports Thursday. About 80 other people were injured in the attack Wednesday night on the general hospital in Mrauk-U township, an area controlled by the ethnic Arakan Army in the western state of Rakhine. The ruling military has not announced news of any attack in the area. Wai Hun Aung, a senior official for rescue services in Rakhine, told AP that a jet fighter dropped two bombs at 9:13 pm with one hitting the hospital's recovery ward and the other landing near the hospital's main building.



All "misunderstandings" with the United States over Ukraine had been resolved following a meeting earlier this month between President Vladimir Putin and US envoy Steve Witkoff

SERGEI LAVROV | FOREIGN MINISTER, RUSSIA

### OVER 12MN FACE ACUTE HUNGER IN MYANMAR

More than 12 million people in Myanmar will face acute hunger next year as mounting violence forces more people to flee their homes, the United Nations World Food Programme said Thursday. Around 1 million of those will face emergency levels of hunger, meaning they will need lifesaving support, the agency added



# Trump launches Gold Card

The Trump Gold Card is a visa based upon an individual's ability to provide a substantial benefit to the United States

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New York/Washington, Dec 11:** US President Donald Trump announced the launch of a million-dollar "Gold Card" offering a pathway for immigrants to US citizenship, saying that it is a "shame" that students from India and China have to go back to home countries.

The Trump Gold Card announced Wednesday is a visa based upon an individual's ability to provide a substantial benefit to the United States.

"It is a gift of getting somebody great coming into our country, because we think these will be some tremendous people that wouldn't be allowed to stay," Trump said during a roundtable in the White House.

Trump added that students graduate from college, "you have to go back to India, they have to go back to China, they have to go back to France. They have to go back to where ever they came from. Very hard to stay. It's a shame,"

Flanked by IBM;s Indian-American CEO Arvind Krishna and Dell Technologies CEO Michael Dell, Trump announced that the Gold Card website is live and companies can "buy" the Gold Card to keep the students they hire from top American universities such as Wharton, Harvard and MIT in the US.

Trump said that he has heard from Apple CEO Tim Cook several times and other executives



that they cannot hire people from the best colleges because "you don't know whether or not you can keep the person."

Trump said students are "thrown" out of the country. "You graduate number one from your college, and there's no way of guaranteeing... that they're able to stay in the country."

Trump said Cook spoke to him about this "real problem".

"It's not going to be a problem anymore. As you know, they used to send people up to Canada and other places, other countries. So we solved that," Trump said adding that through the Gold Card, the US will take in billions of dollars that will be used for the country.

"So it'll be a great thing. We'll take in, I think, billions of dollars, many billions of dollars even. So that's very exciting," he said. Trump added that the companies are now going to be very happy with the Gold Card, which will have greater advantages over a green card that offers permanent residency in the US.

He said companies will be able to go to the schools such as Wharton School of Finance, New York University's Stern Business School, Harvard, MIT, "wherever you may get

Wealthy foreign nationals, high-skilled foreign graduates, and major US companies like Apple and IBM are the target applicants and sponsors

A new, expedited pathway to US lawful permanent residency (a Green Card) and eventual citizenship. It replaces the traditional EB-5 investor visa program

The administration aims to attract global talent, generate billions of dollars in direct revenue for the US Treasury, and address long-standing complaints from tech CEOs about retaining top foreign graduate

your students, any school, and you're able to buy a card and keep that person in the United States. So there's certainty."

Trump described the Gold Card as a "Green Card, but much better, much more powerful, a much stronger path and a path is a big deal. Have to be great people, but much stronger path", which also helps companies.

He cited the example that if IBM wants to hire an individual at the top of his or her class at Wharton but can't guarantee the person stays in the country, the company can buy the Gold

## Pak court sentences ex-ISI chief to 14 years in jail



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, Dec 11:** Pakistan's former spy chief Faiz Hameed was Thursday sentenced to 14 years in jail by a military court, which found him guilty on multiple charges, including violating the Official Secrets Act and engaging in political activities.

According to a statement by the army, the process of Field General Court Martial (FGCM) against Hameed was initiated August 12, 2024, under provisions of the Pakistan Army Act, and continued for 15 months.

He was tried on four charges related to engaging in political activities, violation of the Official Secrets Act in a manner "detrimental to the safety and interests of the State", misuse of authority & government resources, and causing wrongful loss to individuals.

"After lengthy and laborious legal proceedings, the accused has been found guilty on all charges and sentenced to 14 years rigorous imprisonment by the court," the army said.

It is for the first time that a former chief of the powerful Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has been convicted and sentenced. He served as the Director General of the ISI from 2019 to 2021. He last served as Commander of the XXXI Corps before taking premature retirement in December 2022 after Asim Munir took over as the army chief. Hameed was considered close to the then Army chief Gen Qamar Bajwa.

The army said that the Court-Martial complied with all legal provisions and that the accused was "afforded with all legal rights, including (the) rights of (a) defence team of his choice." It said that the convict has the right of appeal at a relevant forum after conviction. "Involvement of the convict in fomenting vested political agitation and instability in cohorts with political elements and in certain other matters is separately being dealt with," the army said.



Servicemen of the 13th Operative Purpose Brigade 'Khartiia' of the National Guard of Ukraine prepare targets with images depicting Russian President Vladimir Putin during shooting practice between combat missions, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kharkiv region, Ukraine

REUTERS

# Indian artefacts stolen in high-value UK museum burglary

The items were stolen from Bristol Museum's British Empire and Commonwealth collection September 25 and released CCTV footage of four white male suspects in an appeal for information

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Dec 11:** A number of artefacts from India dating back to the British colonial era are among over 600 "high value" items stolen in a burglary at a museum in Bristol, southwest England, the police said Thursday.

The Avon and Somerset Po-

lice said the items were stolen from Bristol Museum's British Empire and Commonwealth collection September 25 and released CCTV footage of four white male suspects in an appeal for information.

The historic collection documents the links between Britain and countries in the British Empire from the late 19th century onwards.

"Detectives investigating a high value burglary of museum artefacts are appealing for the public's help to identify these people," the police force said in a statement.

"The building housed items from the Bristol Museum's British Empire and Commonwealth collection. More than 600 artefacts of various descriptions were taken by the offenders," the police said.



Among the items stolen in the robbery include an ivory Buddha and a waist belt buckle belonging to an East India Company officer.

"The theft of many items which carry a significant cultural value is a significant loss for the city," said Detective

Constable Dan Burgan of the Avon and Somerset Police.

"These items, many of which were donations, form part of a collection that provides insight into a multi-layered part of British history, and we are hoping that members of the public can help us to bring those re-

Among the items stolen in the robbery include an ivory Buddha and a waist belt buckle belonging to an East India Company officer

sponsible to justice. So far, our enquiries have included significant CCTV enquiries as well as forensic investigations and speaking, liaising with the victims," he said.

The officer appealed for members of the public to contact the force if they recognise anyone from the CCTV footage released this week or may have come across any of the possible items being sold online.

It remains unclear why the police appeal is being issued over two months after the burglary. The Bristol Museum website states that its British Empire and Commonwealth collection is made up of household belongings, souvenirs, photographs and papers of British people who lived and worked in the colonies.

It is designed to give visitors an insight into the workings of the British Empire and the lives of the people who made it function. "We make these sources available to help people and communities worldwide to explore difficult, forgotten or hidden histories from their own perspectives. The majority of the collection was previously held by the former British Empire & Commonwealth Museum in Bristol," the museum states.



of the day

quote

India will be one of our key engineering hubs, driving significant co-development, especially for the AI and SaaS platform that we are building

NAKUL DUGGAL | EXECUTIVE VP, QUALCOMM TECHNOLOGIES

I believe the GST reduction, the impact on the whole economy will be very, very significant. So I see a lot of opportunities in India

FERNANDO FERNANDEZ | CEO, UNILEVER INDIA

I request the government of India to start a new award line, social innovation line, so that social innovators can be recognised, respected, and we get the advantage of that, all of us in the society

SUDHA MURTY | NOMINATED MEMBER, RAJYA SABHA

SHORT TAKES

Amazon to invest over \$35bn in India

**Mumbai:** Amazon plans to invest more than \$35 billion in India by 2030 to expand its operations by boosting artificial intelligence capabilities and increasing exports, the US e-commerce giant said Wednesday, as global tech firms deepen their presence in Asia's third-largest economy. Major US tech firms have poured billions of dollars into India this year, underscoring the country's emergence as a strategic hub for cloud, AI and deep-tech growth. Microsoft pledged an investment of \$17.5 billion in India for AI and cloud infrastructure by 2030 Tuesday, marking its largest investment in Asia, while Google has committed \$15 billion over the next five years to build AI data centers. Amazon's investments are "strategically aligned with India's national priorities and will focus on expanding AI capabilities, enhancing logistics infrastructure, supporting small business growth and creating jobs," the company said in a statement.

ICICI AMC secures ₹4,815cr funding

**New Delhi:** As many as 26 domestic and foreign investors have infused ₹4,815 crore into ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company (AMC), a subsidiary of ICICI Bank, through a pre-IPO funding round. As part of this transaction, the asset management company undertook a private placement of 22,240,841 equity shares at an issue price of ₹2,165 per share, according to its public announcement Wednesday.

India-made Prada sandals debut at \$930 after backlash

Italian luxury brand faced criticism six months ago after showing sandals resembling 12th-century Indian footwear, known as Kolhapuri chappals, at a Milan show

REUTERS

**Mumbai, Dec 11:** Prada will make a limited-edition collection of sandals in India inspired by the country's traditional footwear, selling each pair at around 800 euros (\$930), Prada senior executive Lorenzo Bertelli told Reuters, turning a backlash over cultural appropriation into a collaboration with Indian artisans.

The Italian luxury group plans to make 2,000 pairs of the sandals in the regions of Maharashtra and Karnataka and a deal with two state-backed bodies, blending local Indian craftsmanship with Italian technology and know-how.

"We'll mix the original manufacturer's standard capabilities with our manufacturing tech-

Silver shines to fresh high

The white metal surges ₹2,400 to new record ₹1.94 lakh/kg

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** Silver prices jumped ₹2,400 to a fresh all-time high of ₹1,94,400 per kilogram in the national capital Thursday tracking firm global cues amid weakness in the rupee and a rate cut by the US Federal Reserve.

The white metal had rallied sharply Wednesday, rising ₹11,500 to scale the record level of ₹1,92,000 per kg, according to All India Sarafa Association.

Since the beginning of the calendar year, silver has climbed ₹1,04,700, or 116.72 per cent, from ₹89,700 per kg December 31, 2024.

"Silver prices has reached another record high on Thursday, fuelled by robust physical and investment demand. The upward momentum in domestic prices has been significantly supported by a combination of tight market supply, record-breaking international silver prices, and a weaker Indian rupee," Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, said.

He further stated that the white metal outperformed gold in terms of returns this year, due to a combination of global

RBI eases curbs on cash credit accounts

REUTERS

**Mumbai, Dec 11:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Thursday removed all restrictions on banks opening and maintaining cash credit accounts under new transaction account rules.

"A cash credit account is operationally different from a current or overdraft account," the central bank said, adding banks may now offer these facilities based on customer needs without restriction.

Cash credit acts as a short-term, flexible business loan for working capital. The regulator adopted the changes following industry feedback on draft rules issued October 1, 2025.

These amendments form part of the central bank's updated transaction account rules.

The RBI also eased norms for opening and maintaining current and overdraft accounts.

Banks may now maintain current accounts without restriction for customers with banking exposures under ₹100 million.

For exposures exceeding ₹100 million rupees, banks holding at least 10% exposure to a borrower may provide current and overdraft facilities, the central bank said.

Current accounts serve businesses and individuals with high transaction volumes. The RBI classifies current, overdraft, and cash credit accounts collectively as "transaction accounts." The move is aimed at providing greater flexibility to banks, the RBI said.



The Indo-EU FTA will be a fair, equitable and balanced document which will be a win-win for all the countries

PIYUSH GOYAL | UNION COMMERCE MINISTER

GOLD & SILVER



The US Federal Reserve's decision to cut key interest rates by 25 bps amid persistent inflation has reinforced bullish sentiment in precious metals. With bullion already at record highs, this policy shift adds momentum to the rally, as investors seek safe-haven assets amid economic uncertainty and inflationary pressures

HAREESH V | HEAD OF COMMODITY RESEARCH, GEOJIT INVESTMENTS

supply deficits, alongside consistently high demand from China and a surge in industrial consumption.

"In the domestic market, spot silver price is showing strong bullish momentum and is expected to inch towards ₹2,10,000 per kilogram in the coming days," Parmar added.

In the local bullion market, gold of 99.9 per cent purity added ₹90 to ₹1,32,490 per 10 grams from the previous close

of ₹1,32,400 per 10 grams, as per the association.

Globally, spot gold fell \$15.55, or 0.37 per cent, to \$4,213.12 per ounce.

Spot silver gained for the third straight session, rising \$1.06, or 1.71 per cent, to a record \$62.88 per ounce. So far this year, the metal has added \$33.91, or 117.06 per cent, from \$28.97 per ounce on December 31, 2024.

"The US Federal Reserve's decision to cut key interest

Premium Payroll package: Canara Bank signs MoU with ECoR

**Bhubaneswar:** Canara Bank signed MoU with East Coast Railways Khurda Road Division Thursday for extending the Canara Premium Payroll package to ECoR employees. The MoU signing ceremony commenced with a brief introduction of Canara Bank by Bhubaneswar Circle Head Suman Chakraborty highlighting the significant growth and progress of the bank. All Regional Heads of the bank and top officials from East Coast Railways Khurda Road Division attended the ceremony. The event continued with a presentation highlighting the features of the Premium Payroll package. Thereafter, MoU was executed by Suman Chakraborty, Circle Head, Bhubaneswar Circle and Pramod Behera, DPO (I/C), in the presence of PK Behera, ADRM (OP), Subhrajyoti Mandal, ADRM (Infra) and officials of ECoR. This partnership will enable enhanced, seamless banking solutions for the dedicated workforce of East Coast Railways.



FED RATE CUT BOOST

REUTERS

**Mumbai, Dec 11:** Indian benchmark shares closed higher Thursday in a broad-based rebound after the Federal Reserve's 25-basis-point rate cut, following a three-session slide, even as the rupee slumped to a record low on worries over the lack of a US trade deal.

The Nifty 50 rose 0.55% to 25,898.55 while the BSE Sensex gained 0.51% to 84,818.13.

Both benchmarks had lost about 1.6% each in the last three sessions.

On the day, fifteen of the 16 major sectors advanced. The broader small-caps and mid-caps rose 0.8% and 1%.

Financials and information technology gained 0.6% and 0.8%, after losing 1.7% and 2.4%, respectively in the last three sessions.

Metals gained 1.1%, tracking firmer metal prices due to

NSE NIFTY

DECEMBER 11, 2025



a weakening US dollar after the Fed rate cut.

While the Fed's projection of only one cut in 2026 underscores caution, the rate cut boosts global liquidity and improves market confidence, said Ross Maxwell, global strategy operations lead at VT Markets.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell's

WEAK ₹ MAY MAKE BMW COSTLIER

German luxury carmaker BMW is looking to hike vehicle prices from next month as it aims to offset the impact of the weakened rupee against the euro, company's President and CEO Hardeep Singh Brar said Thursday. "Forex fluctuation is a big dampener. We were looking at somewhere about 93 to 95 (rupee against euro) this year, but it is actually around 103 to 105, so it's about 10 per cent deterioration versus our expectation. So that puts a lot of pressure on pricing and profitability," Brar told PTI



Rupee drops to new all-time low of 90.32

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Dec 11:** The rupee plunged 38 paise to close at an all-time low of 90.32 against the US dollar Thursday amid uncertainty over the India-US trade deal.

Forex traders said the rupee is expected to trade with a negative bias as the delay in the trade deal between India and the US may continue to dent investor confidence.

Moreover, prevailing risk-averse market sentiment and sustained foreign fund outflows weighed on the local unit. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 89.95 against the US dollar, then lost ground and fell to a record intra-day low of 90.48, registering a 54-paise decline from its previous close.

At the end of Thursday's trading session, the rupee was quoted at 90.32 against the American currency, down 38 paise over its last close.

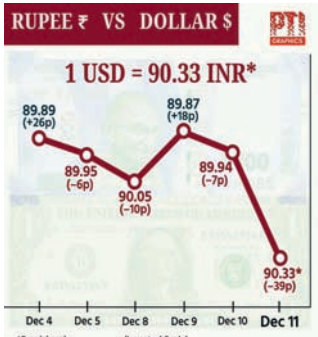
On Wednesday, the rupee depreciated 7 paise to close at 89.94 against the US dollar.

Forex traders said the rupee fell to a new all-time low of 90.48 after Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran reportedly said the India-US trade deal is likely to be inked by March.

"Indian rupee hit a fresh all-time low amid uncertainty over the India-US trade deal. However, positive domestic markets and a weak US Dollar cushioned the downside," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, MiraeAsset ShareKhan.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias as delay in trade deal between India and US may continue to dent the domestic currency," Choudhary said, adding that any intervention by the central bank may also support the rupee at lower levels.

"Any intervention by the cen-



The rupee plunged to a record low against the US dollar, a move largely fuelled by aggressive dollar purchases from the importers. Specifically, surging global prices for precious metals enforced metal importers into rush for dollars, creating immense pressure

DILIP PARMAR | RESEARCH ANALYST, HDFC SECURITIES

tral bank may also support the rupee at lower levels. USDINR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 90.10 to 90.75," Choudhary added.

Meanwhile, US Trade Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer has said the US has received the "best" ever offers from India on the proposed trade agreement amid commencement of two-day talks here between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.18 per cent lower at 98.61, after the FED cut rates and gave a not-so-hawkish guidance.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 1.25 per cent lower at \$61.43 per barrel in futures trade.

Foreign institutional investors sold equities worth ₹2,020.94 crore Thursday, according to exchange data.

GOING GREEN

Late-stage funding drives EV sector

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** India's electric vehicle (EV) sector raised \$1.4 billion year-to-date in 2025, up 27 per cent from over \$1.1 billion raised in 2024, a report said Friday.

The funding was concentrated in just 65 funding rounds compared with 135 in the previous year, the report from market intelligence platform Tracxn said.

Electric vehicle manufacturers dominated funding, securing \$1.2 billion of the total, with Delhi leading the city rankings with \$1.1 billion raised.

Late-stage funding surged 105 per cent year-on-year from \$536 million in 2024 to \$1.1 billion in 2025 YTD, reflecting renewed confidence in scale-ready, selective and mature startups.

This indicates a transition towards performance-led capital deployment with sector maturity, the report noted.

Early-stage funding, however, dropped 49.3 per cent to \$226 million from \$446 million, while seed-stage funding dropped to \$61.2 million across 32 rounds from \$129 million over 77 rounds in 2024.

Pune followed Delhi in terms of funding, raising \$120 million, while Bangalore secured \$105 million. The investor base narrowed, with total investors falling from 150 in 2024 to 70 in 2025 YTD, and first-time investors dropped from 63 to 32.

Electric vehicle sales rose from about 50,000 in 2016 to over 2 million in 2024, representing roughly 9 per cent of the global EV stock, another recent report said, highlighting a \$100 billion export opportunity in auto components. EV penetration is expected to remain modest at 3-4 per cent, the report said, forecasting electric car volumes in the PV segment at around 1.75 lakh units for FY26. EV sales grew by 83 per cent in FY24 and 11 per cent in FY25, reaching 1.11 lakh units in FY25.



# Poor show by Men in Blue

South Africa level series after de Kock special; Gill, SKY misfire again in a challenging chase of 213

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mullanpur, Dec 11:** The lean run of Shubman Gill and Suryakumar Yadav was extended as Indian batters stumbled on a good batting surface to lose the second T20 against South Africa by 51 runs here Thursday.

Quinton de Kock made an effortless 90 of 46 balls, pushing South Africa to a challenging 213 for four after India opted to field.

India were expected to chase down the steep target but South Africa removed Indian trio of Abhishek Sharma (17), Gill (0) and Suryakumar Yadav (5) inside the powerplay to put the hosts on the backfoot. India were eventually bowled out for 162 in 19.1 overs with Tilak Varma (62 off 34) playing a lone hand.

The five match series now stands at 1-1 with the third match scheduled in Dharam-sala December 14.

The local crowd was expecting their home heroes, Gill and Abhishek, to fire but it was not to be.

Yet to realise his potential in the shortest format, vice-captain Gill, facing his very first ball, got a beauty from Lungi Ngidi that seamed away from length to take a thick outside edge.

Abhshek was caught behind in the following over from Marco Jansen. Next to depart was skipper Suryakumar who too got a faint edge after Jansen angled it away from the India skipper.

Batting at three, Axar Patel (21 off 21) was pounced at cover with Reeza Hendricks just about managing to have his fingers under the ball.

From thereon, Tilak batted at a high tempo but lack of partnerships and soaring run rate pushed the game out of India's reach.

Earlier, de Kock entertained the crowd with his remarkable strokeplay.



When in full flow, De Kock is among the most attractive batters in the game and he flaunted his special skills on a true pitch. He was mainly dealing in sixes in the middle and majority of his seven maximums came in the deep square leg region.

De Kock, who recently reversed his ODI retirement and was not sure about his T20 future post the World Cup last year, is back with a renewed purpose and remains

on top of his game.

An innings like this just less than a week before the mini auction will also create the buzz among the franchises, who might indulge in a bidding war for the multi-skilled cricketer.

Arshdeep Singh, who had De Kock caught behind in the series opener, was at the receiving end Thursday. De Kock began the assault with a pick up shot for six off Arshdeep before pulling the left-

arm pacer for a maximum over deep mid-wicket.

Jasprit Bumrah too conceded 16 runs in his second over after being disdainfully pulled for six by Reeza Hendricks. The right-hander missed a skidder from Varun Chakravathy in the following over to give India a welcome breakthrough but de Kock maintained the pressure on the opposition, taking his team to 53-1 in the powerplay.

Brought back into the attack

in 11th over, Arshdeep lost his usual calm under pressure after being smashed for a six down the ground by de Kock. The Indian pacer tried to bowl wide yorkers from thereon but failed miserably and ended up bowling as many as seven wides in a 18-run over.

The South African opener looked certain to cross the 100-run mark for the second time in his T20 career but was run out in a bizarre fashion by wicket-keeper Jitesh Sharma after attempting a nonexistent single.

The big hits kept coming even after de Kock's fall with Donovan Ferreria (30 not off 16) and David Miller (20 not out off 12) doing the damage in the death overs.

Arshdeep's new ball partner Bumrah too had an off day and conceded 18 runs in the 20th over after being hammered for two towering sixes by Ferreira.

## Brief Scores:

**South Africa** 213 for 4 in 20 overs (Quinton de Kock 90, Donovan Ferreira 30 not out ; Varun Chakravathy 2/29 beat **India** 162 all out in 19.1 overs (Tilak Varma 62 ; Ottniel Baartman 4/24) by 51 runs

## 13-ball over, 7 wides:

Pacer Arshdeep Singh equalled the unwanted record of Afghanistan's Naveen-ul-Haq for bowling the most number of balls in an over in T20I cricket among full-member nations



## LEAN PATCH

India's captain Suryakumar Yadav averages 14 and has no fifty in 19 innings of 2025

Vice captain Shubman Gill averages 23 in 14 innings since his return to T20I setup



## India blank Brazil, top pool in squash WC

**Chennai:** Already through to the quarterfinals, hosts India blanked debutants Brazil 4-0 in their final pool B match of the Squash World Cup here Thursday. National champion Velavan Senthilkumar gave India the perfect start, outplaying world No 183 Pedro Mometto 3-0 (7-5, 7-2, 7-2). India's 17-year-old rising star Anahat Singh then doubled the lead as she brushed aside Laura Silva 3-0 (7-4, 7-0, 7-2) in 14 minutes. India's top-ranked player Abhay Singh sealed the fixture with a clinical 3-0 (7-3, 7-1, 7-1) victory against Diego Gobbi. Veteran Joshna Chinappa was given a walkover in the final match of the tie. Having defeated Switzerland in their opening fixture of the tournament, India thus topped their Pool. They will take on South Africa in their quarter-final match Friday.



## Rupa Bayor rises to career-best eighth



Australia Open Taekwondo Tournament in August. Poomsae is a non-combative form of Taekwondo in which competitors perform a pattern of moves like gymnastics routines to be evaluated by a panel of judges. This format is currently a non-Olympic category but features in the Asian Games. Bayor, who trains at the Indo Korean Taekwondo Academy in Mumbai, was inducted into the Target Asian Games Group (TAGG) of the Sports Ministry in April this year. She is the only Indian in the top 100 of the world rankings across categories.

**New Delhi:** Asian bronze-medallist Rupa Bayor has become India's first Taekwondo player to be ranked as high as eighth in the latest world rankings, rising a rung from her previous career-best position. The 24-year-old Poomsae competitor from Arunachal Pradesh won a bronze medal at the World Taekwondo President Cup Europe held in Innsbruck, Austria, from November 29 to 30. Earlier this year, she also won a bronze at the

## 2026 T20 World Cup tickets go live

**Mumbai:** Sale of tickets for the 2026 T20 World Cup began Thursday with price being as low as Rs 100 or LKR 1000 in phase 1 for some venues. The competition is being co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka from February 7 to March 8. The ICC announced the sale of tickets for the 10th edition of the T20 showpiece on its platform with the 20-team tournament set to be played across eight venues. Ahmedabad, Chennai, New Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata will be the host cities for the World Cup in India, while Sri Lanka will have Colombo (two venues) and Kandy as the two locations. Defending champions India will take on the USA in one of the three matches on the opening day of the tournament. ICC CEO Sanjog Gupta said the global governing body wants to make the tournament "most accessible and global ICC event ever".



## ODISHA MASTERS

# Top seeds cruise into quarterfinals

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi attends Day 3 action

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Dec 11:** The Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack hosted a thrilling third day of the International Badminton Tournament – Odisha Masters 2025, where 39 matches across Women's Singles, Men's Singles, Women's Doubles, Men's Doubles, and Mixed Doubles were completed in the pre-quarterfinal round.

The day saw a special presence as Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi attended the event as the Chief Guest, boosting the morale of participating athletes.

Indian shuttlers continued their strong showing with top seeds Unnati Hooda and Tharun Manne palli, alongside Tanvi Sharma, Kiran George, and Anupama Upadhyaya advancing to the singles quarterfinals.

In women's singles, Unnati defeated Thailand's Tidaporn Kleebyeun 21-7, 21-14 in just 25 minutes to book her quarter-final spot.

Joining her was Tanvi, who overcame fellow Indian Aditi Bhatt 21-18, 22-20 in a 33-minute



battle. Anmol Kharb staged an impressive comeback against Japan's Shiori Ebihara, recovering from a 6-21 opening-game loss to take the next two games 21-8, 21-13 in 46 minutes.

Anupama also advanced after her opponent retired in the third game.

Tasnim Mir, who delivered a major upset Wednesday, put up a strong fight against qualifier Nanami Someya of Japan. She will now take on seventh seed Tung Ciou-Tong of Chinese Taipei, who defeated India's Aakarshi Kashyap 11-21, 21-8, 21-18 in a 66-minute contest.

In men's singles, top seed Tharun moved into the quar-

terfinals with a 21-16, 12-21, 21-11 win over Govind Krishna in 48 minutes and will next face Indonesia's Muhammad Yusuf.

George advanced with a 21-12, 21-18 win over Dendi Triansyah and will take on eighth seed Rithvik Sanjeevi in an all-Indian quarterfinal. Rounak Chouhan and S Sankar Muthusamy also progressed to the last eight. In doubles, World Junior Team Championships medalists Bhargav Ram Arigela and Viswa Tej Gobburu outplayed Nithin HV and Venkata Harsha Veeramreddy 18-21, 24-22, 21-17 to secure a quarterfinal berth.

Fourth seeded men's doubles pair Pruthvi Krishnamurthy

## ASIAN YOUTH PARA GAMES

# Swimmer Indori grabs double gold



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Dubai, Dec 11:** India marked a proud moment at the Asian Youth Para Games 2025 as Abdul Quadir Indori delivered an impressive performance in the swimming events, winning two gold medals in the 50m Butterfly and 50m Backstroke events.

"Golden glory for India! A remarkable achievement that reflects his dedication, discipline, and the rising strength of India's young para-athletes. Congratulations, Abdul!" Paralympic Committee of India shared on X. The Opening Ceremony of the Asian Youth Para Games 2025 was also held Wednesday in Dubai, featuring cultural performances and participation from young para athletes representing various Asian nations countries.

Among the nations, Iran, the table toppers at the last edition in Bahrain 2021 with 51 gold medals, will field the largest delegation with 195 athletes, demonstrating their deep commitment to youth development and Para sport excellence.

Uzbekistan (124), Thailand (122), and India (122) follow,

bringing in the second- and third-largest teams to the competitions, the Asian Paralympic Committee (APC) informed in a release Friday.

The hosts, the UAE, will have 55 athletes demonstrating how Para-sport has developed in the nation and the commitment of organisations such as the Asian Paralympic Committee and Dubai Club for People of Determination to promote inclusion in the region.

Dubai is hosting the Games for the second time since 2017, reaffirming its growing role as a hub for Para sport in Asia. Defending champions Iran, the table-toppers from the previous edition, have arrived with the largest contingent of athletes, totalling 195 participants, and are aiming to retain their titles.

The Games will also feature some of Asia's top Para athletes, including Para Taekwondoin Zahra Rahimi of Iran, silver medallist in the women's -52kg at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, and Chen Po-Yen (Chinese Taipei) ITTF World No 1 and Paris 2024 Paralympic Games silver medallist in Class 11.

## IOC confirms LA28 Olympic hockey path

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has approved the qualification system for the women's and men's hockey events at the 2028 Los Angeles Games, the sport's governing body FIH announced Thursday. As has been the case since the 2008 Beijing Olympics, 12 teams per gender will compete at the Games, including host nation USA.

The remaining 11 teams in each category will qualify through the FIH Pro League, the five Continental Championships, and the Olympic Qualification Tournaments.

"The highest placed nation in the FIH Hockey Pro League Seasons 2025-26 and 2026-27 will qualify; if the same team that wins the 2025-26 Season also wins the 2026-27 Season, the runner up of the 2026-27 Season will qualify," FIH said. Additionally, the highest-placed team at each of the five Continental Championships that has not already qualified either as host or through the FIH Pro League will secure a spot.

The Olympic Qualification Tournaments, scheduled for early 2028, will provide the final pathway. There will be four tournaments (two per gender), each featuring eight teams.

## LITTLE SWIMMER, BIG MILESTONE

# 1-year-old Veda makes waves as youngest to swim 100m

Ratnagiri's Veda scripts her name in India Book of Records for becoming the youngest to swim 100m in 10 minutes and 8 seconds

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Dec 11:** In Maharashtra's Ratnagiri, a one-year-old has set the record of the youngest child to swim 100 meters, securing a place in the India Book of Records.

The young swimmer Veda Paresh's achievement was publicised in an Instagram post, which shows the official mail from the Book of Records.

The email stated that Veda completed 100 meters, which equates to four laps. She achieved the remarkable feat in Ratnagiri's municipal swimming pool in a record time of 10 minutes and 8 seconds. She is only 1 year, 9 months, and 10 days old.

The India Book of Records honoured her achievement, not-



ing that it was an extraordinary milestone for someone her age. The mail was sent November 25, and stated that "Veda

has become the youngest to swim 100 meters. The record for swimming 100 meters was set by Veda Paresh Sarfare, born on January 22, 2024, of Ratnagiri."

Her official Instagram page features several videos of her swimming, showing the little girl confidently diving into the pool and completing laps effortlessly.

"She swam 100 metres (4 laps) across the length of a swimming pool measuring 25 metres \* 22 metres in 10 minutes and 8 seconds at the mu-

nicipal swimming pool," the email further read.

Similarly, a 10-year-old Aanvi Shailesh Suvarna completed an open-water sea swim of 17 kilometres from Atal Setu to the Gateway of India. Originally from Dombivli in Maharashtra, Aanvi's achievement placed her among the youngest swimmers in India to accomplish a long-distance sea route.

The accomplishment was made even special as she had completed it on her tenth birthday.