



## Kirti's desire

Actor Kirti Kulhari voices her desire to move beyond the labels often attached to her

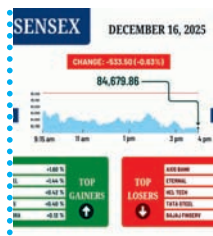
LEISURE | P2



## Trump sues BBC

Trump sues BBC for \$10 billion, accusing broadcaster of defamation and deceptive, unfair trade practices

INTERNATIONAL | P10



## Sensex falls 533.50 pts

Sensex tumbles 533.50 points as foreign fund outflows, a weak rupee and sluggish global market trends dent investor sentiment

BUSINESS | P11



## India eye series sweep

The Men in Blue, up 2-1, look to seal their eighth consecutive T20 international series victory as they take on Proteas today

SPORTS | P12

## NATIONAL HERALD CASE Court relief for Gandhis

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 16: A court here Tuesday refused to take cognisance of the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) money laundering charge against Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, and five others in the National Herald case.

The ED said it would file an appeal against the court order.

Special Judge Vishal Gogne noted the chargesheet filed in the case is based on an investigation into a complaint by a private person and not on an FIR of a predicate offence. Its cognisance is impermissible in law, the judge said.

Reading out the operative part from the order, the judge said the Delhi Police's Economic Offences Wing has already lodged an FIR in the case, and hence it will be premature to adjudicate on ED's arguments in the case based on merits.

The ED has accused Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, as well as late party leaders Motilal Vora and Oscar Fernandes, along with Suman Dubey, Sam Pitroda, and a private company, Young Indian, of conspiracy and money laundering.



**GONE WITH THE STORM:** A replica of the Statue of Liberty, a symbol of Brazilian retailer Havan, lies toppled after strong winds struck the city of Guaiba in Brazil

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Killer fog: 25 dead, 59 injured in UP mishaps

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Dec 16: At least 25 people were killed and 59 injured in a series of fog-linked road accidents across Uttar Pradesh, with the worst tragedy unfolding on the Yamuna Expressway in Mathura, where a multi-vehicle pile-up turned into an inferno, police said Tuesday.

The maximum number of 13 fatalities was reported from Mathura, while four people each were killed in Basti and Unnao and two each in Meerut and Barabanki. According to officials, all the incidents were linked to poor visibility.

President Droupadi Murmu condoled the loss of lives and injuries in the Mathura incident, in which 13 people were burnt to death and 43 sustained injuries, when several vehicles collided in dense fog on the Yamuna Expressway in the early hours of Tuesday. The accident occurred around 4:30am on Agra-to-Noida carriageway within the Baldev police station limits.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Shlok Kumar said eight buses and three smaller



vehicles were involved in the pile-up due to poor visibility. "The vehicles collided due to low visibility. Some of those caught fire. All the injured were sent to hospitals," he said.

Baldev SHO Ranjana Sachan said all the 13 people died of burns. Three of them were identified as Akhileendra Pratap Yadav, 44, from Prayagraj, Rampal, 75, from Maharajganj district and Sultan Ahmed, 62, from Gonda.

Visuals from the spot showed the charred remains of the buses and cars. Cranes were pressed into service to clear the wreckage. "We have identified three deceased passengers and are contacting their relatives," he said.

UP CM Yogi Adityanath expressed grief and announced an assistance of ₹2 lakh each to the families of the deceased and ₹50,000 each to the injured.

## Oz shooting suspect native of Hyd: Cops

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad/Melbourne, Dec 16: Sajid Akram, the 50-year-old slain suspect in a mass shooting during a Hanukkah celebration at Bondi beach in Australia, was an Indian citizen hailing from Hyderabad, Telangana Police revealed Tuesday.

While he had migrated to Australia in 1998, Akram carried an Indian passport. Akram, along with his 24-year-old son Naveed Akram, recently travelled to the Philippines on an Indian passport.

Akram, one of the two suspects in the shooting that has left 15 people dead and dozens injured, had limited contact with his family since then, the Telangana DGP's office said. P10

## WB SIR: 58.20L names deleted

The release of West Bengal's post-SIR draft electoral rolls ahead of Assembly elections early next year Tuesday stirred up a hornet's nest, with 5,820,898 voters struck off the rolls, bringing the state's total electorate down to 7,08,16,631. The Election Commission (EC) said the deletions were part of a routine clean-up exercise and involved voters who had died, shifted from their registered addresses, were untraceable, or were found to be duplicate electors. The ruling Trinamool Congress, however, accused the Union government of using the SIR process as a political tool to divide and distract the public from its governance failures. The party alleged that the revision could disenfranchise legitimate voters ahead of the polls. The Opposition BJP, however, dismissed the TMC's allegations, mocking the charges and defending the revision as a necessary step to ensure the integrity of the electoral rolls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Dec 16: With the Assembly elections in West Bengal likely to be held early next year, the draft rolls, along with a detailed, booth-wise list of deleted voters and reasons

## 'Dead' TMC councillor walks into crematorium



A TMC councillor Tuesday walked into a crematorium near Kolkata and demanded that his last rites be performed, claiming that the Election Commission listed him among the "dead" in the draft electoral rolls. A booth-wise list of the deceased and migrated voters was released ahead of West Bengal's draft electoral rolls earlier in the day. Surya Dey, the TMC councillor of Dankuni Municipality's Ward 18, said that while checking the lists linked to the SIR, he claimed his name figured among the "dead", though he had filed and submitted his enumeration form to the booth-level officer.

for deletion, have been made available on the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), West Bengal website, the Election Commission's voter portal and the ECINET application.

A detailed breakup released by the CEO's office last week showed that 24,16,852 voters were marked as dead, 19,88,076 were found to have permanently shifted, and 12,20,038 were listed as missing or untraceable at their registered addresses.

Another 1.38 lakh voters were identified as having duplicate

entries, while 1,83,328 names were flagged as so-called 'ghost' voters. In addition, more than 57,000 names were deleted under other complications detected during enumeration. The deletions primarily stem from what were termed "uncollectable SIR enumeration forms", which exceeded 58 lakh.

The EC stressed that deletion from the draft roll does not mark the end of the road for affected voters.

Over 1 crore electors left out in 3 states, 2 UTs P9

## New pharma policy aims to bring ₹25K-cr investment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Tuesday unveiled Pharmaceutical and Medical Devices Policy-2025, aiming to attract investment of ₹25,000 crore and create 1 lakh jobs by 2030.

The new policy was launched at the Odisha Pharma Summit-2025 in the presence of Industries Minister Sampad Chandra Swain and senior government officers.

Speaking on the occasion, Industries department Additional Chief Secretary Hemant Sharma said India imports about 85 per cent of medical devices from other countries, and there is a huge opportunity for this sector.

As a lot of units of pharmaceutical and medical devices



are expected to come up in the next five years, Odisha must make an attempt to become a part of this endeavour, Sharma said.

Under the policy, the state offers a 50 per cent subsidy on concessional land cost for units employing more than 200 Odisha-domiciled skilled staff.

The government also offered a 30 per cent capital subsidy on eligible plant and machinery

(disbursed up to 6% per annum for 5 years), without any upper cap, while a 25% subsidy (capped at ₹1 crore) will be given for dedicated power infrastructure, another official said.

The objective of the new policy is to fast-track Odisha as the eastern hub for pharmaceuticals and medical devices through investment, jobs, innovation and green manufacturing, he stated.

"The policy is expected to bring an investment of ₹25,000 crore and generate direct and indirect employment for 1 lakh individuals by 2030," he said.

The policy also aims to attract investment and catalyse local entrepreneurship and MSME growth, while generating employment across skilled and semi-skilled segments.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Ours is a democratic party, and he is a powerful president. No, not elected but selected by the supreme leader

## Musk 1st person to hit \$600bn net worth: Forbes

MUSK, WHO WAS THE FIRST TO SURPASS \$500 BILLION IN NET WORTH IN OCTOBER, OWNS AN ESTIMATED 42% STAKE IN SPACEX, WHICH IS PREPARING TO GO PUBLIC NEXT YEAR

REUTERS

Washington, Dec 16: Elon Reeve Musk, businessman and entrepreneur known for his leadership of Tesla, SpaceX, X, and xAI, has become the first person ever having a net worth of \$600 billion, Forbes said, on the heels of reports that his SpaceX startup is likely to go public at a valuation of \$800

billion. Musk, who was the first to surpass \$500 billion in net worth in October, owns an estimated 42 per cent stake in SpaceX, which is preparing to go public next year, Reuters reported last week.

The SpaceX valuation would strengthen Musk's wealth by \$168 billion to an estimated \$677 billion as of 12 pm ET

Musk's wealth got a boost from his roughly 12 per cent stake in EV maker Tesla which have risen 13 per cent so far this year, despite flagging sales

They were up nearly 4 per cent Monday after Musk said the company was testing robotaxis without safety monitors in the front passenger seat

Monday, according to Forbes. Musk's wealth also got a boost from his roughly 12 per cent stake in EV maker Tesla which have risen 13 per cent so



far this year, despite flagging sales. They were up nearly 4 per cent Monday after Musk said the company was testing robotaxis without safety moni-

tors in the front passenger seat. In November, Tesla shareholders approved a \$1 trillion pay plan for Musk, the largest corporate pay package in history, as investors endorsed his vision of morphing the EV maker into an AI and robotics juggernaut.

Musk's artificial-intelligence (AI) startup xAI is in advanced talks to raise \$15 billion in fresh equity at a valuation of \$230 billion, according to a media report. Musk, Tesla, SpaceX and xAI did not immediately respond to Reuters requests for comment.

## Protest as Class XII boy dies at Tarbha school

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur/Tarbha, Dec 16: A 17-year-old student of PM Shri Government (SSD) Higher Secondary School in Tarbha block of Subarnapur district died reportedly under mysterious circumstances Tuesday, triggering protest by the locals.

The deceased was identified as Aryan Suna, a Science student, reportedly fell unconscious and collapsed. School authorities rushed him to Charbhata CHC, where the attending physician Premanand Meher declared him dead.

Aryan was a resident of Badanuapali village in Dunguripali block of the district. He was staying in the school hostel run by the SC and ST Development (SSD) department.

Tension flared after allegations came to the fore that Aryan had an argument with a fellow student over a mobile phone Monday evening and that a scuffle reportedly took place between them. However, headmistress Nibedita Hota denied any physical assault, saying the student had breakfast and was healthy. Following the death,



locals staged a protest at the CHC, alleging negligence by school authorities. Protesters demanded compensation of Rs 50 lakh for the bereaved family.

A team from Tarbha police station and Kamsara police outpost reached the spot and brought the situation under control.

Aryan's father, Bishnu Suna, has submitted plea before Kamsara police outpost officer, seeking a thorough investigation into the circumstances leading to his son's death.

On being informed, District Collector Nruparaj Sahu reached the spot and held discussions with the protesters. Police said a detailed probe will begin Wednesday.

# leisure



## CAREY TO PERFORM AT WINTER OLYMPICS

Top pop singer Mariah Carey is set to perform at the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics. The chart-topping icon has been confirmed as the first major star set to perform at the opening ceremony of the Games, which is being staged at the San Siro stadium in Milan February 6.

## SWIFT'S UNIQUE IDEA ABOUT HER WEDDING

Pop icon Taylor Swift has got some great ideas up her sleeves for maintaining the secrecy around her and fiance Travis Kelce's wedding invitations. One of them, she said, "We could get really tricky with it where they read it and as soon as it senses fingerprint. Three minutes later, it dissolves into dust."



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today will be a very romantic day for you. Ganesha says you will be faced with many temptations and you may forget that your wishes are not being reciprocated. If your relationships are in troubled waters, you will get some hints about pending matters.

**TAURUS**  
There is a good chance that you will be able to make changes at your workplace that you had desired since a long time. You will be generous with gifts and favours, which will go down well with your loved ones (though not with your bank balance!). You will win favours from the opposite sex later in the day, says Ganesha.

**GEMINI**  
You will break free of your routine work today and spend the day having fun with your family and friends. Plans for dinner or for a picnic with your loved ones are strongly indicated, and should see you filled with enthusiasm. Waiting for a couple of days before proposing to that special someone should net you a favourable response, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
You will be an eternal optimist today. Ganesha says that your accomplishments will motivate others to emulate you. You will spend the evening with family members and enjoy it, too. Your value for family values and plans will go up to-day. You will follow a definite pattern in achieving them.

**LEO**  
You will take some progressive decisions in the morning. However, your positivity will fade away as the day progresses and you will take a pessimistic view of things. This could affect your decisions. You will accomplish more in the later half of the day, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
Ganesha predicts that you will achieve the targets that you set out to achieve today. The heavy pressure of work will not affect you in any way. Ganesha says the secret of your success is being patient. You are bang on target.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says you will see your hard work come to fruition today. This is a good and profitable day for all those of you who are associated with the business field. For those of you who are working professionals this will be a day when your senior officials will praise you for taking up tough tasks and completing them satisfactorily.

**SCORPIO**  
Keep as much distance as possible from partnerships and JVs, advises Ganesha. At work, your experience will be enough to manage huge projects. Today you are set to emerge as a better manager of large pools of people, and guide them on the lines of your imagination and decisiveness.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Your role in bringing crucial and influential deals will be pivotal, says Ganesha. However, the end results may not turn up as per your expectations. But a pleasant evening with your beloved is likely to cheer you up and lighten your mood.

**CAPRICORN**  
You are in for a windfall, predicts Ganesha. Patience is the key for you. Your patience and composure will enable you to put yourself in others' shoes and understand their problems. If you're a student or planning to enrol yourself for a course, Ganesha ensures tremendous growth for you in that direction.

**AQUARIUS**  
The wanderer in you has suddenly come alive. You scan through travel magazines, surf internet and probably go on a tracking tour or just randomly go to distant places all by yourself. Take some of your close friends or like minded people along with and double the fun, suggests Ganesha.

**PISCES**  
It is best that you concentrate single-mindedly on the task at hand at the work-place, rather than diverting your attention to other things, if you want to meet all your deadlines today, says Ganesha. Compromising on certain issues in relationships will only help you, and is the best way to maintain the balance in your personal life.

## Shahid gets sarcastic about delayed flight

Mumbai: Actor Shahid Kapoor, who was last seen in Deva, is on a delayed flight, and is getting sarcastic about his ordeal.

On Tuesday, the actor took to the Stories section of his Instagram, and shared a monochromatic picture of himself inside the flight cabin. He wrote on the picture, "Delayed flights are so lovely".

This comes amidst the slowly returning normalcy in the Indian aviation sector after one of the airlines unleashed chaos across the airports in India following the implementation of a new policy by the government where it increased the resting time for pilots.

Earlier, Shahid had shared a video of him teasing and poking fun at his wife Mira Rajput while she was gearing up for an ad shoot with Shahid. The actor in the video was seen teasing Mira, who was seen visibly annoyed at a prank played by her husband. Throughout the video, the Kaminey star was seen at his goofy best.

Shahid, as part of his prank, secretly placed a sticker on Mira's luxury phone that created the illusion of a cracked screen. Naturally, when Mira noticed it, she panicked and was visibly upset. But before things could escalate, Shahid quickly confessed that it was just a prank, playfully admitting he was the culprit behind the mischief.



Mumbai: Celebrities are constantly under the microscope, facing everything from body shaming to random medical opinions. Recently, Bollywood actress Rakul Preet Singh found herself caught in a similar situation after a man claiming to be a plastic surgeon alleged that she had drastically changed her looks through cosmetic procedures.

## Rakul issues fraud alert

allegations, Rakul called out the man in question on social media.

Taking to Instagram Story, she wrote, "Fraud alert: it's scary that people like him are claiming to be doctors and making statements without any factual checks and misleading people. Being an actor who understands ancient and modern science, I have no issues if people do surgeries, compared her old and new pictures. In the video, he suggested that she had undergone Botox, fillers, and a nose job. He also took a dig at her for not being open about the alleged procedures and for focusing only on fitness, saying it created unrealistic beauty expectations.

Responding strongly to the medical opinions. Recently, Bollywood actress Rakul Preet Singh found herself caught in a similar situation after a man claiming to be a plastic surgeon alleged that she had drastically changed her looks through cosmetic procedures. Now, Rakul reacted to a video making rounds online where a man, claiming to be a doctor, compared her old and new pictures. In the video, he suggested that she had undergone Botox, fillers, and a nose job. He also took a dig at her for not being open about the alleged procedures and for focusing only on fitness, saying it created unrealistic beauty expectations.

## Mehreen responds to unverified reporting

Mumbai: Actor Mehreen Pirzada addressed ongoing misinformation about her personal life and clarified that she was not married, after false details circulated widely across online platforms and media reports.

The rise of digital platforms and user-generated content had often led to the rapid spread of unverified information, and Mehreen had been among those affected. For a prolonged period, incorrect details on a user-edited platform reportedly claimed that the actor was married to an individual unknown to her or her family.

Mehreen, who predominantly worked in Tamil, Telugu, Punjabi, and Hindi films and was also part of Anushka Sharma's Phillauri, finally chose to speak out against what she described as sustained harassment. Taking to social media, the actor shared a note calling out the false reporting and the manner in which misinformation continued to be published without accountability.

In her statement, Mehreen said that she had stayed silent for nearly two years despite the incorrect reports, but decided to respond due to the constant distress caused by the situation. She clarified that she was not married and added that if and when she chose to get married, the news would be officially shared by her. She also expressed disappointment over certain media reports that, according to her, relied on inaccurate online sources instead of verified information.

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AGENCIES

## Kirti's note on self-discovery

Mumbai: Actress Kirti Kulhari shared a reflective note on self-discovery and voicing her desire to move beyond the labels often attached to her.

The actress took to Instagram, where she spoke about finding an inner strength, a "superpower", that allows her to rise above preconceived notions and define herself on her own terms.

Sharing a string of images of herself, Kirti wrote as the caption: "May I find the #superpower to go beyond the #labels they give me.. May be I have."

The actress is gearing up for the ultimate season of Four More Shots Please! Season 4.

Talking about the acclaimed actress, Kirti made her acting debut with the film *Khichdi: The Movie* in 2010 and then starred in *Shaitan* in 2011.

She then appeared in the films including *Jal, Pink, Indu Sarkar, Uri: The Surgical Strike* and *Mission Mangal*. The actress has starred in several streaming series, which includes *Four More Shots Please!*, *Criminal Justice* and *Human*.

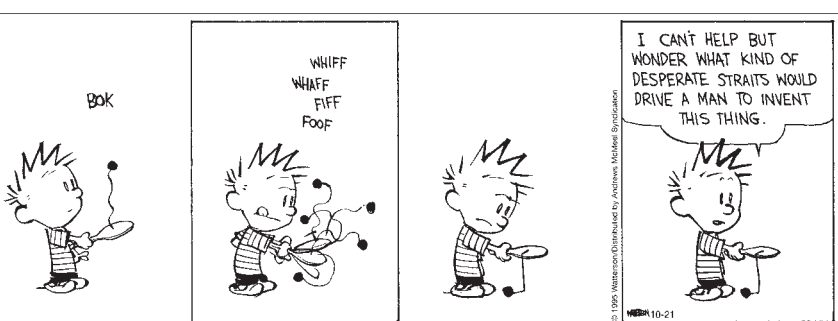
On the film front, she was last seen in *Badass Ravi Kumar*, a musical spoof action film starring Himesh Reshammiya. It is a spin-off of the 2014 film *The Xposé* and serves as the second installment in *The Xposé Universe*, with Himesh reprising his role as Ravi Kumar in the lead.



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

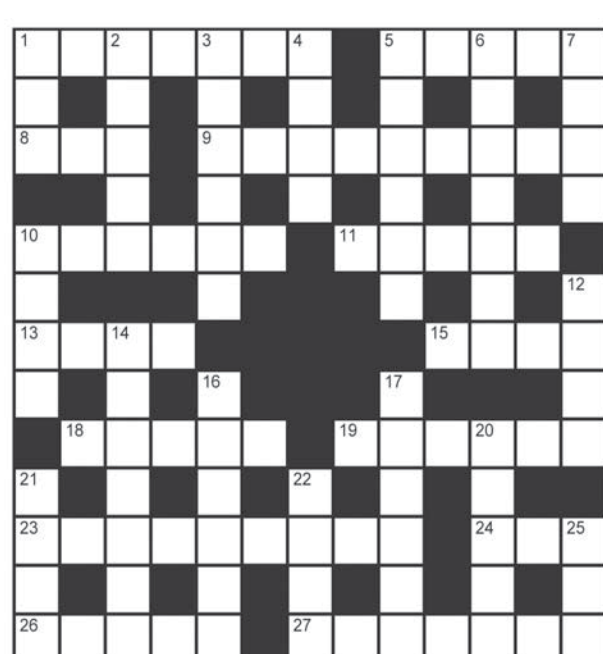


### BREVITY



### FUN post

### CROSSWORD



**Across**  
1 Messenger of Jupiter  
5 Scimitar  
8 Swindle  
9 National park in Tanzania  
10 Manservant  
11 Guanaco's cousin  
13 Pipe problem  
15 Curved molding  
18 Devout  
19 Recluse  
23 Magpie, for one  
24 Beaver's work  
26 Low cards  
27 Quandary  
**Down**  
1 Scratch  
2 Morocco's capital  
3 Heavy overcoat  
4 It's a long story  
5 Unmarried  
6 Stein (4,3)  
7 Diabolical  
10 Unguent  
12 Straight, at the bar  
14 Rile up  
16 *The Fall of Phaeton* painter  
17 Saab mover  
20 Computer accessory  
21 Attention-getter  
22 Old-time oath  
25 Extinct flightless bird

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD  
SUDOKU

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

**ODISHA PHARMA SUMMIT 2025**

## State set to become eastern India's key pharma hub: CM



PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 16:** Odisha is poised to emerge as a major pharma hub in eastern India by manufacturing quality medicines and developing advanced devices for treatment, said Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi here Tuesday.

Addressing the Odisha Pharma Summit 2025, Majhi said that the government is fulfilling all the requirements to make Odisha the first choice state for investors. The CM said he is also committed to developing non-traditional industries in the state.

"Odisha is currently one of the best states in the country for investment. Our industrial ecosystem is one of the best in the country. Our goal is to make Odisha a major hub for manufacturing of medicines along with other industries," the CM said.

The CM said that the metal, mineral and chemical sectors are the backbone of industry in Odisha. "But to make the resources of the state people-oriented, we have to go further. Therefore, we have given more importance to infrastructure,

innovative power and knowledge-based economy. In the last one and a half years, there has been a huge diversification of industry in the state. Investment has come in Odisha in sectors such as chemicals, petrochemicals, green energy, fintech, electronics, semiconductors, textiles and tourism. From today, a new chapter has also begun in the pharma sector," he said.

On the occasion, the CM launched the Odisha Pharmaceutical and Medical Devices Policy, 2025 and laid the foundation stone for a dedicated Pharma Park and a Medical Device Park in Khurda.

During the event, 45 MoUs worth Rs 6,263-crore were signed, which will create a total of 38,406 jobs in the state. Out of these, 32 MoUs were signed for pharmaceuticals, 12 for medical devices and another pact was inked for a landmark industrial park proposal.

Highlighting the pharma sector, Majhi said, "In the last one and a half years, we have

**45 PACTS WORTH ₹6,263 CRORE, WITH A POTENTIAL TO GENERATE 38,406 JOBS, WERE SIGNED. CM LAYS STONE FOR PHARMA PARK AND MEDICAL DEVICE PARK IN KHURDA**

brought about necessary changes in the industrial policy and pharma policy of the state. Our pharma policy is one of the best policies in the country."

He said that the new pharma policy has given impetus to every part of the pharma sector, including research, capital investment, infrastructure creation and employment.

The CM asserted that Odisha's pharma sector will reach new heights in the next few years. He added that in terms of quality and price, Odisha's pharma products will be the most attractive in the world, and it will also be Odisha's reputation in med-tech manufacturing.

He further said that the state is fully prepared to provide everything that the pharma industry requires.

"The environment of Odisha is completely conducive to industry. Everything that is required for the industry is available in Odisha. Odisha has the highest mineral resources in

the country, three major ports, two commercial airports, 575 km of coastline, well-developed rail and road network, surplus power, availability of adequate water and trained manpower," he said.

He added, "Therefore, Odisha is fully prepared to become a major pharma hub in eastern India by manufacturing quality medicines and developing advanced devices for treatment."

Industries and Skill Development Minister Sampad Chandra Swain, who attended the event, said that Odisha Pharma Summit 2025 reflects the development-centric industrialisation strategy of Odisha. "With progressive policies, dedicated industrial parks, skilled human resources, Odisha will now create an enabling environment for pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers," he said.

Among others, Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja, Development Commissioner Anu Garg, Industries and Information and Public Relations departments Additional Chief Secretary Hemant Sharma and Health and Family Welfare department Commissioner-cum-Secretary Aswathy S were present.

### AT LORD'S SERVICE

Servitor Chandra Sekhar Mangaraj with 'Pahili Bhoga' for the sibling deities near Srimandir in Puri, Tuesday



## Odisha EOW nabs couple in UP for duping investors of ₹20cr

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 16:** The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police has arrested a couple from Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh (UP) on the charge of duping investors of Rs 20 crore in the name of share trading, an official statement said Tuesday.

The accused, identified as Chandra Sekhar Sahoo and Jharana Sahoo from Tangar village under Anandapur police limits in Keonjhar district, were arrested December 12 and brought to Odisha on transit remand Tuesday, it said.

The EOW nabbed them on the basis of a complaint lodged by Jayant Mishra, an employee of Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL).

The accused induced people to invest through lucrative schemes floated by their company for doubling their

invested amount within 30 months, it said.

They had opened two offices, one in Talcher's Handidhwa and another in Bhubaneswar's Patia, and promised the duped persons that their money was being invested in real estate, retail mart, pearl culture, fish farming and hotel business. They had collected around Rs 20 crore from investors in Odisha, Bangalore, Tamil Nadu, Delhi and a few other places, the statement said.

Chandra Sekhar Sahoo was

working as a chartered accountant with MCL. He later resigned from the job and opened a company in 2021, becoming its MD and making his wife one of the directors.

"Investors' money had also been deposited in the personal accounts of both the arrested persons. During the investigation, incriminating documents such as fake agreements, term deposit receipts of different companies and mobile phones have been seized. Further investigation is on," the EOW statement added.



THE ACCUSED, IDENTIFIED AS CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHOO AND JHARANA SAHOO FROM TANGAR VILLAGE UNDER ANANDAPUR POLICE LIMITS IN KEONJHAR DISTRICT, WERE ARRESTED DECEMBER 12 AND BROUGHT TO ODISHA ON TRANSIT REMAND TUESDAY

### POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## Gangrape near Dhauli distressing: Naveen

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 16:** BJD president and Leader of Opposition (LoP) Naveen Patnaik Tuesday termed the alleged gangrape of a 17-year-old college student near Dhauli as 'distressing', while the BJP accused the regional party's supremo of politicising the tragic incident.

Noting that such incidents indicate a serious 'deterioration' in public safety and raise questions about the law and order situation in the state capital, the LoP claimed that criminal activities have increased, which 'created fear among citizens and eroded public confidence in governance'.

"The inability to prevent crimes, particularly those targeting women and children, underscores serious lapses in ensuring a safe environment in the capital city," Patnaik said, referring to the incident of December 10, when an under-

### BJP ACCUSES THE BJD SUPREMO OF POLITICISING THE TRAGIC INCIDENT

graduate college student was allegedly gangraped by some men near Dhauli hills.

This was the third such incident reported in the state in the last six months. Patnaik said the state government must take strict measures to ensure women's safety and stop the 'growing' criminal activities in the state.

"Not after an incident occurs, the government must be proactive in preventing it beforehand. #Odisha," he said in a social media post.

Deputy Chief Minister Pravat Parida, who is also the Women and Child Development Minister, criticised the BJD chief for his comments.

"Do people of Odisha ever expect a person like you (Patnaik) to politicise a tragic incident? When will you speak the truth?"

The truth is that the police took swift action and arrested the accused persons in this incident. Now, in this (BJP) government, the law is taking its course and not on the path you had shown. We would be happy if you wrote something based on your experience," Parida said on X.

Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan said the government has been planning to have fast-track courts to deal with crimes against women.

"Swift actions have been taken, whether in the case of advocate Pitabas Panda's murder or incidents of crime against women. In all cases, the accused are immediately arrested," he said, while replying to a query on the alleged gangrape near Dhauli, in which two persons were arrested.

Meanwhile, a team from the Odisha State Commission for

Women (OSCW) visited the crime spot and met officials at Dhauli police station, where a case has been registered.

"After visiting the crime spot on the canal road on the bank of the Daya river, I appeal to all the girls not to venture into such isolated places at night. There are no restrictions on visiting any place, but we should be cautious," OSCW member Urmila Mohapatra told reporters.

She asked the police to expedite patrolling at all tourist places. Addressing media, BJD's women wing president Snehangini Chhuria termed the OSCW member's statement as 'unfortunate'. "She (Mohapatra) has admitted that the state government is unable to ensure safety of women," Chhuria said.

According to police, the girl was allegedly gangraped, and her gold ornaments were robbed, while she was returning from Dhauli along with her male companion.



**TAKING STOCK:** Deputy Chief Minister Pravat Parida, who also holds the Tourism portfolio, reviews the progress of integrated tourism plan for Khandagiri-Udayagiri in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

## New Year: DGP reviews Puri security arrangements

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 16:** Anticipating a massive footfall of devotees to Puri on the occasion of New Year, Director General of Police (DGP) Yogesh Bahadur Khurania Tuesday emphasised the need for extensive security arrangements across the holy city.

Keeping in view the safety of devotees, temple security, and smooth traffic movement, a high-level review meeting was held at the DGP's Camp Office in Bhubaneswar under the chairmanship of Khurania. The DGP directed senior police officers to ensure orderly

darshan of devotees within the Srimandir complex, effective crowd management, proper supervision of traffic and parking arrangements, and regular patrolling along the sea beach.

He also instructed the installation of CCTV cameras at key junctions and strict checking in hotels and lodges.

The administration expects lakhs of devotees to visit Puri during the New Year to have a darshan of Lord Jagannath.

The DGP instructed officers to work in close coordination with senior officials, maintain courteous behaviour towards devotees, and remain fully prepared to handle any unforeseen situation during the



celebrations. To ensure a safe, orderly, and peaceful environment in

Puri during the New Year, the DGP directed the Puri Superintendent of Police to take all

necessary measures on behalf of the police.

The meeting was attended by Director (Intelligence) RP Koche, Additional Director General of Police (Anti-Naxal Operations) Sanjeeb Panda, ADGP (Railways and Coastal Security) Arun Bothra, ADGP (Modernisation) Soumendra Kumar Priyadarshi, ADGP (Law and Order) Sanjay Kumar, Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Police Commissioner S Dev Datta Singh, ADGP (Armed) Rajesh Kumar, DIG (Central Range) Satyajit Naik and DCP (Bhubaneswar) Jagmohan Meena. DIG (Eastern Range) Pinak Mishra, SP (Puri) Prateek Singh, and SP (Cuttack) (Rural) Vinit Agrawal participated in the meeting through virtual mode.

## Digital fraud: 10 scammers, including from Odisha, held

AGENCIES

**New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, Dec 16:** An international digital fraud syndicate allegedly involved in cheating its victims of over Rs 50 crore by impersonating law enforcement officials has been busted, with the arrest of 10 people, including from Odisha, police said Tuesday.

The arrests were made from Delhi, Maharashtra, Kerala, Odisha, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana as part of a probe that began in southeast Delhi, they said.

The syndicate operated a digital arrest scam, threatening its victims through video calls while impersonating police officers.

The callers would lie to their targets that their Aadhaar and

mobile numbers were linked to serious criminal cases and would coerce them into transferring money to avoid arrest.

The fraud came to light with a complaint filed December 7 by a Shaheen Bagh resident, who alleged that he had been cheated of Rs 99,888 after receiving threatening video calls from fraudsters posing as Karnataka Police officers.

An FIR was registered under Section 318(4) of the BNS, and a probe was launched into the alleged fraud. Investigations revealed that the arrested accused were part of an interstate and cross-border network involving mule bank accounts, illegal SIM activation and social media authentication using multiple devices, police said.

# Raise Odisha's parboiled rice quota, Pradhan urges Centre

The meeting between the Union Education Minister and Consumer Affairs Minister comes amid early paddy procurement in Odisha, with authorities aiming to prevent logistical bottlenecks that could impact farmer payments



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 16:** A delegation led by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Tuesday met Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Pradeep Bal Samanta at his office, urging the Centre to raise Odisha's parboiled rice evacuation quota under the Central Pool from 20 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) to 25 LMT. In a formal letter submitted to Joshi, Pradhan expressed gratitude to the Centre for enhancing Odisha's paddy procurement target from 50 LMT to 58 LMT for the Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2024-25, covering both Kharif and Rabi crops. He said the upward revision had significantly boosted the confidence of farmers across the state and ensured smooth procurement operations. Highlighting Odisha's status as one of the country's leading

producers of parboiled rice, Pradhan noted that procurement activities for KMS 2025-26 have already begun in early-harvesting districts. He stressed that the timely evacuation of Custom Milled Rice (CMR) by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) is crucial to create adequate storage space for the ongoing and upcoming procurement seasons. "The early evacuation of parboiled rice stocks is essential to ensure uninterrupted procurement, safeguard farmers' interests and strengthen the national food security buffer,"

**Pradhan noted that Odisha, one of the country's leading parboiled rice producers, has already begun KMS 2025-26 procurement in early-harvesting districts. He emphasised that timely evacuation of Custom Milled Rice (CMR) by the FCI is crucial to maintain adequate storage for current and upcoming procurement**

Pradhan said in the letter, seeking Joshi's personal intervention to enhance the evacuation quota. The proposed increase from 20 LMT to 25 LMT, he added, would help prevent storage bottlenecks, facilitate smooth procurement operations in Odisha and support the state's farmers during peak harvesting periods. The meeting comes at a time when Odisha is witnessing early procurement activity, and state authorities are keen to avoid logistical constraints that could affect paddy procurement and farmer payments.

## OSWC pays ₹81.6L dividend to state

**Bhubaneswar:** Odisha State Warehousing Corporation (OSWC) paid a dividend amount of ₹81,59,845 to the state government for the financial year 2022-23, reflecting the corporation's continued profitability and efficient use of storage infrastructure across the state. The dividend cheque was formally handed over to Cooperation, Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts Minister Pradeep Bal Samanta at his office. The amount represents the state government's share of the dividend for the said financial year. Commissioner-cum-Principal Secretary of the Cooperation department Rajesh Prabhakar Patil and OSWC MD Mihir Prasad Mahanti were present on the occasion. For the financial year 2022-23, OSWC recorded a total profit of ₹5,43,98,965. As per norms, 30 per cent of the total profit—amounting to ₹1,63,19,690—was declared as dividend. The dividend was distributed equally between the two stakeholders, the state government and the Central Warehousing Corporation.

# Man held for attempting to burn wife, daughters

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 16:** In a shocking incident, a man was arrested Tuesday for attempting to set his wife and daughters on fire over prolonged marital discord in the Kuha area under Airfield police station limits. The accused has been identified as Ajit Mallick (36), husband of the complainant, Babita. According to police, Babita lodged a written complaint stating that she and her family, living in the Kuha area, had been facing long-standing marital discord with her husband, Ajit. A previous domestic dispute case against him is already under investigation at Airfield police station. In the early hours of Tues-



day, around 4 am, the police control room received reports of a house being set on fire. A police team, accompanied by Fire Services personnel, rushed to the scene and found Ajit creating a ruckus.

Preliminary investigation revealed that, due to ongoing marital conflict, Ajit deliberately set fire to his house intending to burn his wife and daughters alive. Police said he even tried to push his wife into the flames but she managed to escape in time, saving her life. The accused further escalated the situation by brandishing a sharp weapon and threatening to kill anyone who approached. He also chased his wife with the intent to murder her. After considerable effort, police overpowered and detained him on the spot. Based on the complaint, police registered a case and formally arrested Ajit under Sections 326(g), 296, 109, and 351(3) of the BNS and later forwarding him to court.

# Police driver returns lost ₹14K to owner

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 16:** In a commendable act of honesty and civic responsibility, a police driver at the Commissioner of Police's office ensured the safe return of a lost pouch containing ₹14,000 to its rightful owner Monday night. On December 15, around 9:30 pm, driver Madhusudan Raula, returning home after duty, noticed a white pouch fall from a motorcyclist near the busy Jayadev Vihar Junction. Alert and responsible, Raula picked up the pouch and tried to chase the rider, but heavy traffic and distance prevented him from tracing the person. Demonstrating exemplary conduct, Raula promptly informed his senior officers.



December 15, around 9:30 pm, Madhusudan Raula spotted a white pouch fall from a motorcyclist near Jayadev Vihar Junction while returning home after duty. Raula promptly picked up the pouch and attempted to chase the rider, but heavy traffic and distance prevented him from catching up. He reported the incident to his senior officers, who, with assistance from the Control Room, identified the owner, Biswabhusan Behera, and returned the lost pouch to him.

Coordinating with the Smart City Police Control Room team, they used CCTV footage and vehicle registration details to identify the motorcycle owner as Biswabhusan Behera, As-

sistant Manager at WATCO. Further verification confirmed that Behera had lost a pouch containing ₹14,000, which was subsequently returned to him, bringing visible relief and gratitude.

Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Police Commissioner S Dev Datta Singh lauded Madhusudan Raula for his integrity, honesty, and sense of responsibility, calling his actions a model of exemplary public service.

## 'Go-to-Market Strategy' workshop held in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 16:** Start-up Odisha, under the aegis of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) department, organised a one-day workshop on 'Go-to-Market Strategy' here Tuesday. Held at the O-Hub Auditorium, the workshop saw active participation from startups and entrepreneurs. Founder of TeachBetter.ai, Binit Agarwalla, served as the resource person and offered in-depth insights and practical training to participants. During the session, Agarwalla elaborated on the various strategic steps to be adopted before and after launching a new product in the market. He highlighted key aspects such as market readiness, customer acquisition, product positioning, and post-launch growth strategies. Notably, the workshop was conducted under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMPP) programme, aimed at strengthening the performance and scalability of MSMEs and startups in the state.

# Odisha gears up for Nat' Road Safety Month 2026

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 16:** Reaffirming its commitment to safer roads and responsible mobility, Odisha has begun preparations for the observance of National Road Safety Month-2026, to be held from January 1 to 31, 2026, as notified by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India. A preliminary preparatory meeting was held Tuesday at Kharavel Bhawan under the chairpersonship of the, Commerce & Transport department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee. The meeting was attended by the Transport Commissioner and senior officials of the department. The discussions focused on translating national road safety guidelines into impactful, well-coordinated actions at the state and district levels. The month-long observance will serve as a platform to intensify awareness, strengthen enforcement, improve road engineering, and enhance emergency response—aimed

at fostering a people-centric road safety culture across Odisha. Adopting a data-driven and outcome-oriented approach, it was decided that seven high-accident districts will receive focused attention through targeted interventions and district-specific strategies. Learnings from previous road safety initiatives were reviewed, and new measures were deliberated to scale up impact and sustainability. Road safety continues to be a central priority in Odisha's vision of building a Developed Odisha, where every life matters. Sustained efforts are being made to reduce road accidents and fatalities through systematic improvements in infrastructure, behaviour change campaigns, enforcement mechanisms, and swift post-crash care. Identified accident-prone locations will be addressed in coordination with road construction and implementing agencies to eliminate engineering gaps and enhance safety standards.

# City Manipal Hospitals performs TAVI

RESHMI YADAV, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 16:** Manipal Hospitals, Bhubaneswar has successfully performed a highly complex Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI) on an elderly woman suffering from severe aortic stenosis, marking a major milestone in advanced cardiac care in the region. The patient was admitted with recurrent fainting spells and chest pain and was diagnosed with critical narrowing of the aortic valve, requiring urgent intervention. Considering her advanced age and associated comorbidities, conventional open-heart surgery was deemed high risk. The cardiac team therefore opted for TAVI, a minimally invasive alternative. The procedure posed significant challenges due to extensive calcification of the patient's aorta and femoral



arteries, a condition known as porcelain aorta, which ruled out standard transfemoral access. After alternative access routes were found unsuitable, the team adopted an advanced approach using intravascular lithotripsy (IVL) to modify heavy calcium deposits in the femoral artery. This enabled safe catheter passage and successful implantation of a bal-

loon-expandable valve. The procedure was led by Dibya Ranjan Behera, Consultant Interventional Cardiologist, along with a multidisciplinary cardiac team. The patient has recovered well post-procedure and is now symptom-free. Commenting on the achievement, Behera said, "TAVI has transformed the treatment of elderly and high-risk cardiac patients."

## Sainik School-OMC mini marathon Dec 21

**Bhubaneswar:** Sainik School Bhubaneswar will host the Ninth Sainik School-OMC Mini Marathon December 21, followed by the 54th Annual Meet of its Old Boys Association (OBA) December 28. Addressing the media, Principal Colonel Pankaj Kumar said the mini marathon is expected to see participation from over 1,200 runners, including around 600 Sainik School cadets, students from Sahodaya and government schools, and alumni. The event will be conducted in four categories—Senior Boys, Girls, Junior Boys, and OBEANS (Old Boys). The senior category will feature a 10-km route starting from Gandhi Ground inside the Sainik School campus, passing through Mancheswar Railway Colony Road, OMFED Chakk, NALCO-Kalinga Hospital Square, Jaydev Vihar, Acharya Vihar Square, Apollo Hospital Road, and concluding at the school campus.

# UU hosts symposium on devpt & dispossession



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 16:** The PG department of Sociology, Utkal University, Tuesday organised an international symposium on "Rethinking Development and Dispossession," bringing together scholars, students and faculty for critical deliberations on contemporary development paradigms. Raju J Das, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University, Toronto (Canada), was present as the chief speaker and delivered the keynote address. In his lecture, Das examined the issue through the case study of Kalinga Nagar in Odisha, a major industrial hub. "Dispossession is not an accidental aspect of capitalist development; it is one of its constitutive conditions," he said. Drawing from his forthcoming book, Das argued that dispossession is an ongoing process of primitive accumulation,

actively mediated by the state through legal and institutional mechanisms. Calling for an alternative vision, he said, "Development must unite industrialisation with equality, environmental sustainability and popular democracy, placing economic power in the hands of common people." Chairing the session, head of the Sociology department RabindraGarada said development is often projected as a pathway to progress but "has led to the dispossession of local communities from land, livelihoods, water and common property resources, while also emerging as a major source of pollution." He added that large projects such as dams and mining "benefit a few while displacing and impoverishing many," underscoring the need for inclusive, sustainable and ecologically balanced development. The symposium concluded with an interactive discussion and saw participation from a large number of students, research scholars and faculty members, including Tanaya Mohanty, Papeesh Kumar Lenka, Anwesh Panigrahi and Deepak K. Nayak.

# OVC 2025 climate-resilient action plan presented to govt



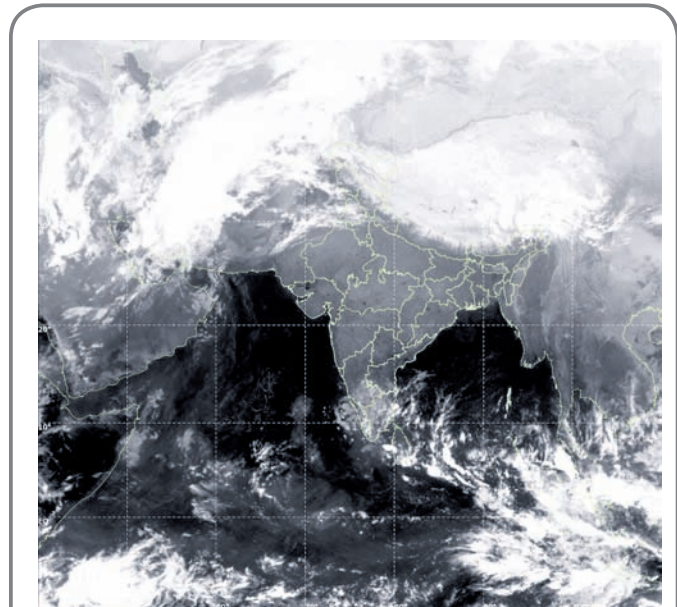
POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Dec 16:** The actionable outcomes of Odisha Vikash Conclave (OVC) 2025, aimed at driving climate-resilient and people-centric development, was presented to the state government in a key meeting with senior officials chaired by Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary Anu Garg. The meeting included Labour and ESI Principal Secretary Chithra Arumugam, along with senior members of the Planning and Convergence department. The conclave, which saw the participation of over 700 stakeholders from various

sectors, focused on crucial themes surrounding sustainable development, climate change, and social equity. Participants included civil society organisations, government representatives, academics, corporate leaders, community representatives and solution providers. The two-day event deliberated on several key areas, including ecosystem governance and climate adaptation, green livelihoods and urban livability, gender, climate and development nexus, disaster preparedness for climate change, impact of climate change on human health, climate-responsive human mobility and migration and climate-smart

panchayats. During the interactive session with the government officials, a delegation from Odisha Development Initiative (ODI), led by Jagadananda, presented the outcomes, which outlined sector-specific priorities, institutional roles, and actionable pathways in alignment with 'Odisha Vision 2036' and 'Viksit Bharat 2047'. One of the central recommendations was the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in ensuring the success of the state's development goals. The government officials acknowledged the depth and relevance of the conclave's discussions, expressing appreciation for the comprehensive approach to sustainable development. They emphasised the need for structured actions at the grassroots level and community-centered models to operationalise the recommendations effectively. Garg and other senior officials assured that the insights and recommendations from the conclave would be carefully considered for future policy actions.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	91.07 ▲ 0.22	SENSEX	84679.86 ▼ 533.50	GOLD	₹134,956 ▲ ₹826
EURO	107.14 ▲ 0.40	NIFTY	25860.10 ▼ 167.20	SILVER	₹198,200 ▲ ₹299



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	28.7°	26.2°	Fog or Mist in the morning and mainly clear sky later
Min Temp	24.0°	13.0°	
Humidity	14.2%	86%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

# Olive Ridleys start mating, security beefed up along Ganjam shores

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Berhampur, Dec 16:** The mating season of Olive Ridley turtles has begun near Rushikulya river mouth in Ganjam district, as the administration increased patrolling to keep away poachers, an official said.

Berhampur Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Sunny Khokkar said that many pairs of turtles were seen in the area, and mating might pick up in the last week of December.



Nesting of turtles usually takes place for 45 days after mating, he said.

After mating, female turtles lay eggs by digging pits in the sand and return to the sea, with the hatchlings emerging 45-50 days later.

"We hope Olive Ridley turtles turn up in large numbers this year as well. Mass nesting is expected to take place in the third week of February," the DFO said.

Last year, a record number of over 9.04 lakh turtles had laid eggs in around a seven-km-long beach stretch from Bateswar to

Gokharakuda in two phases of the mass nesting. As many as 6,98,698 turtles had laid eggs from February 16-23 in the first phase, while 2.05 lakh turtles laid eggs in the second phase from March 16 to 23, sources said.

Meanwhile, patrolling has been intensified in the sea for protecting the mating Olive Ridley turtles from poachers, Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF), Khallikote range, Dibya Shankar Behera, said. During patrolling, two mechanised fishing trawlers from Andhra Pradesh have been

seized for illegal fishing in the area, he said.

The government has banned fishing by the mechanised trawlers within 20 km from the coast from November 1 to May 31 as the turtles congregate for mass nesting during the period.

The forest department has also held a coordination meeting with fishermen, seeking their cooperation during the mating, nesting and hatching people in the Rushikulya River rookery. The fishermen demanded the doubling of compensation from ₹15,000 to ₹30,000 during the fishing ban period.

## Man dies as witchcraft rituals turn fatal

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, Dec 16:** A 32-year-old man died after a mound of soil collapsed over him while digging inside his house. He was allegedly following the advice of an occult practitioner at Palakana village under Nikirai police limits in Kendrapara district, Tuesday evening.

The deceased was identified as Jagabandhu Moharana, a native of the village. The sorcerer fled the scene after the incident while villagers detained two persons in this connection. The incident has sparked tension in the village as police reached the spot and launched an investigation. According to preliminary information, Moharana had been facing frequent disturbances and unrest at home and sought help from a sorcerer and witchcraft practitioner from the Asureswar area. The sorcerer reportedly claimed that an idol of a deity and gold were buried inside the house and advised rituals to retrieve them.

Rituals, including prayers and fire offerings, had been conducted for about a month. The incident occurred when Moharana and two others began digging at a marked spot inside the house. After digging to a depth of about 10 feet, a large section of soil collapsed and buried Moharana. He was pulled out by villagers but was found unconscious. Doctors at the CHC pronounced him dead on arrival. IIC Padmalay Pradhan of Nikirai police station said a probe is underway.

## Youth arrested for duping traders through UPI app

DWARKA PRASAD PATNAIK, OP

**Chhatrapur, Dec 16:** A youth was arrested for allegedly duping a trader of more than ₹5 lakh through fake cheques and UPI apps.

The accused identified as Nalinikanta Jena (24 years), a resident under Berhampur Sadar police limits, was arrested by the Chhatrapur police after a complaint was filed against him by the local trader.

According to the Chhatrapur IIC Sabyasachi Malla, Nalinikanta, an ITI pass-out, went to a local iron and steel shop named Maa Santoshi Traders pretending to be a staff of Army Public School in Gola-bandha, to purchase steel materials worth ₹91,300 December 14. He produced the screenshot of the said payment through a popular UPI app to Siddharth Nayak, the owner of the shop. Siddharth did not receive the payment instantly to which Nalinikanta argued, excusing network delays.

The matter did not end there. The police informed that Nalinikanta later came to the same trader again and gave Siddharth a cheque of ₹4.35 lakh in exchange of more steel and iron materials, requesting Siddharth to produce the cheque at the bank after two days.

However, Siddharth got suspicious when he did not receive the initial amount transferred through UPI in his account even after two days and filed a



complaint with the Chhatrapur police.

The police launched an investigation into the matter and arrested Nalinikanta from Pukudibandha square near Berhampur. Nalinikanta took all the materials and sold them in Hinjilicut. The app used for the payment turned out to be fake. Initially denying the act, Nalinikanta admitted the fraudulent activities and demonstrated the entire episode, the police said.

Police said that the accused is a serial offender cheating several other traders. Nalinikanta had recently duped a trader named Niroda Kumar Das of Pathara village under Chamakhandi police limits. Nalinikanta cheated Niroda of more than seven lakhs rupees in five different occasions. Interestingly, modus operandi of cheating was same in both the cases. A case was also registered with the Chamakhandi police about the matter.

# Ring road to ease snarl in Rayagada

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada, Dec 16:** The long-awaited ring road in Rayagada town will be constructed fully and it will be seven metre in width, a report said.

The matter came to the fore as the Works department finalized and approved the detailed project report (DPR), officials said. The existing ring road, which starts near Majhighari Temple and runs up to Maharshi Vidya Mandir, will now be extended further to FCI Chhak. Works department Superintendent Engineer Ambikeya Mishra said the extension work has received approval.

Officials said land measurement from Maharshi Vidya Mandir to Sai International Chhak has already been completed by the Revenue Department. The ring road will be seven meters



wide, with drains constructed on both sides as part of the project. The total cost of the road construction has been estimated at ₹6 crore. Once completed, the ring road is expected to ease the movement of two-wheelers and four-wheelers, reducing traffic pressure inside the town. Intellectuals said it would also help curb accidents on National Highway 326, which passes through Rayagada town, thereby improving road safety.

The ring road is also expected to benefit devotees traveling by train from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh to visit the Majhighari Temple, officials added. The proposed ring road will pass through Maharshi Vidya Mandir and run alongside the Dadhiban temple in Kasturi Nagar before merging with the national highway at the Sai International Square, officials said.

## Notorious criminal injured in encounter



**Bhadrak, Dec 16:** A notorious criminal wanted in more than 50 cases was shot in the right leg during a police encounter in Bhadrak in the wee hours of Tuesday.

The accused has been identified as Kamalakanta Das, alias Budhia, a resident of Tudigadia area in neighbouring Balasore district. However, his accomplice managed to escape, police said. Bhadrak Town police inspector-in-charge Prabhashu Mishra led the operation, Superintendent of Police Manoj Rout said.

Police received a tip-off around 4 a.m. that Budhia, listed as a most-wanted criminal, was at Charampa railway station. Acting on the SP's instructions, a police team rushed to the spot. On seeing the police, Budhia and his accomplice attempted to escape on a black motorcycle without a valid registration number, Rout said.

During the chase, Budhia allegedly fired four rounds of bullets at the police. In retaliation, police fired one round near the railway station's goods shed, hitting Budhia below the knee of his right leg. The accomplice abandoned Budhia and fled, police said.

Police recovered a firearm from Budhia and admitted him to the district headquarters hospital in Bhadrak. Due to his critical condition, he was later shifted under police guard to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. Rout said Budhia is involved in multiple serious crimes, with over 50 cases registered against him across police stations in Bhadrak, Balasore and other parts of the state. He had previously escaped after opening fire on police during a robbery, the SP added.

Police had received intelligence inputs that Budhia was planning a major robbery in Bhadrak and that he was present at the railway station early Tuesday morning, Rout said.

## PITABAS PANDA MURDER

### Bail pleas of Bikram Panda, 4 others nixed

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, Dec 16:** A local court Tuesday rejected the bail applications of five accused in the murder case of advocate Pitabasa Panda.

Those denied bail include former Berhampur MLA Bikram Kumar Panda, former mayor of Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) Shiva Shankar Das alias Pintu, advocate and BJD leader Madan Mohan Dalai, and businessmen Sunil Hota and Shunya Das.

Special Public Prosecutor Kali Prasad Mishra Tuesday said that the court has rejected the bail applications.

The order was passed by Ganjam Additional District Judge - III Bibaswat Gautam. The five accused had earlier moved discharge petitions and sought bail through their counsels. The hearing was held December 12, during which lawyers from both sides argued the matter, with the prosecution strongly opposing the bail



pleas. Though the hearing concluded the same day, the court had reserved its order.

Pitabasa was shot dead at a close range near his residence October 6. Police have so far arrested 16 people in phases, including Bikram Panda and Pintu Das in connection with the case. Of them, 15 are lodged in Berhampur Circle Jail, while Shiva Shankar Das alias Pintu is lodged in Phulbani jail.

# NIT Rourkela team wins Smart India Hackathon 2025



**Rourkela, Dec 16:** NIT Rourkela student team, 'SWADES', secured first position at the 'Smart India Hackathon (SIH) 2025'. The team was declared the winner for Problem Statement ID 25166, titled 'Smart Sabarmati Riverfront & Urban Water Bodies', during the final round held from December 8 to 12, 2025, at Parul University, Gujarat.

The Smart India Hackathon 2025 was organised by the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell, government of India, in collaboration with the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) as part of the

national mission 'Hack for Bharat, Build for the World'.

The winning team comprised all third-year students: Nitesh Kumar and Dev Soni from the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Ritik Pandey from the Department of Physics (Integrated), and Amol Munot, Suchismita Behera, and Ujjwal Kumar from the Department of Electrical Engineering. Their solution addressed critical challenges related to urban water management and public safety through an innovative and technology-driven approach.

Team SWADES designed and successfully demonstrated an autonomous river surface cleaning robot

capable of removing floating waste from river surfaces. Beyond waste management, the system is equipped to detect drowning incidents, send alert notifications to nearby citizens through the Sabarmati Mitra mobile application, and provide real-time water quality information to the public via the app. The solution demonstrated effective use of intelligent systems to support environmental sustainability and enhanced public safety.

For this problem statement, around 120 teams across the country submitted their proposals, each comprising six members. Only five teams were shortlisted at the national level following a rigorous evaluation process, with Team SWADES from NIT Rourkela being among the finalists. During the final stage, the shortlisted teams participated in a five-day intensive hackathon, where they were required to develop and demonstrate a fully functional working prototype.

Team SWADES was declared the winner December 12, at the grand finale held in the presence of the Chief Guest, Arun Mahesh Babu, IAS, Commissioner of Vadodara Municipal Corporation, and the Guest of Honour, Yogesh Brahmankar, Innovation Director, AICTE.

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
Tender Notice No. 01-eT-SDCM-SBP-25  
**NAME OF WORK: EXECUTION OF ART & CULTURE WORK ACROSS 14 STATIONS VIZ. TITLAGARH (TIG), BALANGIR (BLGR), MAHASAMUND (MSMD), BARGARH ROAD (BRGA), KANTABANJI (KBJ), KESINGA (KSG), KHARAR ROAD (KRAR), HARSHANKAR ROAD (HSK), MUNIGUDA (MNGD), BHAWANIPATNA (BWIP), HIRAKUD (HKG), SAMBALPUR CITY (SBPY), RAIKAKHOL (RAIR) & JHARSUGUDA ROAD (JSGR) STATIONS UNDER AMRIT BHARAT STATION SCHEME (ABSS) OVER SAMBALPUR DIVISION.**  
Approx. Cost of the Work ₹ 69,93,840/-  
EMD : ₹ 1,39,900/-, Completion Period of the work : 12 Months from the date of issue of LOA.  
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 02.01.2026.  
No manual offers sent by Post / Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.  
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)  
Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/ bidder can participate on e-tendering.  
Sr. Divl. Commercial Manager / PR-903/Q/25-26 Sambalpur

(A Government of India Undertaking)  
Corporate Office, Speed Post Centre Building,  
Bhai Veer Singh Marg, New Delhi 110001

**ENGAGEMENT OF RETIRED GOVERNMENT SERVANTS AS HINDI OFFICER (RAJBHASHA ADHIKARI) ON CONTRACT BASIS**  
Advt. No.: IPPB/CO/HR/RECT/2025-26/05

Applications are invited from retired officers of Central Government/Public Sector Undertaking/Public Sector Bank/Autonomous bodies having considerable experience as Rajbhasha Adhikari.

Name of the Post	Number of Vacancies	Type of Engagement	Age	Eligibility Criteria
Hindi Officer (Rajbhasha Adhikari)	01	Contract	Above 60 years and not more than 65 years as on 01.11.2025	A Retired officer who has previously handled Rajbhasha functions/role in a government or public sector organization and must have retired in E6 or above Scale as per IDA or in Level 13 and above as per CDA Scale.

**IMPORTANT DATES:**  
Opening date of the advertisement is 15th November 2025. Candidates are required to send a scanned copy of the application form and supporting documents to careers@ippbonline.in. The hard copy and soft copy of the application form along with the required documents, as specified in the advertisement, must reach the IPPB Corporate Office by 30th December 2025, 5:00 PM. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

For detailed advertisement and guidelines to apply, please visit our official website:  
<https://ippbonline.com/web/ippb/current-openings>

Place : New Delhi  
Date : 15.11.2025  
CBC 06346/12/0010/2526  
Sd./- DGM HR

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT BHIMA BHOI MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL**  
At/Po/Dist. - Balangir, PIN-767002 (Odisha)  
E-mail : gm@hospitalbalangir1@gmail.com  
**ADVERTISEMENT FOR SUPPLY OF DRUGS & MEDICAL CONSUMABLES TO BHIMA BHOI MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL, BALANGIR FOR THE YEAR 2026-27**  
No.E-593 : Sealed tender is invited from organization/firms/ Agencies for supply of Drugs & Medical Consumables to Bhima Bhoi Medical College & Hospital, Balangir. The Tender Paper completed in all respect should be submitted separately for the services to the undersigned on or before Dt.07.01.2026 up to 5.00 P.M. in the office of the Superintendent, BBMC & H, Balangir-767002. The details and terms & condition can be downloaded from <https://bmcchbalangir.odisha.gov.in>, [www.balangir.odisha.gov.in](http://www.balangir.odisha.gov.in), [www.dmetodisha.gov.in](http://www.dmetodisha.gov.in).  
Sd./- Superintendent  
Bhima Bhoi Medical College & Hospital, Balangir  
OIPR-10141/11/0053/2526

**UCO BANK ZONAL OFFICE 18/1, Ainthapali Road, Sambalpur, Ph.: 0663-2540640**

**POSSESSION NOTICE Appendix - IV [See Rule 8(1)]**

(Under Section 13(4) of the Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 for Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of UCO Bank, Bolangir Branch under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of Powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice under section 13(2) of the said Act calling upon the Borrowers to repay the amount with interest at the contractual rate together with incidental expenses, cost, charges etc. within 60 days from the date of the said Notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **POSSESSION** of the property described here-in below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **UCO Bank, Bolangir Branch** for an amount with interest and expenses thereon. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

BOLANGIR BRANCH / Name and Address of the Borrowers	Outstanding Amount	Date of Demand / Possession Notice	Description of the Property
<b>Borrowers: 1) Mr. Basanta Kumar Behera, S/o.: Bhojraj Behera, 2) Mrs. Nirupama Sahu, W/o.: Mr. Basanta Kumar Behera, Both are At: Mukundapur, P.O.: Rugudipalli, Dist.: Bolangir, PIN-767001</b> Place : Sambalpur, Date: 16.12.2025	₹ 12,05,425.42 as on 29.08.2025 + future interest & Expenses thereon	20.09.2025 / 11.12.2025	All that part and parcel of the Land & Building thereon in the name of <b>Mr. Basanta Kumar Behera</b> , situated at Plot No.: 2165/4730 & 2172/4731, Khata No.: 1157/2731, Mouza: Salepali, P.S.: Bolangir (149), Tahasil No.: 318, Dist.: Bolangir, Total Area: Ac.0.046 Dec, as per Sale Deed Bounded by North: Hemanta Kumar Sai, East: Road, South: Hemanta Kumar Sai, West: Pabitra Juad

Authorised Officer, UCO BANK

**FOCUS CLIMATE ACTION**

# LET'S REDOUBLE EFFORTS



**The decade since COP21 has been a period of success and ambition. But it has also been marked by international tensions, the questioning of science, international division, and efforts to erase the universal ideal of liberty and fraternity among peoples**

social leasing program, 50,000 low-income households were able to acquire a new vehicle in 2024 for less than €100 (\$117) per month, and another 50,000 will benefit this year.

Adapting to Climate Change. We must prepare for the consequences of climate change which are already here and accelerating. We have adopted our third National Adaptation Plan and defined a reference pathway to align all our policies – from the local to the national level.

Carrying the Fight to Europe and the World. Europe is the most climate-ambitious continent, with the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. The European Union is also the world's leading provider of climate finance. France fully embraces its role as a guarantor of the Paris agreement and of global climate ambition. To this end, in 2017, I launched the One Planet Summit to build cross-sector coalitions capable of acting simultaneously on emissions reduction and adaptation projects. Since then, we have launched 50 concrete initiatives to fight climate change. And our programs led, in record time, to the UN's adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the High Seas Treaty, as well as to the mobilization of €4 billion to combat plastic pollution and over €19 billion for biodiversity protection and food security. Ten years after COP21, France also hosted the UN Ocean Conference, aimed at protecting unique ecosystems that are vital to the climate. We lead this effort with respect for the national sovereignty of all.

The decade since COP21 has been a period of success and ambition. But it has also been marked by international tensions, the questioning of science, international division, and efforts to erase the universal ideal of liberty and fraternity among peoples. As always, France will play its full part in the struggle for our climate and our planet, guided by respect for science, industrial ambition, progress, solidarity, and the exemplary leadership of Europe. Let us make the coming decade a time of collective success. I am certain that we will – if we remain faithful to the commitments we made in Paris ten years ago.

*The writer is President of France.*  
©PROJECT SYNDICATE

It has been ten years since COP21 in Paris, where 195 states made a historic commitment to work together to keep the long-term rise in global temperatures well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to no more than 1.5°C. France played its full part in making this great moment of cooperation and universal solidarity a success. A decade later, we can be proud of how far we have come. In France, we have reduced our greenhouse-gas emissions by 30% compared with 1990, including 20% between 2017 and 2024. We went from a reduction of less than 1% per year before 2017 to annual reductions of more than 2% on average from 2017 to 2021 – and more than 4% on average between 2022 and 2024. Our goal is a 50% reduction by 2030, which means 270 million fewer tons of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere every year.



*Emmanuel Macron*

**LET US MAKE THE COMING DECADE A TIME OF COLLECTIVE SUCCESS**

These results are France's collective achievement – the success of our unique approach to ecology, which combines progress and protection, and enables us to reduce both emissions and unemployment at the same time. We never impose a rule without providing an accessible alternative. We refuse to sacrifice our competitiveness. We aim to combine sovereignty, employment, and decarbonization. How? Through clear choices. I have placed ecology at the heart of all our economic, planning, energy, agricultural, and industrial policies. I have also directly tasked the Prime Minister with ecological and energy planning. The just-published National Low-Carbon Strategy is a case in point: it sets our course toward carbon neutrality, shaping all our policies.

We rely on six essential principles: Respecting and Protecting Science. We are guided by the consensus of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which last week launched the preparation of its seventh report and held its first meeting with all its authors here in Paris. This is why we invest so heavily in climate research and innovation – to find new decarbonization solutions. Through our Research Pro-

gramming Law and France 2030 programme, we have funded highly practical research and hundreds of projects related to climate change in various fields, from small modular nuclear reactors and low-carbon hydrogen to sustainable fuels and water management. At a time when scientific voices are being challenged, we will continue to accelerate in this area and attract the best researchers through our Choose France for Science programmes.

Ending Dependence on Imported Fossil Fuels. We are choosing a decarbonized and sovereign energy system – essential for both national independence and climate protection. As early as 2022 in Belfort, I outlined the main pillars of our energy policy: reducing fossil-fuel consumption, developing renewable energies, and relaunching nuclear power. This has succeeded: In 2024, our electricity was more than 95% decarbonized – a world-leading achievement. After unprecedented consultation and planning, we have identified zones where offshore wind farms will be developed by 2050. We have revived the nuclear sector, with initial construction and financing already underway on six new EPR2 reactors, and we are developing small reactors for heat production. We are building a truly sovereign energy industry, and I intend to go even further: by 2027, we will close or convert the last coal-fired power plants. Helping Our Industries De-

carbonize. Reindustrializing France means helping to decarbonize the world. Green investment in France has increased by nearly 30% over the past three years, and green industry accounted for one in three new factories in 2024. We have already launched decarbonization efforts for the 50 largest industrial sites – the biggest emitters, representing about 10% of France's total emissions. By 2030, these sites will have halved their emissions. Our green industries are creating jobs throughout our regions. It is here, throughout France, that we plan to produce our electric vehicles (like the Renault R5 in Douai), batteries, heat pumps, and solar panels. We must continue this effort as Europeans as well – to keep simplifying, innovating, and better protecting these industries against unfair competition. I hope that the European Commission's upcoming announcements will show that momentum is building, with a genuine "European preference," so that Europe truly becomes the site of the world's most ambitious decarbonization projects.

Maintaining France's Goal of Progress for People. Ecology must improve people's daily lives. Renovating our homes allows everyone to lower their energy bills, helps the country reduce dependence on fossil fuels, and increases everyone's quality of life. This ambition for progress requires constant attention to equality and purchasing power. Through our

It is not God who made man wicked. It is man who makes himself wicked by separating himself from God.

**THE MOTHER**



## G Ram G

The BJP-led NDA government's proposed change in the nomenclature of the Centre's flagship social welfare scheme for the poor, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) launched by the previous UPA government in 2005, seemingly is a rank, deplorable dishonour to the father of the nation. It would be no exaggeration to say that Gandhi has been made a scapegoat since long. The UPA may have named a scheme or two in his name but they too never aspired to follow the path shown by him. The BJP, of course, being a product of the political doctrine of the RSS is implementing its age old policies. The name of Gandhi being replaced by the central government is official this time around by way of a piece of legislation by the Union government. That may not be considered as important by many as the government's proposals for major changes in the MGNREGA scheme's funding pattern. The proposed name is Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission, or VB- G RAM G. The acronym has the name of Lord Ram. That too is very acceptable to many across North India or the Cow belt. Jettisoning Gandhi lock, stock and barrel from the highly laudable and popular scheme for the country's poverty-stricken can only be a cosmetic change. The win in Bihar seems to have emboldened the BJP that it has drastically changed the funding pattern of this long running scheme.

MGNREGA, originally passed by Parliament on 25 August, 2005, is a rural employment scheme that guarantees up to 100 days of wage work every year to households whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual labour. The scheme is aimed at providing income support to poor families, especially in villages, and is implemented through local panchayats. Its budget in 2005-06 was Rs 11,000 crore, while the allocation for 2025-26 is set at Rs 86,000 crore. Over the years, it has become one of the government's largest social welfare programmes and a key source of income for rural workers during periods of job distress.

On the other hand, the VB-G RAM G proposes changes, including increasing guaranteed employment under the scheme to 125 days from the current 100 days, and revising the funding pattern between the Centre and states to 60:40, compared with the existing arrangement of up to 90:10. This shows the Centre with a sleight of hand wants to disown much of its funding responsibilities and pass them on to the states which is itself a problematic step. Already, the BJP's ally and Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh N Chandrababu Naidu, has raised his voice against the shifting of financial burden on the states.

The draft Bill also provides greater control to the Centre, allowing it to decide where the scheme will be implemented. At the same time, it would empower states to suspend the scheme for up to two months of their choice, including during the peak harvest season. According to a report, the amended Bill was cleared by the Union Cabinet at its meeting on 12 December, but no formal announcement was made at the Cabinet briefing at that time.

MGNREGA has frequently been at the centre of disputes between the Centre and states, mainly over funding delays, implementation issues, and allegations of misuse. The NDA government has been known to managing headlines for its survival and covering its failure to deliver. It has also shown much alacrity and efficiency in producing acronyms for various government schemes and bodies. The present exercise in the name of RAM is yet another clever ploy to divert the people's attention from the Centre's dismal economic performance, the rupee's drastic fall against the US Dollar and the terrible foreign policies that have over powered and negated India's relations with the world.

Yet, down below, the average citizen is busy squabbling in political rhetorics with limited vision and realisation.

**WISDOM CORNER**

I do not think that there is any other quality so essential to success of any kind as the quality of perseverance. It overcomes almost everything, even nature.

*JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER*

We must, indeed, all hang together or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately.

*BENJAMIN FRANKLIN*

Half the world is composed of people who have something to say and can't, and the other half who have nothing to say and keep on saying it.

*ROBERT FROST*

**THIS DAY IN HISTORY**

- 1790:** Discovery of the Aztec calendar stone. Also known as the Stone of the Five Eras, the sculpture was excavated in Mexico City.
- 1807:** With Napoleon's decree of Milan, all neutral countries and allies of France were forbidden to trade with Britain.
- 1892:** The first issue of Vogue was published. Initially a weekly high-society journal, it became a prominent American fashion magazine, with Diana Vreeland and Anna Wintour among its most notable and influential editors.
- 1903:** Brothers Orville and Wilbur Wright made the first successful sustained flights in an airplane—Orville first, gliding 120 feet (36.6 metres) through the air in 12 seconds—at Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina.
- 1989:** The debut of The Simpsons. The Simpsons debuted on this day in 1989 with the Christmas special "Simpsons Roasting on an Open Fire." Weekly episodes began airing in January 1990, and the show went on to become the longest-running animated television series in U.S. history.

**IN JEST THIS**

## Paying to meet a celebrity isn't for me



*Melvin Durai*

**I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY PEOPLE PAY LARGE SUMS OF MONEY TO HAVE THEIR PHOTOS TAKEN WITH CELEBRITIES**

Lionel Messi is considered the greatest football player of this era, so it shouldn't be surprising that his three-day visit to India created more commotion than a visit from the Pope. It was billed as the GOAT Tour and fans in four cities, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Delhi, packed stadiums to get a glimpse of the GOAT (greatest of all time).

His visit to Kolkata's Salt Lake Stadium, however, did not go well, as many fans were angry that they were unable to see him. He was surrounded by officials and celebrities on the field, and fans apparently had a hard time spotting him. The organisers should have used drones or other technology to create a big red arrow that pointed down to where Messi was standing. Then perhaps fans could have spotted a wisp of his hair.

Some fans had reportedly paid as much as Rs 12,000 to see a football god. When he left

the field without giving them a good view of himself, many fans threw chairs, bottles and other items toward the pitch. I understand their disappointment. If only they had more money to spend, they could have actually met Messi and had their photo taken with him.

According to a news report, anyone willing to spend about 10 lakh rupees could have bought a package that included a brief meeting/handshake with Messi, a professional photo, a premium seat at the main event, and an Argentina shirt signed by Messi. I don't know what one crore would have bought you, but perhaps it would have given you the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to kiss his left foot. That's the golden foot that has scored more than 100 of his 115 international goals.

Aside from letting you kiss his left foot, perhaps he'd have also let you kneel in front of him and receive a football

blessing: "May all your goals be great goals. May all your passes be great passes. And may all your flops be rewarded with penalties."

A friend of mine once texted me a photo he had taken with Messi. He thought I'd be impressed, and I pretended to be. But I knew he had paid a lot of money for it. He was basically saying, "Look at me. I can afford to have my photo taken with a great footballer."

I don't understand why people pay large sums of money to have their photos taken with celebrities. Even if I had a lot of extra money, I wouldn't do it, not even to show my teeth next to Deepika Padukone. The photo would not give me the slightest amount of pride, knowing that the only reason she posed with me was the money I was willing to pay.

Of course, celebrities have every right to make as much money as they want from their

fans. Messi probably doesn't visit any country without the promise of a boatload of cash. Many fans in India were willing to pay for just a glimpse of him. In Delhi, fans got to watch him play football with a group of kids, giving them a sample of the skills that earned him eight Ballon d'Or trophies, presented annually to the best football player in the world.

While in India, Messi met several politicians and celebrities, including Shah Rukh Khan, Rahul Gandhi and Sachin Tendulkar. I can't help wondering: Did Shah Rukh have to pay anything to meet Messi? Or did Messi have to pay something to meet Shah Rukh?

And how much would a fan have had to pay to get a photo with both Messi, the greatest footballer, and Tendulkar, the greatest cricketer?

Probably more money that I could make in a lifetime.

**LOL**  
**HORSE PULLS THE CAR**



An out-of-towner drove his car into a ditch in a desolated area. Luckily, a local farmer came to help with his big strong horse named Buddy.

He hitched Buddy up to the car and yelled, "Pull, Nellie, pull." Buddy didn't move.

Then the farmer hollered, "Pull, Buster, pull." Buddy didn't respond. Once more the farmer commanded, "Pull, Jennie, pull." Nothing.

Then the farmer nonchalantly said, "Pull, Buddy, pull." And the

horse easily dragged the car out of the ditch. The motorist was most appreciative and very curious. He asked the farmer why he called his horse by the wrong name three times. The farmer said, "Oh, Buddy is blind, and if he thought he was the only one pulling, he wouldn't even try!"

**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**  
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

**Universal pension**

Sir, India has a large workforce, yet dignified pension security after retirement remains limited to government employees and a small section of the organised private sector. Millions working in construction, gig work, and other informal sectors remain outside formal pension coverage. With most of the workforce in the unorganised sector, India's pension system continues to lag—reflected in its 45th rank among 77 countries in the Mercer-CFA Global Pension Index 2025. The Economic Survey 2025 also notes that pension assets form only about 17% of GDP in India, compared to 70-80% in developed economies, while barely 12% of the workforce is covered by formal pension schemes. As India's elderly population grows rapidly, ensuring post-retirement financial security has become unavoidable. Although multiple schemes such as NPS, EPFO, Atal Pension Yojana, PM-SYM and PM-KMY exist, differences in structure and benefits have resulted in persistent inequalities, with recent reforms largely benefiting government employees. In this context, a Universal Pension Scheme is no longer a policy option but a social necessity, essential to ensure dignity, stability, and financial security for every Indian in old age.  
**Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD**

**Meeting of legends**

Sir, The meeting of two legendary sportspersons – Sachin Tendulkar and Lionel Messi - during the latter's recent visit to Mumbai as part of his four-city GOAT India tour, was a historic moment that will remain with sports fans of the Maximum City forever. Tendulkar and Messi share several common factors, largely revolving around their status as icons in their respective sports, their playing styles, and their personal demeanor. Both are widely considered the greatest players in the history of their respective sports. Both players famously wore the Number-10 jersey for a significant portion of their careers for the national teams. And importantly, the two iconic players are known for their humility and grounded personalities. Tendulkar and Messi share a rare combination of generational talent, relentless dedication, and universal respect that has cemented their legacies as two of the most admired athletes in the history of international sports.  
**Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI**





The Hon'ble Court has completely exposed the illegality and mala fide intent of the Modi Government. The ED proceedings against Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Shri Rahul Gandhi in the Young Indian case have been held to be without jurisdiction, illegal, and unsustainable in law

'NIA TO HAVE DEDICATED COURT IN EACH STATE, UT'

The Centre Tuesday told the Supreme Court that to ensure speedy trial, it has decided to set up a dedicated NIA court in each state and Union territory and more than one court at places where there are over 10 cases under anti-terror law. A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi was also told by the Delhi government that 16 special courts are being created in the national capital to deal with organised crime and terror cases



of the day quote

There is no problem in announcing the alliance (between Shiv Sena-UBT and MNS) in the coming week. Both the brothers, Uddhav Thackeray and Raj Thackeray, will be seen on stage for the announcement



They changed names of railway stations and cities. Only (changing) country's name is left now



We don't just make promises, we fulfill them all. Vacancies for 2,350 various posts in @ assampolice is now live for applicants aspiring to join the force and serve Aai Asomi (Mother Assam)



GOA NIGHTCLUB FIRE

Police take custody of Luthra brothers



The Luthra brothers are facing a case of culpable homicide and negligence following the December 6 tragedy, which investigators allege was compounded by the nightclub operating in violation of mandatory fire safety norms

ter the blaze tore through the nightclub in Arpora in North Goa. The two had fled to Phuket after the midnight fire at their nightclub, prompting the authorities to issue an Interpol Blue Corner Notice and cancel their passports.

questions over alleged fire safety violations and lapses by the management. Gaurav and Saurabh fled to Phuket in the early hours of December 7 after the midnight fire at their nightclub, prompting the authorities to issue an Interpol Blue Corner Notice and cancel their passports.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Tripura signs two MoUs with Patanjali

Agartala: The Tripura government Tuesday signed two MoUs with Patanjali Yogpeeth Trust for an investment of ₹400 crore and to strengthen forest and agriculture-based value chains in the state, officials said.

Goods train derails in SAIL's Gua siding

Chaibasa: A goods train derailed at SAIL's Gua siding in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district Tuesday, officials said. The derailment affected the movement of freight trains to SAIL's iron ore mine in Gua, they said.

K'taka Assembly clears 12 Bills

Belagavi (Karnataka): The state Assembly Tuesday passed 12 Bills, including the Greater Bengaluru Governance (Second Amendment) Bill. The Greater Bengaluru Bill makes provisions for all MPs and MLAs who stay in the state capital and are on the electoral roll in the city to be members of the Greater Bengaluru Authority.

34 Naxals surrender

Bijapur (Chhattisgarh): Thirty-four Naxalites, 26 of them collectively carrying a reward of ₹84 lakh, surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district Tuesday, police said. The cadres, including seven women, turned themselves in before senior police and CRPF officials here under the "Poona Margem (from rehabilitation to social reintegration) rehabilitation initiative, Bijapur Superintendent of Police Jitendra Yadav said."

Two charred

Dhanbad (Jharkhand): Two persons of a family, including an elderly woman, were charred to death, while two others sustained severe burn injuries after a fire broke out in a three-storey building in Jharkhand's Dhanbad district, police said Tuesday.

New Delhi, Dec 16: Gaurav and Saurabh Luthra, co-owners of the Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub, were arrested on Tuesday after being deported from Thailand and placed under a two-day transit remand for production in a Goa court in connection with the December 6 fire incident that killed 25 people.

The brothers arrived at the Indira Gandhi International Airport here in an IndiGo flight and were immediately handed over to authorities for further legal proceedings, 10 days after the blaze.

A Goa police spokesperson later said in Panaji that the police team is expected to bring the accused to Goa by Wednesday morning.

Both the accused were taken to the court in Delhi in two separate police vehicles. They were also taken to the Safdarjung Hospital for a medical checkup. The Luthra brothers are facing a case of culpable homicide and negligence following the tragedy, which investigators allege was compounded by the nightclub operating in violation of mandatory fire safety norms.

The incident raised serious

Treasury benches support 100% FDI in insurance; Oppn opposes



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 16: Members of the ruling dispensation Tuesday supported a Bill to raise FDI in the insurance sector to 100 per cent, with the Opposition countering the move in the Lok Sabha, saying the past governments chose protection over profit to help all sections of society. Initiating the debate on the Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Bill, Manickam Tagore of the Congress said provisions of the bill were unsettling and could lead to people questioning the credibility of the insurance sector.

dispensation was doing away with. He said nationalisation helped all strata of society feel included. Countering him, KV Reddy of the BJP, who was the first speaker from the treasury side, said privatisation has helped greater insurance penetration as competition has prompted companies to offer benefits to customers.

He maintained that FDI is not stopping local players in any way. He opined that now insurance agents can sell policies and schemes of multiple companies as they will not be bound down by working for one player.

At present, Reddy claimed, India has 70-75 lakh insurance agents, and an enhanced FDI will create more jobs in the field. Noting that while healthcare is cheaper in India compared to other countries, it is still unaffordable, Reddy said that in such a scenario, increased insurance penetration is a must.

Utkarsh Verma of the Samajwadi Party claimed that the draft law was a surrender before corporate interests.



A vegetable seller rows his boat in the waters of Dal lake during a cold morning, in Srinagar. The region is gripped by cold wave, recording a minimum temperature of -1.8 degrees Celsius

Low visibility hit ops at Delhi airport, 131 flights cancelled

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 16: Low visibility conditions disrupted flight operations at Delhi airport Tuesday, leading to airlines cancelling 131 flights, a Delhi International Airport Ltd official said.

"Due to low visibility, 52 departures and 79 arrivals have been cancelled so far at Delhi airport," the official said. The northern parts of India, including Air India's primary hub Delhi, experience low visibility due to dense fog with a potential to have a cascading impact on flight schedule across the network.

Aviation regulator DGCA has announced December 10-February 10 next year as the official fog window during this winter. In a related development, crisis-hit IndiGo cancelled 113 flights across its network due to disruptions caused by bad weather at Delhi airport Tuesday. Besides, the airline also said it will not operate 42 flights Wednesday on account of bad weather at Delhi airport. As winter sets in, early mornings across northern India can bring fog that may occasionally slow down flight movements, IndiGo said in a post on X.

"Our teams are well prepared and closely monitoring weather conditions", IndiGo said, adding that wherever possible, "we are making thoughtful adjustments on the ground to reduce inconvenience and ensure any waiting time is as comfortable as possible."

As part of the fog operations (CAT-11b) norms, Airlines have to mandatorily roster crew, which is trained to operate in low-visibility conditions, as well as aircraft compliant for such operations.

Category-III is an advanced navigation system that empowers an aircraft to land under foggy conditions.

CASH DISCOVERY ROW Top court agrees to hear Varma's plea

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 16: The Supreme Court Tuesday agreed to hear Allahabad High Court judge Yashwant Varma's plea challenging the constitution of an inquiry committee by the Lok Sabha Speaker to probe corruption charges against him.

A bench of justices Dipankar Datta and Augustine George Masih issued notices to the office of the Lok Sabha Speaker and the secretaries-general of both the Houses of Parliament and sought their responses.

The matter was posted for next hearing January 7.

Justice Varma was repatriated from the Delhi High Court to the Allahabad High Court after burnt wads of currency notes were found at his official residence here March 14.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by Justice Varma challenging the legality of the three-member committee constituted solely by the Lok Sabha under the procedure provided by the Judges Inquiry Act.

"Issue an appropriate writ, order or direction declaring and setting aside the Impugned Action dated August 12, 2025 of the Hon'ble Speaker of the Lok Sabha in constituting the Hon'ble Committee under Section 3(2) of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968 as unconstitutional, being violative of Articles 124, 217 and 218 of the Constitution of India, 1950, and contrary to the procedure established by law under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968," the plea said.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Varma, submitted that the introduction of a motion regarding his removal in both Houses of Parliament mandates that the constitution of a three-member committee must have been formed jointly by both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and not unilaterally by the Speaker of Lok Sabha.

CAPFs saw 438 suicides, 7 fratricides in 3 yrs: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 16: A total of 438 incidents of suicide and seven fratricides were reported among the personnel of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), Assam Rifles and National Security Guard (NSG) over the last three years, the government informed Parliament Tuesday.

In a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai provided data that showed that the number of suicide cases declined from 157 in 2023 to 133 in 2025, while two fratricide incidents were reported in 2023, one was recorded in 2024 and there were four such incidents in 2025. Force-wise data showed the highest number of suicides



was reported in the Central Reserve Police Force (159), followed by the Border Security Force (120) and the Central Industrial Security Force (60) in the three-year period.

On resignations, the minister said a total of 23,360 personnel from the CAPFs and Assam

Rifles resigned from service between 2014 and 2025.

The Border Security Force (BSF) recorded 7,493 resignations, followed by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) with 7,456 and the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) with 4,137 resignations

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The data shows that there have been 3,077 resignations so far in 2025, with the BSF recording the largest number at 1,157

during this period.

The data shows that there have been 3,077 resignations so far in 2025, with the BSF recording the largest number at 1,157. Replying to queries on service conditions, the minister said the CAPF personnel generally work in eight-hour shifts, though the duty hours

vary depending on "operational exigencies", with provisions for rest, leave and training built into battalion structures.

He said the government has provided for 75 days of leave for the CAPF personnel deployed in the field annually, including 60 days of earned leave and 15 days of casual leave, and efforts are being made to ensure that they are able to avail the admissible leave as far as possible.

Rai also said mental health support is being provided to the personnel through CAPF, composite and unit hospitals, along with specialised psychiatric services, and that the forces regularly conduct awareness programmes, stress-management workshops, yoga and meditation sessions to promote mental well-being.





**On Vijay Diwas, the nation bows in pride and gratitude to the Indian Armed Forces who delivered the decisive victory of 1971. The Army, Navy and Air Force operated in flawless coordination, reshaping history and asserting India's strategic resolve. Their valour, discipline and combat spirit continue to inspire generations and strengthen our national will**  
**RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER**

## DELHI ENVIRONMENT MINISTER APOLOGISES FOR AIR POLLUTION

Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa Tuesday apologised for the air pollution crisis in the national capital and acknowledged its impact on children's health. He asserted that it was the result of the policies pursued by the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government



### of the day note

**The Modi government** launched the National Disaster Mitigation Fund in 2021 to armour the society to withstand any disaster, and today the initiative was extended to the Panchayat level



If you are the Prime Minister of a country like India, inevitably you have a reach across the globe but for somebody who has not been PM, is leader of Opposition, having that kind of outreach and demand itself is a very significant thing. I think India should be using it to its own advantage rather than running down any such decision that is taken after great thought and consideration



There is no threat to institutional autonomy and even if the opposition has some concerns or misconceptions, they can be addressed by the JPC. The powers with the states will remain as they are at present



### POST OF THE DAY

- (1) If government prints more money
  - (2) Money gets devalued
  - (3) As money gets devalued, asset prices go up
  - (4) Therefore, everything: stocks, real estate, gold, BTC will keep going up (on a macro cycle)
  - (5) This does not mean that ALL stocks & ALL Real Estate will go up
  - (6) It simply means that high quality stocks and assets will keep going up.
- It is common sense to keep converting your money into good quality assets.
- @Akshat\_World**

## SIR IN 3 STATES, 2 UTS

# Over 1crore electors left out of draft electoral rolls



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LAST WEEK, THE POLL PANEL HAD EXTENDED THE TIMELINE FOR THE SIR IN FIVE STATES AND ONE UT FOLLOWING REQUESTS FROM THE CEOS

THE SCHEDULES WERE REVISED FOR TAMIL NADU, GUJARAT, MADHYA PRADESH, CHHATTISGARH, UTTAR PRADESH AND THE ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

THE ENUMERATION PERIOD FOR THESE SIX STATES AND UNION TERRITORY WAS TO END THURSDAY LAST AND THE DRAFT ELECTORAL ROLLS WERE TO BE PUBLISHED DECEMBER 16

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** As many as 12.32 crore electors have found their names in the draft electoral rolls of three states and two Union territories published Tuesday as part of the ongoing special intensive revision as compared to the 13.36 crore people who were part of the voters' list October 27.

Election Commission officials said the names in the draft electoral rolls also include new voters who had filled up Form 6 to become part of the electorate.

In West Bengal, out of 7.66 crore electors as October 27, as many as 7.08 crore were included in the draft electoral rolls, a net difference of 58 lakh.

EC officials said the electors who did not return the enumeration forms have been included in the last of ASD -- absent, shifted, dead/duplicate electors.

Their names have not been deleted and the decision will be taken by respective election registration officers of respective constituency before the final list is published in February next year.

In Rajasthan, out of the 5.48 crore electors, as many as 5.04 crore have made it to the draft rolls and 44 lakh have been included in the ASD category. In Goa, of the 11.85 lakh electors, 10.84 have been included in draft voters' list, while another 1.01 lakh are in ASD category.

In Puducherry, of the 10.21 lakh electors, 9.18 lakh have made it to the draft rolls, a deduction of 1.03 lakh. The Union territory of Lakshadweep had 58,000 electors as on October 27 and 56,384 have made it to the draft list.

## MP: 6 kids test HIV positive in hospitals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Satna, (MP) Dec 16:** A routine necessity turned into a nightmare for six families in Madhya Pradesh's Satna after their children, already battling severe blood disorder thalassemia, tested positive for HIV, which officials suspect was transmitted via contaminated blood transfusions at different hospitals.

All these cases were reported between January and May this year, and all the affected children - aged between 12 and 15 - are being treated under HIV protocols, an official said.

Madhya Pradesh Health Minister Rajendra Shukla ordered a probe into the matter and sought a comprehensive report. "It is also being investigated whether the blood transfusion took place in other hospitals also or only in the government hospital," Shukla told reporters.

According to the official, six children suffering from thalassemia have contracted the incurable disease after receiving HIV-infected blood transfusions at the district hospitals in Satna and Jabalpur, and a private medical facility Madhya Pradesh. The parents of one of the children were also affected, he said. Talking to reporters, Satna Collector and Magistrate Satish Kumar S said, "Children suffering from thalassemia were receiving regular blood transfusions. Six of these children were found HIV positive during routine testing. The affected children received blood transfusions at Satna District Hospital, Jabalpur District Hospital, and several other locations. "The parents of one of these children have also been found HIV positive," he said, adding that the parents of the remaining five children did not test positive. However, all the infected persons are out of danger and are being treated, according to him. An internal committee of the hospital is investigating the matter, which has been brought to the notice of higher authorities in the government, the collector said.

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# Kerala govt orders screening of all IFFK films

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 16:** The Left government in Kerala Tuesday directed the organisers of the IFFK to screen all films selected for the event, challenging the BJP-led Centre after it allegedly denied clearance for the screening of more than a dozen movies.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and the Kerala Chalachitra Academy said all films would be screened irrespective of whether the Centre had granted clearance.

In a Facebook post, Vijayan termed as "unacceptable" the Centre's denial of clearance to several films scheduled to be screened at the 30th edition of the International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK).

He alleged that the censorship at the film festival was a direct reflection of the "totalitarian rule of the Sangh Parivar regime, which suppresses



diverse voices and creative expressions in the country".

"Enlightened Kerala will not give in to such censorship. All films that have been denied permission to be screened will be shown at the festival," the CM said in his post.

Prior to that, Resul Pookutty, chairman of the Kerala Chalachitra Academy, which is organising the festival, said "an unprecedented decision" has been taken to show all the



Army officer Vijay Chahar performs a ritual amid 'Vijay Diwas' celebrations at the State War Memorial, in Dharamshala

## Cong asks MPs to be present in LS for next 3 days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** The Congress Tuesday issued a whip in Lok Sabha, mandating its MPs to be present in the Lower House for the next three days as key legislations such as the VB-G RAM G and a new bill to overhaul laws governing India's civil nuclear sector are likely to come up for consideration and passage.

The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, which seeks to open the civil nuclear power sector for private participation and overhaul the liability regime, could be taken up for discussion Wednesday.

The SHANTI Bill, introduced by Minister of State in PMO Jitendra Singh, seeks to repeal the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010.

A bill that seeks to guarantee rural jobs for 125 days every year and replace the 20-year-old MGNREGA was introduced in Lok Sabha Tuesday amid strong objections by the Opposition to the "removal" of Mahatma Gandhi's name from it.

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, while introducing the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Bill, 2025, said the government not only believes in Gandhi but also follows his principles. "The (Narendra) Modi government has done more for rural development than previous governments," he said. The bill is likely to be taken up for discussion and passage later this week. Opposition members have strongly opposed the proposed legislation at the introduction stage and pressed for sending the bill to a parliamentary panel for greater scrutiny.

The enumeration period for Uttar Pradesh has been extended till December 26 and the draft electoral rolls will be published December 31.

The enumeration period for Goa, Pondicherry, Lakshadweep, Rajasthan and West Bengal will end on 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 on October 18 and the draft electoral roll will be published December 23.

## Opposition MPs protest against VB-G RAM G Bill

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** Several Opposition MPs protested in the Parliament House complex Tuesday over the VB-G RAM G Bill that has become a new flashpoint with the government, as they accused the BJP-led NDA dispensation of "insulting" Mahatma Gandhi by renaming MGNREGA scheme and demanded the withdrawal of the proposed legislation.

Soon after the government introduced the Bill in Lok Sabha seeking to replace MGNREGA, Congress' Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, DMK's TR Baalu, RSP's N K Premchandran, among others, held the protest near the Mahatma Gandhi statue in the complex, raising slogans like "Gandhi ji ka ye apman nahi sahega Hindustan (country will not tolerate this insult of Mahatma Gandhi)".

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra accused the government of attempting to finish off the rural employment guarantee law -- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005 -- that was implemented by the erstwhile UPA dispensation.

The Opposition MPs gathered near the steps of the Makar Dwar of Parliament with pictures of Mahatma Gandhi in hand and walked to the statue of the Father of the Nation at Prerna Sthal.

"Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, awakened the soul of the country. He played the biggest role in our country's freedom struggle... Today, the BJP doesn't have anything new to do, and that is why they are changing the name," Samajwadi Party chief and Lok Sabha MP



Akhilesh Yadav said. Speaking with reporters, Priyanka Gandhi also slammed the government for its "obsession with changing the names" of schemes. "This scheme is named after Mahatma Gandhi who is our Father of the Nation," she pointed out.

TMC's Mahua Moitra said her party opposes the Bill. "How much lower will this government stoop? This will lead to an all-India, anti-government agitation because you are disrespecting the Father of the Nation," she said.

The Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Bill, 2025, was introduced in the Lok Sabha by Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan amid strong objections by the opposition to the "removal" of Mahatma Gandhi's name.

Opposition members pressed for sending the bill to a parliamentary panel for greater scrutiny. They also came into the Well of the House, holding photographs of Mahatma Gandhi.

The need of the hour is to expand the scope of MGNREGA to urban areas, not to destroy its vision and safeguards in rural India, he said and called upon the party units to organise protests in all districts December 22 against the new Bill.

## J&K: Security forces hunt for 3 terrorists holed up in Udhampur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, Dec 16:** Security forces intensified search for three terrorists in a village in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir Tuesday, a day after a policeman was killed in a gunfight there, officials said.

During the encounter in Soan village of Majalta area Monday, one terrorist was believed to have been injured, while two policemen suffered minor bullet wounds.

Speaking to reporters at Udhampur, Inspector General of Police, Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti said that the search operation is on.

"The terrorists escaped towards the forest area after the initial gunfight. It is a dense forest area. There are three terrorists holed up. Operation is underway," he said.

The IGP said an operation was launched on specific information in Soan village Monday evening. "The information turned out to be true and an encounter took place. We had a small Special Operations Group party. During the firefight, Amjad Ali Khan, our policeman, suffered injuries. We tried to evacuate him, but due to excessive blood loss, we lost him," he said.

A wreath-laying ceremony was held in Udhampur to pay tributes to slain constable Amjad Ali Khan of the 22nd Battalion of the Indian Reserve Police. Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat led the solemn ceremony, held at the District Police Lines in Udhampur, to honour the constable.

Earlier, a police officer told PTI that the operation has been resumed in the area to track down the holed-up terrorists. "The cordon has been further strengthened."

A joint team of the Special Operations Group (SOG) of police, along with the Army and the CRPF, is on the job with sniffer dogs, the officer added.

On Monday, forces got locked in a gunfight with terrorists in Soan village.

IN A FACEBOOK POST, VIJAYAN TERMED AS "UNACCEPTABLE" THE CENTRE'S DENIAL OF CLEARANCE TO SEVERAL FILMS SCHEDULED TO BE SCREENED AT THE 30TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF KERALA (IFFK)

HE ALLEGED THAT THE CENSORSHIP AT THE FILM FESTIVAL WAS A DIRECT REFLECTION OF THE "TOTALITARIAN RULE OF THE SANGH PARIVAR REGIME, WHICH SUPPRESSES DIVERSE VOICES AND CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS IN THE COUNTRY"

movies curated for the festival were denied permission for screening on the grounds that they were submitted late for clearance. Pookutty claimed that films were submitted for clearance as per the timelines followed in the past.

He said that usually films are submitted for clearance once the filmmakers get political clearance and apply for a visa. Pookutty said that it was also shocking that a restored version of Sergei Eisenstein's 100-year-old classic 'Battleship Potemkin' -- taught in film schools all over the world -- was denied clearance.

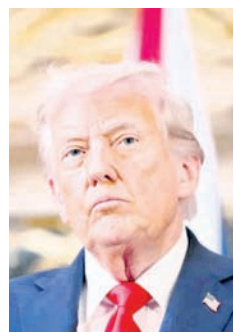
He said that IFFK followed up with the ministries of Information and Broadcasting and External Affairs and as of now, four more films -- 'Beef', 'Eagles of The Republic', 'Heart of The Wolf' and 'Once Upon A Time In Gaza' -- were granted clearance and 15 are awaiting MEA nod.

all the artists and citizens of the country."

"We are going to take an unprecedented decision towards upholding our right to freedom of expression under the Constitution," he said in a video message.

Giving details of what happened, he said that it came as a "shock" when a lot of the

# international



Our administration is formally classifying fentanyl as a weapon of mass destruction, which is what it is. No bomb does what this is doing

## JAPAN BIDS FAREWELL TO TWIN PANDAS

Thousands of people flocked to Tokyo's Ueno zoo to have a last glimpse of the popular twin pandas Xiao Xiao and his sister Lei Lei, that are set to return to China next month, worried if or when they get to see their replacement in Japan as Tokyo's relations with Beijing sank and their last day of public viewing will be Jan 25



### of the day quote

I am not always the wife of the president of the Republic. I also have a private life, and this was a private moment. I am sorry if I hurt women victims. It's them and just them that I am thinking of



While encouraging, the dialogue process between both leaders is at its early beginning. More will need to be done in order to strengthen the nascent momentum and establish a real climate of trust that would allow the Secretary-General to convene a 5+1 informal meeting



Today, we pay tribute to the victims of the Army Public School Peshawar incident, who sacrificed their precious lives for the future of our beloved homeland. The sacrifice of these innocent children and teachers is forever etched in our national conscience



## BONDI BEACH SHOOTING

# Gunmen inspired by Islamic State: Police

The Sunday attack was Australia's worst mass shooting in nearly 30 years, and is being investigated as an act of terrorism targeting the Jewish community



Sydney, Dec 16: Two alleged gunmen who attacked a Hanukkah event at Sydney's Bondi Beach had travelled to the Philippines before the assault, which killed 15 people, and appeared to be inspired by Islamic State, police said Tuesday.

Gunmen inspired by Islamic State ideology, police say Australia's gun laws under review after mass shooting Gunman had six registered weapons, held licence since 2015 Victims include a rabbi, Holocaust survivor, and 10-year-old girl

Marawi siege. "Early indications point to a terrorist attack inspired by Islamic State, allegedly committed by a father and son," Australian Federal Police Commissioner Krissy Barrett said

at a news conference. "These are the alleged actions of those who have aligned themselves with a terrorist organisation, not a religion." Police also said the vehicle which is registered to the younger male contained improvised explosive devices and two homemade flags associated with ISIS, a militant group designated by Australia and many other countries as a terrorist organisation. The father and son allegedly fired upon hundreds of people at the festival during a roughly 10-minute killing spree at one of Australia's top tourist destinations, forcing people to flee and take shelter before both were shot by police. Videos have emerged of the younger shooter preaching Islam outside train stations in suburban Sydney. Authorities are still trying to piece together how he went down the path of violence.

## Suspect native of Hyderabad: T'gana police

Hyderabad: Fifty year-old slain Sajid Akram, a suspect in the recent mass shooting at Bondi beach in Australia, is an Indian citizen hailing from this city, Telangana Police revealed Tuesday. While he had migrated to Australia 27 years ago, Akram carried an Indian passport. Akram, one of the suspects in the mass shooting that has left 15 persons dead, migrated to Australia in 1998 and had limited contact with his family here since then, the Telangana DGP's office said in a statement. "Sajid Akram (50) is originally from Hyderabad, India. He completed his B.Com degree in Hyderabad and migrated to Australia in search of employment, approximately 27 years ago, in November 1998," it said. He married a European origin woman before settling permanently in Australia. The couple have one son, Naveed (one of the two suspected attackers) and one daughter, it said. Naveed and Akram's daughter were born in Australia and are citizens of that country, the statement said. "The factors that led to the radicalisation of Sajid Akram and his son, Naveed appear to have no connection with India or any local influence in Telangana," police said. Telangana Police further said it has no adverse record against Sajid Akram during his stay in India prior to his departure in 1998.

The father travelled on an Indian passport, while the son was on an Australian passport, officials said, adding it was not conclusive they were linked to any terrorist group or whether they received training in the country.

Islamic state-linked networks are known to operate in the Philippines and have wielded some influence in the south of the country. They have been reduced to weakened cells operating in the southern Mindanao island in recent years, far from the scale of influence they wielded during the 2017

# Trump sues BBC for \$10bn over speech edit

Washington, Dec 16: President Donald Trump sued the BBC for up to \$10 billion in damages over edited clips of a speech that made it appear he directed supporters to storm the US Capitol, opening an international front in his fight against media coverage he deems untrue or unfair. Trump accused Britain's publicly owned broadcaster of defaming him by splicing together parts of a January 6, 2021, speech, including one section where he told supporters to march on the Capitol and another where he said "fight like hell". It omitted a section in which he called for peaceful protest.



- BBC admits error of judgment but denies legal basis for lawsuit
Trump seeks \$5 billion on each of two counts
BBC faces crisis, resignations over documentary edit

Trump's lawsuit alleges the BBC defamed him and violated a Florida law that bars deceptive and unfair trade practices. He is seeking \$5 billion in damages for each of the lawsuit's two counts. BBC APOLOGISES BUT SAYS IT WILL DEFEND THE CASE The BBC said it would defend the case and would not make any further comment. It had previously apologised to Trump, admitted an error of judgment and acknowledged that the edit gave the mistaken impression that he had made a direct call for violent action. But it has said there is no legal basis to sue. A spokesperson for Prime Minister Keir Starmer said any legal action was a matter for the corporation but the government defended "the principle of a strong, independent BBC as a trusted, relied-upon national broadcaster, reporting without fear or favour".

Starmer has gone to great lengths to cultivate a solid relationship with Trump. Trump, in his lawsuit filed Monday in Miami federal court, said the BBC despite its apology "has made no showing of actual remorse for its wrongdoing nor meaningful institutional changes to prevent future journalistic abuses". The BBC is funded through a mandatory licence fee on all TV viewers, which UK lawyers and analysts say could make any payout to Trump politically fraught. It had total revenue of 5.9 billion pounds (\$7.9 billion) in its last financial year, including the licence fee and commercial income. A spokesman for Trump's legal team said in a statement the BBC "has a long pattern of deceiving its audience in coverage of President Trump, all in service of its own leftist political agenda".

## SHORT TAKES

### Tiger census officially kicks off in Nepal

Kathmandu: Nepal Tuesday officially launched the tiger census in the country's five protected areas, marked by a formal inaugural programme held in Sauraha of Chitawan district in central Nepal, officials said. Conducted once every four years, the last census conducted in 2022 estimated the tiger population in the country to be 355. The census is being led by the DNPWC under the Ministry of Forests and Environment, in collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Nepal and the Department of Forests and Land Conservation, according to an official at the Department of Nepal Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC). The tiger count is being carried out with the assistance of the Nepali Army, Buffer Zone staff and Community Forest Users' Committees, the official said.

### Polish student held over attack plot

Warsaw: Polish security services have detained a 19-year-old student suspected of seeking to establish contacts with Islamic State and charged with preparing an attack at a Christmas market that could have caused mass casualties, authorities said Tuesday. Mateusz W, a student at the Catholic University of Lublin, wanted to commit an attack using explosives and planned to join a terrorist organization, said Jacek Dobrzynski, a spokesperson for Poland's special services. "The man was very fascinated by Islam, sought to establish contacts with the Islamic State, and was preparing an attack in Poland, in one of the cities during a Christmas market," Dobrzynski said during a press conference.

### 7 killed in small plane crash

Mexico City: A small plane crashed in central Mexico while trying to make an emergency landing Monday, killing at least seven people, Mexico State Civil Protection Coordinator Adrian Hernandez said. The accident took place in San Mateo Atenco, an industrial area three miles (5 kilometres) from the Toluca airport, about 31 miles (50 kilometres) west of Mexico City. The plane had taken off from Acapulco, along Mexico's Pacific coast. Hernandez said the private jet had registered eight passengers and two crew, but hours after the crash only seven bodies had been recovered.

# Rwanda-backed M23 to withdraw after US request



REUTERS

Congo, Dec 16: Rwanda-backed M23 rebels have said they would withdraw from the eastern Congo town of Uvira at the request of the US administration, which had criticised seizure of the town last week as a threat to mediation efforts. The rebels entered Uvira, on the border with Burundi, less than a week after the presidents of Congo and Rwanda met with US President Donald Trump in Washington and affirmed their commitment to a peace deal known as the Washington Accords. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Saturday that Rwanda's actions in eastern Congo violated the Washington Accords and vowed to "take action to ensure promises made to the President are kept." Rwanda denies supporting M23 and has blamed Congolese and Burundian forces for the renewed fighting. A report by a United Nations group of experts

in July said Rwanda exercised command and control over the rebels.

## WITHDRAWAL A 'UNILATERAL TRUST-BUILDING MEASURE'

Corneille Nangaa, leader of the Congo River Alliance of insurgents that includes M23, said in a post overnight on X that the rebels would withdraw. The move was a "unilateral trust-building measure in order to give the Doha peace process the maximum chance to succeed," he said. M23 is not party to the Washington-mediated negotiations but has been participating in separate, parallel talks with the Congolese government, hosted by Qatar. A rebel source said both M23 and Congolese forces would withdraw 5 km (3 miles) from Uvira to establish a buffer zone, something M23 had proposed at a press conference last week. But General Sylvain Ekenge, spokesperson for Congo's army, told Reuters Tuesday that Congolese forces remained intent on regaining control of Uvira. "Uvira is a city in the DRC. We will do everything in our power to reclaim the city and secure it," he said. Hundreds of Uvira residents participated in a march meant to thank M23 for driving out Congolese and allied forces Tuesday.



Aircraft fly past as Bangladesh Air Force team performs aerobatic display to mark the 54th Victory Day of Bangladesh, in Dhaka

REUTERS

# No contact with Mohammadi since arrest: Supporters

REUTERS

Paris, Dec 16: The brother and lawyer of Iranian human rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi said Tuesday they have no information on her whereabouts or health, four days after her arrest. Mohammadi was arrested Friday after denouncing the

suspicious death of lawyer Khosrow Alikordi during his memorial ceremony in the northeastern city of Mashhad. "We have very little information about her health and we are very worried about how she's being held, where she's being held, and how she's treated," Hamid Mohammadi told reporters. He spoke after another brother in Iran, who

cannot be named for security reasons, briefly spoke to her Monday night. Mashhad prosecutor Hasan Hematifar said Saturday that Mohammadi and Alikordi's brother made provocative remarks at the memorial, encouraging "norm-breaking slogans" and "disturbing the peace." Hamid Mohammadi said his sister had confirmed she had

been beaten and said she expected to be charged for "colluding against the Islamic Republic." She was struck on the head, face, and neck by security forces and arrested along with at least 39 others at the memorial, Hamid Mohammadi said. He added that his elder brother had asked for an independent medical assessment, which authorities had refused.

# Afghan hunger crisis deepens as aid funding falls short: UN

REUTERS

Kabul, Dec 16: The UN World Food Programme is unable for the first time in decades to provide effective aid to millions of Afghans suffering from malnutrition, with deaths especially among children likely to rise this winter, the WFP said Tuesday. International aid to war-torn Afghanistan has dwindled significantly since 2021, when US-led forces exited the country and the Taliban regained power. The crisis has been compounded by multiple natural calamities such as earthquakes. "For the first time in decades, WFP cannot launch a signif-

International aid to war-torn Afghanistan has dwindled significantly since 2021, when US-led forces exited the country and the Taliban regained power

The crisis has been compounded by multiple natural calamities such as earthquakes

icant winter response, while also scaling up emergency and nutrition support nationwide," the UN agency said in a statement, adding that it needed over \$460 million to deliver food assistance to six million most vulnerable Afghans. "With child malnutrition



We are only 12% funded. This is an obstacle. So yes, children are dying

JEAN-MARTIN BAUER | WFP DIRECTOR OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION ANALYSIS

already at its highest level in decades, and unprecedented reductions in (international) funding for agencies providing essential services, access to treatment is increasingly scarce," it said. Child deaths are likely to rise during Afghanistan's freezing winter months when food is scarcest, it said. The WFP estimates that 17 million people face hunger, up

about 3 million from last year, a rise driven in part by millions of Afghans deported from neighbouring Iran and Pakistan under programmes to send back migrants and refugees. Humanitarian agencies have warned that Afghanistan lacks the infrastructure to absorb a sudden influx of returnees. "We are only 12% funded. This is an obstacle," Jean-Martin Bauer, WFP Director of Food Security and Nutrition Analysis, told a press briefing in Geneva. He added that 3.7 million Afghan children were acutely malnourished, 1 million of whom were severe cases. "So yes, children are dying," he said.



**These (reforms) have brought in a greater push for the insurance sector. The number of insurers has risen from 53 in 2014 to 74 now**  
**NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER**

## HDFC BANK GETS RBI NOD TO UP STAKE IN INDUSIND BANK

HDFC Bank has got the Reserve Bank's nod to hike its stakes in another private sector lender, IndusInd Bank, up to 9.5 per cent



### of the day **note**

I think we've reached a very critical inflection point where artificial intelligence has matured from conceptual ideas to production-grade determinants, delivering measurable value across the globe



**SANDIP PATEL | IBM INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA MANAGING DIRECTOR**

With sharp focus on localisation, enhancing India-first product interventions, and expanding customer accessibility, we have created a strong and sustainable growth path



**SHAILESH HAZELA | CEO AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, STELLANTIS INDIA**

We see AI as a very powerful force for humanity, and we are already seeing it dramatically power and accelerate scientific discovery. We are also seeing it become a very powerful augmentation for human capability and we are seeing India at the forefront of using AI to solve real world problems



**MANISH GUPTA | SENIOR DIRECTOR OF GOOGLE DEEPMIND**

### SHORT TAKES

#### NCLT approval for Vedanta demerger

**Mumbai:** The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) Tuesday approved the Vedanta demerger plan, paving the way for splitting the group into sector-specific entities across aluminium, oil and gas, power, and iron and steel. "The sanction to the company scheme is granted," the Mumbai bench of the tribunal, composed of Charanjeet Singh Gulati and Nilesh Sharma, said. NCLT had reserved the order after hearing the matter in November. Vedanta welcomed the NCLT order pronounced on Tuesday, sanctioning the company's demerger scheme. "The approval marks a key milestone in Vedanta's transformation into focused, sector-leading companies with clear strategic mandates and dedicated capital structures. The company will now proceed with the necessary steps to implement the scheme," a Vedanta spokesperson said. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) had opposed the demerger, citing concerns over the potential financial risks and alleged misrepresentation of hydrocarbon assets and insufficient disclosure of liabilities. The ministry also wanted disclosures on the concealment of facts that include showing the exploration blocks as Vedanta's assets and details of the loan taken on the basis of those assets, among others.

#### Govt to offload up to 3% in IOB

**New Delhi:** The government has decided to divest up to 3 per cent stake in state-owned Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) through an Offer for Sale (OFS) commencing on Wednesday. At the current market price, the government would be able to garner about Rs 2,100 crore by offloading up to 3 per cent stake in the bank. Shares of the IOB closed at Rs 36.57 per unit, down 1.08 per cent on the BSE on Tuesday. The government proposes to sell up to 38.51 crore (38,51,31,796) shares or 2 per cent base offer size with an option to additionally sell 19.25 crore (19,25,65,898) shares, representing 1 per cent of the total issued and paid up equity share capital of the bank, IOB said in a regulatory filing. "Offer for Sale in Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) opens tomorrow for Non-Retail investors. Retail investors can bid on Thursday.

# Falling rupee, FII outflows drag Sensex 533.50 pts down

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Dec 16:** Benchmark Sensex tumbled 533.50 points and the broader Nifty declined to the 25,860 level Tuesday as persistent foreign fund outflows, a weak rupee and sluggish global market trends dented investor sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 533.50 points or 0.63 per cent to settle at 84,679.86. During the day, it dived 592.75 points or 0.69 per cent to 84,620.61.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 167.20 points or 0.64 per cent to a week's low of 25,860.10.

Among Sensex firms, Axis Bank tanked the most by 5.03 per cent. Eternal, HCL Tech, Bajaj Finserv, Tata Steel, UltraTech Cement and Bajaj Finance were also among the laggards.

However, Titan, Bharti Airtel, Mahindra & Mahindra and Asian Paints were among the gainers.

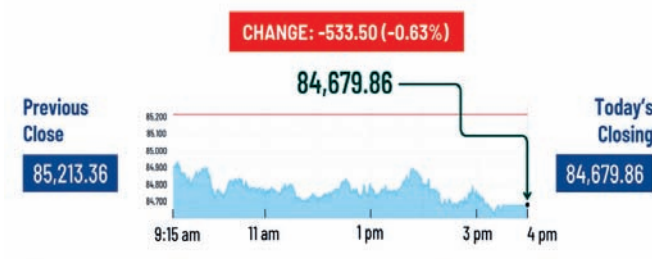
"Continued INR weakness to fresh record lows, driven by persistent FII outflows and subdued global sentiments, dragged domestic markets into negative territory," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

The rupee breached the record low level of 91 against the US dollar and hit 91.14 in intra-day trade due to foreign fund outflows Tuesday.

The BSE midcap gauge dropped 0.78 per cent, and the smallcap index dipped 0.69 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, realty tanked 1.36 per cent, followed by bankex (1.03 per cent), com-

## BSE SENSEX DECEMBER 16, 2025



TOP GAINERS	
TITAN	+1.60%
BHARTI AIRTEL	+1.44%
M&M	+0.42%
ASIAN PAINTS	+0.40%
TECH MAHINDRA	+0.13%

TOP LOSERS	
AXIS BANK	-5.03%
ETERNAL	-4.69%
HCL TECH	-1.90%
TATA STEEL	-1.74%
BAJAJ FINSERV	-1.65%

modities (0.91 per cent), IT (0.90 per cent), BSE Focused IT (0.86 per cent), financial services (0.83 per cent) and metal (0.82 per cent).

Telecommunication and consumer durables were the only gainers.

A total of 2,519 stocks declined while 1,651 advanced and 158 remained unchanged on the BSE

"A risk-averse mood dominated trading as the rupee's breach of the 91 level against the US dollar raised macro concerns, while weakness across Asian markets added to global uncertainty. This combination prompted investors to reduce risk, triggering broad-based profit-taking, particularly across realty, financial services, metal and IT names,"

Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and

wealth tech firm, said. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, declined 1.54 per cent to USD 59.63 per barrel.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index, and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index ended sharply lower. European markets were trading on a mixed note. US markets ended in negative territory on Monday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,468.32 crore on Monday, while domestic institutional investors (DIIs) bought stocks worth Rs 1,792.25 crore, according to exchange data.

On Monday, the Sensex dipped 54.30 points or 0.06 per cent to settle at 85,213.36. The Nifty edged lower by 19.65 points or 0.08 per cent to 26,027.30.

## BOB Jagatpur Industrial Estate branch inaugurated

**Cuttack:** Bank of Baroda Tuesday inaugurated the relocated and renovated premises of its Jagatpur Industrial Estate Branch. The branch was formally inaugurated by Swapna Bandopadhyaya, General Manager and Zonal Head (Bhubaneswar Zone). Pradeep Kumar Behera, Regional Head, Cuttack Region, and Goutam Paul, Deputy Regional Head, were present on the occasion. Debasis Rout, Branch Head, Jagatpur Branch along with staff members, coordinated the event. More than 50 esteemed customers attended the inauguration. Bank of Baroda, India's second-largest public sector bank, currently operates 202 branches across Odisha.



## Central Bank of India holds walkathon

**Bhubaneswar:** Central Bank of India organised a nationwide Walkathon Tuesday to mark its 115th Foundation Day, reaffirming its commitment to the health and well-being of employees and the community. Held under the theme 'Stay Fit, Stay Healthy', the initiative highlighted the importance of physical fitness, mental well-being and a healthy lifestyle. In Bhubaneswar, the Regional Office conducted a Walkathon that saw enthusiastic participation from a large number of staff members. The programme was held in the presence of Regional Head Pankaj Kumar and Deputy Regional Head Suresh Chandra, along with other senior bank officials



# Sebi for periodic disclosures on securitised exposures by trustees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Dec 16:** Capital markets regulator Sebi Tuesday mandated detailed and periodic disclosures by trustees of special purpose distinct entities to enhance transparency in securitisation transactions, requiring reporting across multiple credit, recovery, and asset-pool parameters.

Under this, the regulator mandated half-yearly reporting by trustees of special purpose distinct entities across a wide range of credit, recovery, and structural parameters.

In its circular, Sebi said that trustees of special purpose distinct entities will have to submit these disclosures on a half-yearly basis to the regulator and to the stock exchanges where the SDIs are listed, within 30 days from the end of March or September.

The provisions of the circular will come into effect from March 31, 2026, it added.

Under the disclosure, entities are required to disclose whether any top-up or additional loans have been extended after securitisation against the same security or to the same borrower, according to a circular



issued by the regulator.

In addition, changes in credit quality must be reported, including any increase in the probability of default since the previous disclosure and the number of exposures impacted.

Trustees will also need to disclose the expected credit loss on underlying loans, debt securities or credit facilities, along with any change from earlier disclosures. Details of recovery actions, such as collections from overdue accounts since the last reporting period, must also be provided.

The disclosure framework further requires reporting on the utilisation of credit enhancements, including excess interest spread, cash collateral,

al, over-collateralisation, subordination, guarantees, or any other form, as well as the use of liquidity facilities.

Sebi said the disclosures will also capture any amendments made after securitisation. This includes changes to documentation or payment terms of the underlying exposures, along with brief details of any material amendments.

Further, trustees will be required to provide information on the characteristics of the asset pool, such as industry-wise and state-wise distribution in the case of mixed pools. Any defaults observed in collection or servicing functions being carried out on behalf of the securitisation trust must also be

Morgan Stanley said.

U.S. sales of EVs fell about 40% in November following the expiration of a \$7,500 consumer tax credit on September 30. The incentive had been in place for more than 15 years to stoke demand.

Shares of American automakers have largely been on the rise through the year, as the EV policy shift reshaped vehicle lineups.

Since September, Ford shares gained 14%, GM rose 34% and Tesla advanced about 7%.

GM took a \$1.6 billion charge in October as it adjusted its EV factory plans, and warned

disclosed.

The regulator has also emphasised reporting on compliance with the Minimum Holding Period (MHP). This includes disclosure of the prescribed regulatory requirement, the weighted average holding period of assets at the time of securitisation, and the minimum and maximum holding periods of the securitised assets.

For securitisation of other exposures, the disclosure requirements have been expanded to include the weighted average maturity of underlying assets and details of the Minimum Retention Requirement (MRR).

Entities will need to report the prescribed MRR, actual retention levels, and the form of retained exposure, such as credit enhancement, investment in senior tranches, liquidity support, or other specified forms.

Also, credit quality disclosures will cover deviations in collections from projected cash flows, ageing of overdue receivables, defaults by significant obligors, prepayment rates, recovery actions, and the utilisation of credit enhancement and liquidity facilities.

that it would likely take more

charges in the future. Stellantis has also backtracked on some of its EV plans, axing a scheduled electric Ram pickup truck and leaning into hybrids.

"This move by Ford was to be expected (and should be expected for others) given a new reality on the dramatically weaker U.S. EV environment, driven by weaker demand and heavily reduced compliance requirements," Barclays analysts said.

It is, however, a step in the right direction, and can help Ford improve profits, they added.



consumer demand," Morgan Stanley analysts said.

The charges are a "painful reset for the company" but one

that is essential to align itself with consumer interests which would eventually improve profitability and returns for Ford,

