Kirti's desire Actor Kirti Kulhari voices her desire to move beyond

the labels often attached

LEISURE | P2



Trump sues BBC

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

INTERNATIONAL | P10



DECEMBER 16, 2025 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

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BHUBANESWAR | WEDNESDAY | DECEMBER 17, 2025

NATIONAL HERALD CASE Court relief

for Gandhis

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

Killer fog: 25 dead, 59 injured in UP mishaps

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



'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 Akhilendra 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 ex pressed 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.

Australia in 1998, Akram carried an Indian passport. Akram, along with his 24-yearold son Naveed Akram, recently travelled to the Philippines on an Indian passport. Akram, one of the two suspects

While he had migrated to

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.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



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

WB SIR: 58.20L names deleted

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

The release of West Bengal's

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 filled 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

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

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

New pharma policy aims to bring ₹25K-cr investment (disbursed up to 6% per an-

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



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 num for 5 years), without any upper cap, while a 25% subsidy (capped at ₹1 crore) will be given for dedicated power infra structure, 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 at tract investment and catalyse local entrepreneurship and MSME growth, while generating employment across skilled and semi-skilled segments.

Rupee hits fresh low, ends at 90.93

Mumbai: Rupee descended to a fresh record low, breaching the 91-a-dollar mark for the first time before ending 15 paise weaker at 90.93 against the greenback Tuesday, even as the government in the Rajya Sabha attributed the sliding currency value to the widening trade gap and developments related to the India-US trade deal, During the session, the local unit lost 36 paise from its previous close to hit its lowest-ever level of 91.14 against the greenback, but strengthened slightly before settling at 90.93, down 15 paise from its previous close.

dies at Tarbha school

Protest as Class XII boy

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 Arvan 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, saving the student had breakfast and was healthy. Following the death,



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

MUSK, WHO WAS THE FIRST TO SURPASS \$500 tors in the front passenger seat. from his roughly 12 per cent BILLION IN NET WORTH IN OCTOBER, OWNS AN In November, Tesla sharestake in **EV maker Tesla** holders approved a \$1 trillion ESTIMATED 42% STAKE IN SPACEX, WHICH IS which have risen 13 per pay plan for Musk, the largest cent so far this year, despite PREPARING TO GO PUBLIC NEXT YEAR corporate pay package in hisflagging sales tory, as investors endorsed his vision of morphing the EV

cent Monday after Musk said the company was testing robotaxis without safety monitors in the front

> 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

juggernaut.

maker into an AI and robotics

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.

locals staged a protest at the

Kamsara police outpost officer, seeking a thorough inves tigation into the circumstances leading to his son's death. On being informed, Dis

trict Collector Nruparaj Sahu reached the spot and held discussions with the protesters Police said a detailed probe will begin Wednesday.

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

Washington, Dec 16: Elon

Reeve Musk, businessman

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

They were up nearly 4 per 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

eisure



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 tricksy with it where they read it and as soon as it senses fingerprint. Three minutes later, it dissolves into dust.'



accuracy • reliability • trust

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

GEMINI

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.

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.

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 You are bang on target.

LIBRA

Ganesha says you will see your hard work come to fru-ition 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 con-

stantly 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.

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.

Responding strongly to the

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

> Taking to Instagram Story, she "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, but there is also another called thing

weight loss that from comes work. Ever heard of that? Beware of such 'doc tors." AGENCIES

Mehreen responds to unverified reporting Mumbai: Actor Mehreen Pir-

zada 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

#labels they give me .. May be I have.'

of Four More Shots Please! Season 4.

in 2010 and then starred in Shaitan in 2011.

several streaming series, which includes

Four More Shots Please!, Criminal Justice

the

Himesh

lead.

and Human.

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

media reports that, according to her, relied on inaccurate online sources instead of verified information.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES







BREVITY



DOST **CROSSWORD**

Copyright ©2025 PuzzleJunction.com 23 Magpie, for

24 Beaver's work

26 Low cards

27 Quandary

1 Scratch

2 Morocco's

Down

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

6 Stein (4,3)

capital

3 Heavy overcoat 21 Attention-getter

4 It's a long story 22 Old-time oath 5 Unmarried

25 Extinct

7 Diabolical

12 Straight, at the

10 Unguent

bar

14 Rile up

16 The Fall of

17 Saab mover

accessory

20 Computer

Phaeton painter

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

RUMBSNIOBE

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

owntown

AT LORD'S SERVICE

Servitor Chandra Sekhar Mangaraj with 'Pahili Bhoga' for the sibling deities near Srimandir



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



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: Odisha is poised to emerge as a major nharma 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

"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

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.

pharma sector," he said.

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

brought about necessary changes in the 45 PACTS WORTH ₹6,263 CRORE, WITH A POTENTIAL TO GENERATE

industrial policy and pharma policv of the state. 38,406 JOBS, WERE SIGNED Our pharma pol-CM LAYS STONE FOR icy is one of the PHARMA PARK AND best policies in the MEDICAL DEVICE country. **PARK IN KHURDA** 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 manu-

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 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.

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

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

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

invested amount within 30 months, it said.

They had opened two offices, one in Talcher's Handidhua 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 accoun tant with MCL. He later re signed 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.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL





progress of integrated tourism plan for Khandagiri-Udayagiri in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

Gangrape near Dhauli distressing: Naveen

BJP ACCUSES THE BJD SUPREMO OF

POLITICISING THE TRAGIC INCIDENT

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 undergraduate 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 Pravati 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 expe-

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

rience," Parida said on X.

"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

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

safety of women," Chhuria said.

New Year: DGP reviews Puri security arrangements

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: Anticipating a massive footfall of devotees to Puri on the occasion of New Year, Director General of Police

EXPECTS LAKHS

OF DEVOTEES

TO VISIT PURI

JAGANNATH

(DGP) Yogesh Bahadur Khurania Tuesday emphasised the need for extensive security arrangements **DURING THE NEW** across the holy city. YEAR TO HAVE A

Keeping in view the safety of devotees, temple security, and smooth traf-

fic 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 ADMINISTRATION CCTV cameras at key junctions and strict checking in hotels and lodges

The administration expects lakhs of devotees DARSHAN OF LORD 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

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 mobile numbers were linked

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 Harvana 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 to serious criminal cases and would coerce them into trans ferring 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.

downtown

OSWC pays ₹81.6L dividend to state

Warehousing Corporation (OSWC) paid a dividend amount of ₹81,59,845 to the state government for the financial year 2022–23, reflecting

profitability and efficient use of storage infrastructure across the

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

department Rajesh Prabhakar Patil

were present on the occasion. For

the financial year 2022–23, OSWC

₹5,43,98,965. As per norms, 30 per

to ₹1,63,19,690—was declared

as dividend. The dividend was

the two stakeholders, the state

distributed equally between

government and the Central

Warehousing Corporation.

cent of the total profit-amounting

recorded a total profit of

and OSWC MD Mihir Prasad Mahanti

Secretary of the Cooperation



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 Pralhad Joshi, 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

Highlighting Odisha's status as one of the country's leading

'Go-to-Market Strategy'

workshop held in City

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: Start-

up Odisha, under the aegis of

the Micro, Small and Medium

Enterprises (MSME) depart-

ment, organised a one-day

workshop on 'Go-to-Market

Held at the O-Hub Auditori-

um, the workshop saw active

participation from startups

and entrepreneurs. Founder

of TeachBetter.ai, Binit Agar-

walla, served as the resource

person and offered in-depth

insights and practical training

During the session, Agarwal-

la 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 ac-

quisition, product positioning,

and post-launch growth strate-

gies. Notably, the workshop was

conducted under the Raising

and Accelerating MSME Per-

formance (RAMP) programme,

aimed at strengthening the per-

formance and scalability of MS-

to participants.

Strategy' here Tuesday.

POST NEWS NETWORK



producers of parboiled rice, Pradhan noted that procurement activities for KMS 2025-26 noted that Odisha, one of the

have already begun early-harvesting districts. He stressed that the timely evacuation

maintain adequate storage Custom for current and upcoming 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 said in the letter, seeking Joshi's personal intervention to enhance evacuation

country's leading parboiled The prorice producers, has already posed begun KMS 2025-26 procurement in crease from early-harvesting districts 20 LMT to LMT, He emphasised that timely he added, evacuation of Custom Milled Rice would help

> prevent storage bottle necks, 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 ear-

ly procurement activity, and state authorities are keen to avoid logistical constraints that could affect paddy procurement and farmer payments.

Odisha gears up for Nat'l Road Safety Month 2026

(CMR) by the FCI is crucial to

procurement

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 Tuesady 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

The discussions focused on translating national road safe ty 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

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

Road safety continues to be a central priority in Odisha's vision of building a Devel oped 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.

at fostering a people-centric road safety culture across

impact and sustainability.

vasive alternative.

nificant challenges due to extensive calcification of the

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-

Bhubaneswar, Dec 16: In a

shocking incident, a man was

arrested Tuesday for attempt-

ing to set his wife and daugh-

ters on fire over prolonged mar-

ital discord in the Kuha area

under Airfield police station

limits. The accused has been

identified as Ajit Mallick (36),

husband of the complainant,

According to police, Babita

lodged a written complaint

stating that she and her fami-

ly, living in the Kuha area, had

been facing long-standing mar-

ital discord with her husband,

Ajit. A previous domestic dis-

pute case against him is already

under investigation at Airfield

In the early hours of Tues-

police station.

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, hones ty, and sense of responsibility calling his actions a model of exemplary public service.

Man held for attempting

to burn wife, daughters

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 crerevealed 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, po lice registered a case and for mally arrested Ajit under Sections 326(g), 296, 109, and 351(3) of the BNS and later forwarding

Police driver returns lost ₹14K to owner

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 Javadev 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.

exempla-Demonstrating ry conduct, Raula promptly informed his senior officers.



near Jayadev Vihar Junction while returning home after duty Raula promptly picked up the pouch and attempted to chase

Madhusudan Raula spotted a white

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

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 openheart surgery was deemed high risk. The cardiac team therefore opted for TAVI, a minimally in-

The procedure posed sig-

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 suc-

cessful 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 Bovs Association (OBA) December 28. Addressing the media, Principal Colonel Pankai Kumar said the mini marathon is expected to see participation from over 1,200 runners, including around 600 Sainik School cadets, students from Sahodava and government schools, and alumni. The event will be conducted in four categories-Senior Boys, Girls, Junior Boys, and OBEANS (Old Bovs). 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, Javdev Vihar, Acharva Vihar Square, Apollo Hospital Road, and concluding at the school campus.

UU hosts symposium on devpt & dispossession



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

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 TanayaMohanty, Papesh Kumar Lenka, AnweshaPanigrahi and Deepak

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

During the interactive session with the government officials, a delegation from Odisha Development Initia tive (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 appre ciation 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 1 67.20	SILVER ₹198.200 ♠ ₹299



	WEATHE	ER	
	BBSR	СТС	FORECA
lax Temp	28.7°	26.2°	Fog or Mis
lin Temp	24.0°	13.0°	the morning
lumidity	14.2%	86%	sky late
ainfall	Nil	Nil	

Olive Ridleys start mating, security beefed up along Ganjam shores

Berhampur, Dec 16: The mating season of Olive Ridley turtles has begun near Rushikulya river mouth in Ganiam 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

Man dies as witchcraft

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 fol-

lowing the advice of an occult

practitioner at Palakana village

under Nikirai police limits in

Kendrapara district, Tuesday

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. Ac-

cording to preliminary informa-

tion, Moharana had been facing

frequent disturbances and unrest

at home and sought help from a

sorcerer and witchcraft practi-

tioner 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.

and fire offerings, had been

conducted for about a month.

The incident occurred when

Moharana and two others be-

gan 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 Padmalaya Prad-

han of Nikirai police station

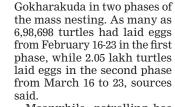
said a probe is underway.

Rituals, including prayers

rituals turn fatal

POST NEWS NETWORK

evening.



Meanwhile, patrolling has been intensified in the sea for protecting the mating Olive Ridley turtles from poachers, Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF), Khallikote range, Dibva 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 Rushikulva River rookery. The fishermen demanded the doubling of compensation from ₹15,000 to ₹30,000 during the fishing ban period.

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 Golabandha, 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

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

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 Majhighariani Temple and runs up to Maharshi Vidya Mandir, will now be extended further to FCI Chhak. Works department Superinten-



dent 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 Majhighariani Temple, officials added. The proposed ring road will pass through Maharshi Vidya Mandir and run alongside the Dadhibaman temple in Kasturi Nagar before merging with the national highway at the Sai In ternational Square, officials said

Notorious criminal injured in encounter



POST NEWS NETWORK

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 had 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

> NAME OF WORK: EXECUTION OF ART & CULTURE WORK ACROSS 14 STATIONS VIZ. TITLAGARH (TIG) BALANGIR (BLGR), MAHASAMUND (MSMD), BARGARH ROAD (BRGA)

(MSMD), BARGARH ROAD (BRGA),
KANTABANJI (RBJ), KESINGA (KSNG),
KHARIAR ROAD (KRAR), HARISHANKAR
ROAD (HSK), MUNIGUDA (MNGD),
BHAWANIPATNA (BWIP), HIRAKUD
(HKG), SAMBALPUR CITY (SBPY),
RAIRAKHOL (RAIR) & JHARSUGUDA
ROAD (JSGR) STATIONS UNDER
AMRIT BHARAT STATION SCHEME
ARSS) OVER SAMBAL BURD DIVISION

(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

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Fax or in person shall be accepted agains' such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time

invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

documents of the above e-Tender

vailable in website : www.ireps.gov.in

Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Ten The prospective tenderers

days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders mus have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate

and must be registered on IREPS Portal

pate on e-tendering.

registered tenderer/ bidder ca

Sr. Divl. Commercial Manager



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

Name of

the Post

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.

Eligibility

Criteria



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	vacancies	
Contract	Vacancies 01	Hindi Officer (Rajbhasha Adhikari)

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WUCO BANK 18/1, Ainth and Road, Sambalpur,

(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.

Address of the Borrowers	Outstanding Amount	Possession Notice	Description of the Property
Borrowers: 1) Mr. Basanta Kumar Behera, S/o.: Bhojraj Behera, 2) Mrs. Nirupama Sahu, W/o.: Mr. Basanta Kumar Behera, Both are At: Mukundapur, PO.: Rugudipalli, Dist.: Bolangir, PIN-76	as on 29.08.2025 + future interest & Expenses thereon	/ 11.12.2025 Bolangir (149), per Sale Deed	All that part and parcel of the Land & Building thereon in the name of Mr. Basanta Kumar Behera, situated at Plot No.: 2165/4730 & 2172/4731, Khata No.: 1157/2731, Mouza: Salepali, P.S.: Tahasil No.: 318, Dist.: Bolangir, Total Area: Ac.0.046 Dec, as Bounded by North: Hemanta Kumar Sai, East: Road, South: ar Sai, West: Pabitra Juad
Place: Sambalpur, Date: 16.12.2	025		Authorised Officer, UCO BANK

NIT Rourkela team wins Smart India Hackathon 2025



POST NEWS NETWORK

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-vear students: Nilesh 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

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,

capable of removing floating waste

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.





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

he 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

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.

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

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.

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 highsociety journal, it became a prominent American fashion magazine, with Diana Vreeland and Anna Wintour among its most notable and influential
- **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.

HORSE PULLS THE CAR

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

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

FOCUS CLIMATE ACTION

LET'S REDOUBLE EFFORTS

t has been ten vears 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.

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



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

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 decar-

bonization 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

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

> The writer is President of France.

Paris ten years ago.

IN JEST THIS

Emmanuel Macron

LET US MAKE

THE COMING

SUCCESS

DECADE A TIME

OF COLLECTIVE

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**

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post

(100 words), articles and

words). Contributors are

numbers and full postal

columns (between 600-1000

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

ionel 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. Lunderstand 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. anvone 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 vou 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.

Universal pension

are most welcome to contribute letters requested to send their contact address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to:

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



TWO STATES





Saini declares Hansi as

Haryana's 23rd district

Hansi's prominence predates even the freedom struggle Chief Minister noted that the town was earlier known

as Asi and Asigarh, and during the reign of Emperor

Harsha it served as the capital of the Satluj province

GOA NIGHTCLUB FIRE AFTERMATH

'The Cape Goa' sealed for violation of rules

The action comes after a massive fire at a nightclub in Arporal, North Goa, December 6 claimed 25 lives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panaji, Dec 16: Authorities have sealed 'The Cape Goa', a prominent restaurant located on a cliff in South Goa district, for violation of fire and other safety norms, officials said Tuesday.

The Tourism Department had granted permission for one temporary private shack, but it was observed that the establishment was operating a full-fledged restaurant beyond the sanctioned plinth area, according to the sealing order issued Monday.

Continued operation of the premises without mandatory safety clearances poses an imminent, grave and real threat to human life and property, particularly in the event of fire, electrical short-circuit, structural failure, or any emergency requiring evacuation, it said.

The action comes after a massive fire at a nightclub in Arporal, North Goa, December 6 claimed 25 lives.

Chairperson of the joint enforcement and monitoring committee, Canacona taluka, Maya Pednekar, Monday issued the order to seal 'The Cape Goa', located on a cliff at Cabo de Rama Fort in Kuddi village of South



Goa district.

A team led by Pednekar carried out an inspection of the premises December 12 and found several violations at the popular restaurant, the officials said. The sealing notice mentions that there was an "imminent threat to human life and

"Upon careful consideration of the inspection report and material placed before me, I am satisfied that the danger is real, proximate and imminent; the premises is being used in a manner endangering public safety; and immediate intervention is necessary in the interest

of protection of human life and property," the order said.

The committee, during the inspection, observed that the restaurant was being operated and used in gross violation of mandatory statutory safety requirements.

The premises was found overcrowded, accommodating more than 24 persons, far beyond permissible limits; no approved structural plan or structural stability certificate was produced; the kitchen was found unsafe, having no proper exit, and was operating with a high fire hazard risk, as per the order.

"The pantry section had no

"The kitchen area and move-

the restaurant, Pednekar stated.

ment/ entry routes were obstructed, and cooking ranges were placed in movement areas. No clear signage indicating entry, exit, escape routes, or assembly point was displayed, the order said.

The committee pointed out that the exit point was obstructed by 29 commercial LPG cylinders and the MCB distribution hoard was found open and unsafe. Loose connections/joints were noticed and the entire wiring was dangerous.

It also observed that the Tourism Department had granted permission for one temporary private shack.

"However, it was observed that the establishment is operating a full-fledged restaurant beyond the sanctioned plinth area, with a bar counter, attached kitchen, bakery, pantry, staff mess (with approximately 120 staff members), staff rooms in the basement, around 40 tables with an average seating capacity of 120 persons, house keeping room, electrical room, feeding room, additional storage room, spa room, etc., which is far in excess of the capacity and area approved by the Tourism Department," the order said.

Chandigarh, Dec 16: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini Tuesday declared Hansi as the

state's 23rd district. It was earlier

a part of the Hisar district. Addressing a public meeting in Hansi, the chief minister said a notification announcing it as a separate district will be issued within a week.

The creation of the 22nd district, Charkhi Dadri, was notified by the Haryana government nine years ago, December 1, 2016, "I make this announcement that Hansi will be the 23rd district of Haryana," Saini said while addressing the Vikas Rally there.

On the occasion. Saini inaugurated and laid foundation stones for three development projects worth Rs 77.30 crore.

The chief minister recalled Hansi's rich historical and cultural legacy and said it had been a land of valour and sac-

He paid homage to the sacrifices of its people during the First War of Independence in 1857, and said the historic Lal Sadak still bears testimony to the brutal atrocities of the erstwhile British Empire, where freedom fighters were mercilessly crushed. Hansi's prominence predates even the freedom struggle, he noted, adding that the town was earlier known as Asi and Asigarh, and during the reign of Emperor Harsha it served as the capital of the Satluj province.

The chief minister promised to leave no stone unturned for the progress of Hansi.

Projects worth Rs 1,008 crore have been executed in the Hansi Assembly constituency over the last 11 years, whereas only Rs 253 crore worth of works were undertaken during the Congress regime, he said.

Out of the 217 promises made in the BJP's election manifesto for the 2024 assembly polls. the double-engine government has fulfilled 54 promises within a year, while work on remaining promises is currently un derway, he said.

Though one year may appear brief, Saini said, the state has witnessed development happen ing three times than the earli er pace, reflecting the government's commitment to non-stop progress, he said.

The chief minister added that the government has taken decisive steps to ensure inclusive growth and safeguard the interests of all sections of the society. Saini said Haryana is progressing steadily under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with clarity in policy, intent and leadership However, the opposition is unsettled by this progress and is resorting to false propaganda

for political gain, he said. Rejecting Congress alle gations of "vote theft", Saini termed it a conspiracy to mislead public, and alleged that the grand old party has a long history of electoral malpractic es, corruption and suppression of democratic rights, including the imposition of Emergency.

Targeting Congress over its criticism of the Special Inten sive Revision of electoral rolls Saini said such exercises had been conducted several times since Independence, including in 1952, 1957, 1961, 1965-?66, 1983 84, 1987-89, 1992-93 and 2002-03. often when the current opposi tion parties were in power.

Democracy was never under threat during those periods, he said, questioning why objections are being raised in 2025 when the Election Commis sion is performing its consti tutional duty. Giving a fresh momentum to the all-round development of the Hansi region. Saini announced a series of major initiatives related to infrastructure. healthcare, basic amenities,

He announced that the existing 50-bed hospital in Hansi will be upgraded to a 100-bed facility. In addition, a special grant of Rs 5 crore was announced for the development of Hansi.

roads and irrigation.

Goa begins SIR enumeration



NDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 16: The Election Commission has launched the Enumeration Phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls across Goa, marking a key step to ensure accuracy, inclusiveness and transparency ahead of future elections, officials said Tuesday.

The drive involves a comprehensive, house-to-house verification exercise aimed at updating voter details, identifying eligible new electors and removing ineligible entries from the rolls.

During the enumeration phase, Booth Level Officers (BLOs) are visiting households to verify the particulars of existing electors and collect information from citizens who are eligible but not yet enrolled. Special focus is being placed

on first-time voters, women, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and migrant populations to ensure no eligible voter is left out of the democratic process.

Officials said the exercise will also help correct errors related to names, addresses, age and photographs, while facilitating the deletion of duplicate or shifted entries.

Electors have been urged to cooperate with BLOs and provide accurate information along with supporting documents where required. Citizens can also submit

forms online or through designated facilitation centres to speed up the process.

The Chief Electoral Officer's office in Goa stated that the SIR is being conducted in accordance with Election Commission of India guidelines, with strict adherence to timelines and procedural safeguards.

Supervisory mechanisms have been put in place at the district and constituency levels to monitor progress and address grievances promptly.

Political parties have been advised to appoint booth-level agents to assist voters and flag any discrepancies during the enumeration. Awareness campaigns through local media, social platforms and community outreach are being undertaken to inform the public about the importance of participation in the revision exercise.

The enumeration phase will be followed by draft publication of electoral rolls, a claims and objections period, and final publication after due scrutiny.

Authorities emphasised that an updated and error-free electoral roll is fundamental to free and fair elections, and called upon all residents of Goa to actively engage with the process.

Haryana CM bats for transforming 'mandis'

exit, posing a serious safety

hazard. 29 commercial LPG

cylinders were found stored

in the open, near the exhaust

blower/duct, which is ex-

tremely unsafe. The absence

of a designated LPG bank and

non-installation of LPG gas leak

detectors posed a serious and

immediate fire and explosion

provided from the restaurant ar-

ea, while fire extinguishers and

fire-fighting equipment were

absent in the restaurant seat-

ing area, kitchen, staff pantry,

storeroom, bakery, and addi-

tional storeroom located below

There was no separate exit

hazard," it said.

Saini said that farmers practising natural farming should be given special space and priority in mandis to sell their produce, as this form of farming represents the future and should be actively encouraged

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Dec 16: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has proposed a slew of initiatives to transform the state's mandis into a modern, transparent and farmer-friendly market sys-

At a Marketing Board meeting here Monday, he proposed the rollout of 'Harit Mandi. Khushaal Farmer', under which he called for the establishment of farmer assistance centres in every mandi (grain market), where grievances can be registered immediately and resolved promptly. ensuring that farmers do not have to make repeated visits

Saini said that farmers practising natural farming should be given special space and priority in mandis to sell their produce, as this form of farming represents the future and should be actively encouraged.

Furthermore, the chief minister stressed the need to ensure safe and dedicated spaces for women farmers and women traders, and to promote their greater participation, according to an official statement.

Calling for greater trans-



collection, Saini said that the foundation of the Marketing Board's functioning lies in ensuring the prosperity of farmers and strengthening the state's economy.

In the meeting with the office-bearers of the board. Saini also said that market committees are not merely government offices, but vital power centres of the rural economy. Therefore, their efficient management is essential to strengthen trust and reliability between farmers and traders, he said.

Further, Saini emphasised that every process, from issuing gate passes to the collection of market fees, must be digitised to enhance transparency. He also highlighted that all

of middlemen.

24 crops are being procured from farmers at the minimum support price (MSP) and that work is being accelerated to improve basic facilities, such as sheds, drinking water, toilets, and rest houses in mandis across the state. The CM stated that pro-

He noted the successful

implementation of e-procure-

ment and direct benefit trans-

fer (DBT), enabling farmers to

receive the full value of their

work by eliminating the role

viding cold storage facilities near farm gates for fruit and vegetable growers is a top priority of the government and directed market committee officials to prioritise proposals for establishing such units under the PPP model in their respective areas.

He also stressed the need to improve road connectivity to mandis so that farmers can bring their produce without difficulty, and instructed the officials to adopt solar energv to meet their electricity requirements.

Haryana streamlines fire safety certification with tech-driven policy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Dec 16: Haryana has notified a set of new guidelines for the issuance and renewal of Fire Safety Certificates (FSC), replacing the old procedure with a technology-driven, transparent and time-bound mechanism, an official statement said.

Framed under the Haryana Fire and Emergency Services Act, 2022, the policy introduces an empanelled agency system along with an automated online approval process, significantly reducing procedural

Under the revised procedure, the FSC, both for new applications and renewals, will be issued automatically through an online portal once the application is supported by a certification report from an empanelled agency.

This policy, notified December 9, is expected to substantially cut down inspection-related bottlenecks and enhance predictability for applicants, the statement said.

Financial Commissioner and Ad-



ditional Chief Secretary (Revenue and Disaster Management) Sumita Misra said the new system aims to ensure faster service delivery without compromising on safety standards.

To ensure transparency and impartiality, the agency assigned for inspection will be selected randomly by the online system for the concerned division.

At the same time, the policy retains strong government oversight. A mandatory physical verification of 25 per cent of cases by a fire officer and 10 per cent of cases by the joint director (Technical) will be carried out on a random basis within 30 days of certificate issuance.

The agencies must meet stringent eligibility criteria, including the requirement that the lead member possesses a Bachelor of Engineering (Fire) or equivalent qualification. with a minimum of four years of experience in fire protection systems or service in a government fire de-

These agencies will conduct fire safety audits, including assessment of fire hazards, electrical safety, verification of sprinklers and hydrants, and emergency preparedness. The new policy is scheduled to

be fully implemented by March 31, 2026, marking a significant reform in Haryana's fire safety regulatory framework, it said.

ZILLA SWASTHYA SAMITI. BHADRAK DISTRICT PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UNIT O/O. CDM&PHO, BHADRAK, DIST.- BHADRAK

Advt. No.28/2025 Date: 15.12.2025

TENDER CANCELLATION NOTICE No.E-595:It is to information of all concerned that to avoid

repeated extension as requested by associations the Mechanised Laundry Services under NIRMAL for the Bhadrak district is hereby cancelled Sd./- Chief District Medical &

OIPR-10123/11/0030/2526 Public Health Officer, Bhadrak

ZILLA PARISHAD, SAMBALPUR

Dist - Sambalpur, Odisha-768001 Ph: 0663-2410992, Email: ori-dsambalpur@nic.in Letter No.671/ Date: 10.12.2025 TENDER CALL NOTICE

No.CAD-2711: Sealed Tenders are invited from reputed firm/agency proprietor/Event Management Agency for different works like Tentage and Allied works/ Security Services for Lok- Mohotsav-2026, Nationa Level Pallishree Mela & Atma Nirbhar Bharat Swadeshi Mela to be held at PHED Ground, Ainthapali, Sambalpur from 4th to 11th Jan 2026 organised by ORMAS & District Administration, Sambalpur The engagement of Firms/Agencies/ Proprietor/ Event Managemen Agency for the event shall be made through two Bid tender i.e Technical and Financial Bid. The detailed tender document is available in the website of Sambalpur District Administration https:// Sambalpur.odisha.gov.in, smcsambalpur.nic.in and www.ormas.org

The bid shall be submitted in the prescribed format along with all relevant documents duly signed and sealed. The last date for submission of bid is 23.12.2025 by 5 P.M. The bid should be submitted to CDO-cum-Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad, Sambalpur by Courier/ Speed Post/ Registered Post only. The Office of Zilla Parishad, Sambalpur shall not be responsible for any delay in postal/courier delivery and similar reason. The Bid will be opend on 24.12.2025 at 11.00 AM in Conference Hall of Zilla Parishad

OIPR-19241/11/0009/2526

Sd./- Collector, Sambalpur

Government of Odisha e-Procurement Notice

E.Mail: rw_boudh@yahoo.co.in Bid Identification No. Online tender/11/S.E.RW BOUDH/2025-26

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH **E-PROCUREMENT** Road work - 1 (one) No.

29.12.2025 up to 5.00 P.M.

Rs. 18.91 lakh (Approximately) Estimated cost Period of completion Date & Time of availability of: From 18.12.2025, 10.00 A.M. to 29.12.2025, 5.00 P.M. Bid documents in the portal

Last date / Time for receipt

Tender / Bid

of bids in the portal Last date / Time for seeking : 26.12.2025 up to 5.00 P.M. of Tender clarification Date & Time of opening of : 30.12.2025 at 11.00 A.M.

Name & Address of the Executive Engineer officer inviting Bid R.W Division, Boudh Further details, corrigendum (s) etc can be seen from the e-procurement portal "Https://www.tendersorissa.gov.in"

Sd./- Executive Engineer OIPR-25061/11/0027/2526 R.W. Division, Boudh

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER ANANDPUR BARRAGE PROJECT, SALAPADA

DIST.: KEONJHAR, ODISHA, PIN: 758020 Tel. No. (06731) 295003, E-Mail: cceabp@gmail.com Tender reference No.-CCEABP-18 of 2025-26

		 a, invites Request for Proposal (RFP) through online pible bidders for the works as detailed below:
SI No.	BID ID No.	Name of the work
01	ABP- Soro-01/18 of 2025-26	Construction of Distribution system for 5052.68 Ha. of CCA including Command Area Development (CAD) of Salandi Left Main Canal from RD 60.304 km to 71.505 km through Under Ground Pipe Line Irrigation system (Gravity Flow) of Anandapur
02	ABP- Soro-02/18 of 2025-26	Barrage Project in Balasore District of Odisha on EPC-Turn key Basis including operation and maintenance of the commissioned project

Period of completion Period of Availability of Bid Document in the Portal

Technical Bid

Bid Salapada

tendersodisha.gov.in

Further details can be seen

Last Date / Time for Receipt of Bid Date and Time of Opening of

02.01.2026 up to 5.00 P.M. 03.01.2026 at 11.30 A.M.

Name & address of the officer inviting

Anandapur Barrage Project

24 (Twenty-four) Calendar months

From 11.30 A.M. of 19.12.2025 to

02.01.2026 up to 5.00 P.M.

Sd./- Chief Construction Engineer

Anandapur Barrage Project, Salapada

OIPR-32180/11/0023/2526

national



The Hon'ble Court has completely exposed the illegality and malafide 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 antiterror 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





ing the alliance

SANJAY RAUT | SENA (UBT) MP

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 for 2,350 various posts in @

assampolice is now live for applicants aspiring to join the force and serve Aai Asomi (Mother Assam)

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

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. Under the agreements, the Patanjali group will invest in the agriculture and forest sectors, with a focus on organic farming, value addition and sustainable utilisation of natural resources, they said. The MoUs were signed between the state's industries and forest departments and Patanjali Yogpeeth Trust.

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. One bogie of the train got derailed at the siding used for loading and unloading of iron ores, said South Eastern Railway's Senior Divisional Commercial Manager of Chakradharpur, Aditya Kumar Chaudhary.

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

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.

Police take custody Messi event fiasco: WB sports minister resigns 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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 tore through the nightclub in Arpora in North Goa. The two had fled to Phuket hours after the tragedy. Amid tight security, Gaurav, 44, and Saurabh, 40, were later produced before Judicial Magistrate Twinkle Chawla in the Patiala House Court, which allowed the Goa Police a twoday transit remand. The investigating officer of the Goa police had sought three days of transit remand and informed the court that they would be taken to Goa

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

by flight at the earliest.

Both the accused were taken to the court in Delhi in two separate police vehicles. They were also taken to the Safdar jang 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 oper ating in violation of mandatory

fire safety norms. The incident raised serious questions over alleged fire safe ty 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.

The duo was detained by Thai authorities at Phuket on December 11 following a request from the Indian government, which later coordinated with officials in Thailand to deport them under legal treaties between the two nations. In a statement in Panaji, a Goa police spokesperson said, "After taking the custody of the deported Luthra brothers in New Delhi and on obtaining the transit remand, the Goa police are bringing both the accused to Goa.

"The police team, along with the accused, is expected to reach Goa by tomorrow (Wednesday) morning," he

On December 11, a Delhi court had rejected the transit anticipatory bail pleas.

Additional Sessions Judge Vandana termed the allegations against the brothers "prima facie grave and serious" and severely criticised their "conduct.'

The court took note of the police investigation that the brothers had booked tickets to Phuket one hour after the fire, a fact their counsel had initially "concealed" while seeking protection from immediate arrest.

The judge had said that leaving immediately after the tragedy was a clear attempt to "evade

Messi event fiasco: WB



Kolkata, Dec 16: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Tuesday accepted Aroop Biswas's resignation as the sports minister in the wake of the controversy over the mismanagement of football icon Lionel Messi's event last week, a senior leader of the ruling TMC said.

Biswas, who had written to the Chief Minister seeking to be relieved of his responsibilities as sports minister, will continue as a cabinet minister, retaining charge of the power department. Trinamool Congress spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said, "Biswas's resignation had been accepted, and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will oversee the sports and youth welfare portfolio." The acceptance of Biswas's res ignation marks a significant political and administrative development following the hue and cry over the chaos that unfolded after Messi's brief appearance at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan, popularly known as the Salt Lake Stadium, December 13.

Angry spectators, upset over alleged mismanagement, crowd control failures and security lapses, resorted to vandalism inside the stadium after the Argentine star exited the field, causing damage to property es-

deepened by images and videos circulating widely on social media that showed Biswas in close proximity to Messi during the

Football fans and sections of the public accused the former sports minister of crowding the star player, even as spectators struggled to get a clear view

timated by officials at around ₹2 crore. Biswas had written to the Chief Minister Monday, seeking relief from the sports portfolio, citing the need for a "neutral" and unhindered probe into the incident. Following Biswas's request to

step aside, senior officials of the Sports and Youth Welfare Department were summoned to the state secretariat 'Nabanna' Tuesday.

As the visuals went viral, criticism mounted not only in public discourse but also within political circles, intensifying speculation over whether Biswas would be divested of his responsibilities or choose to step down. Some party insiders said there had been an expectation among Biswas's associates that the controversy might be overshadowed by the publication of West Bengal's draft electoral rolls under the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) Tuesday.

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 offi cial said.

"Due to low visibility, 52 de partures and 79 arrivals have been cancelled so far at Del hi airport," the official said The northern parts of India including Air India's prima ry 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 develop ment, crisis-hit IndiGo can celled 113 flights across its net work 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 morn ings 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, add ing that wherever possible, "we are making thoughtful adjust ments on the ground to reduce inconvenience and ensure any waiting time is as comfortable as possible.

As part of the fog operations (CAT-111b) 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 secretar ies-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 hurnt wads of currency notes were found at his official resi dence 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-mem ber committee must have been formed jointly by both Lok Sabha and Raiva Sabha and not unilaterally by the Speaker of Lok Sabha.

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.

He said successive Congress governments at the Centre have given priority to "protection over profit", which the present

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

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

recorded 7,493 resignations followed by the Central Reserv Police Force with 7,456 and the Central Industrial Security Force with 4,137 resignations during this period he 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

al exigencies", with provisions for rest, leave and training built into battalion structures. He said the government has

vary depending on "operation-

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.

Jitendra Yadav said."

national



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

The Election Commission

had announced SIR in 12 states

and Union territories October

27 but had revised timelines for

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, Gu-

jarat Madhya Pradesh Ch-

hattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and

the Andaman and Nicobar Is-

lands. The enumeration period

for these six states and Union

territory was to end Thursday

last and the draft electoral

rolls were to be published De-

The enumeration period for

Tamil Nadu and Gujarat has

been extended till December 14,

where the draft electoral rolls

will be published December 19,

For Madhya Pradesh, Chhat-

tisgarh, and the Andaman and

Nicobar Islands, the enumera-

tion period has been extended

till December 18 and the draft

electoral rolls will be published

The enumeration period

for Uttar Pradesh has been

extended till December 26 and

the draft electoral rolls will be

The enumeration period for

Goa, Pondicherry, Lakshad-

weep, Rajasthan and West Ben-

gal will end on Thursday and

the draft electoral rolls will be

revised earlier. The enumer-

ation period for the state will

end o December 18 and the draft

electoral roll will be published

The schedule for Kerala was

published December 31.

published December 16.

December 23

the statement said.

December 23.

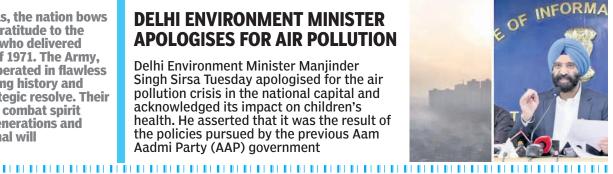
cember 16.

Last week, the poll panel

various states later.

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





National Disaster Mitigation Fund

withstand any disaster, and today the initiative was extended to the

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

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 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

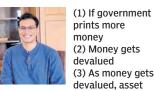
SALMAN KHURSHID | CONGRESS' FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON





they can be addressed by the JPC. The powers with the states will remain as they are at present DHARMENDRA PRADHAN





(4) Therefore, everything: stocks real estate, gold, BTC will keep going up (on a macro cycle) stocks & ALL Real Estate will go up (6) It simply means that high quality stocks and assets will keep

It is common sense to keep converting your money into good

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SHORT **TAKES**

4 Union ministers, 5 CMs to attend WEF meeting

New Delhi: India is set for a power-packed presence at the World Economic Forum **Annual Meeting in Swiss** ski resort town of Davos next month with four union ministers including Ashwini Vaishnaw and Shivrai Singh Chouhan set to join five CMs and over 100 CEOs from the country. K Ram Mohan Naidu, Minister for Civil Aviation, and Pralhad Joshi, Minister for New & Renewable Energy, Consumer Affairs, and Food & Public Distribution, will also be part of the Indian delegation at the five-day annual meeting from January 18-24, while will held under the theme of 'a spirit of dialogue'. The chief ministers include Devendra Fadnavis of Maharashtra, N Chandrababu Naidu of Andhra Pradesh. Assam's Himanta Biswa Sarma, Madhya Pradesh's Mohan Yadav and Telangana's A Revanth Reddy.

2 brothers shot

dead by cousin New Delhi: Two brothers, including one who was specially abled, were shot dead in Northeast Delhi's Jafrabad early Tuesday allegedly by their cousin and his associates after they fell out following the arrest of a wanted illegal arms supplier they were previously associated with, police said. The victims were identified as 31-year-old Faizal and his 33-year-old brother Nadeem who was specially abled, both residents of Jafrabad, the police said.

SIR IN 3 STATES, 2 UTS

Over 1 crore electors left out of draft electoral rolls



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 elecenumeration 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.

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**

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.

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

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 Nu clear Damage Act, 2010.

A bill that seeks to guarantee rural jobs for 125 days every year and replace the 20-year-old MN REGA 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 op posed the proposed legislation at the introduction stage and pressed for sending the bill to a parliamentary panel for greater

Opposition MPs protest against VB-G RAM G Bill

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 BJPled 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 apmann 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. Speak ing 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 Min ister 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 MGN REGA to urban areas, not to destroy its vision and safe guards 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 oper ation 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 in formation in Soan village Monday evening. "The information turned out to be true and an encounter took place We had a small Special Opera tions 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 po lice, 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.

MP: 6 kids test HIV positive in hospitals ing HIV-infected blood transfu-

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.

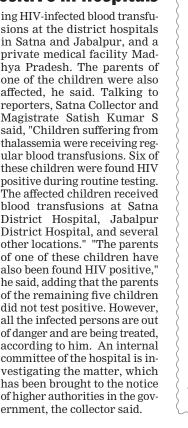
Madhya Pradesh Health Minister Rajendra Shukla ordered a probe into the matter and sought a comprehensive report.

"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 receiv-

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.





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 curated films, including those awaiting approval from the External Affairs Ministry (MEA). "This is a very unprecedent-

ed situation. In such unprecedented situations and times. unprecedented decisions have to be taken. We, as the stakeholders who are running the festival and the Kerala government, have to look at it as an opportunity to defend the freedom of expression -- a constitutional right guaranteed to

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

FESTIVAL WAS A DIRECT REFLECTION OF THE "TOTALITARIAN RULE OF THE SANGH PARIVAR REGIME, WHICH SUPPRESSES DIVERSE VOICES AND CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS IN THE COUNTRY'

CENSORSHIP AT THE FILM

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

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

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

followed in the past.

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.

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

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.

international



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





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

BRIGITTE MACRON | FRANCE'S FIRST LADY

While encouraging, the dialogue process between both leaders is at its early beginning. More will need to



MARÍA ÁNGELA HOLGUÍN I EX-FOREIGN MINISTER, COLOMBIA

convene a 5+1 informal meeting

Today, we pay tribute to the victims of the Army Public **School Peshawar** incident, who sacrificed their



beloved homeland. The sacrifice of these innocent children and teachers is forever etched in our national conscience

SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PRIME MINISTER, PAKISTAN

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

7 killed in small plane crash

during a press conference.

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.

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*

REUTERS

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.

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

The death toll stands at 16, including one of the alleged gunmen, identified by police as Sajid Akram, 50, who was shot by police. The man's 24-yearold son and alleged accomplice, identified by local media as Naveed Akram, was in critical condition in hospital after also being shot.

AUTHORITIES PROBING PHILIP-PINES TRIP

Australian police said Tuesday both men had travelled to the Philippines last month and the purpose of the trip is under investigation.

Philippine immigration officials said both men travelled to Manila and onward to Davao in the south of the country November 1 and left November 28, just weeks before the Bondi



Marawi siege.

"Early indications point to

a terrorist attack inspired by

Islamic State, allegedly com-

mitted by a father and son,'

Australian Federal Police Com-

missioner Krissy Barrett said

unmen inspired by Islamic GState ideology, police say Australia's gun laws under Areview after mass shooting

Gunman had six registered weapons, held licence since

∥ictims include a rabbi, Holocaust survivor, and 10-year-old girl

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

"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 Saiid 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.

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.

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



judgment but denies legal

─□ Trump seeks \$5 billion on each of two counts

■ BBC faces crisis, resignations over documentary edit

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 bil lion) 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 politi-

Rwanda-backed M23 to withdraw after US request



REUTERS

Dec 16: Rwan-Congo, da-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

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

trust-building measure in order to give the Doha peace process the maximum chance to succeed," he said.

Congolese government, hosted

a press conference last week.

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.



that the rebels would withdraw. The move was a "unilateral

M23 is not party to the Washington-mediated negotiations but has been participating in separate, parallel talks with the

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

But General Sylvain Ekenge, spokesperson for Congo's army, told Reuters Tuesday that Congolese forces remained intent



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

No contact with Mohammadi since arrest: Supporters

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

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 expect ed 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

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 USled 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-

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

he 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 dving

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.

business



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 I 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



very critical inflection point ceptual ideas to production-grade

determinants, delivering measurable value across the globe

SANDIP PATEL | IBM INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA



customer accessibility, we have created a strong and sustainable growth path

SHAILESH HAZELA CEO AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, STELLANTIS INDIA



accelerate scientific discovery. We are also seeing it become a very nowerful 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

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 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

Govt to offload

alleged misrepresentation

and insufficient disclosure

of liabilities. The ministry also wanted disclosures

of hydrocarbon assets

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.

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

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 Air-

tel, 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 re-

cord 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

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

DECEMBER 16, 2025

CHANGE: -533.50 (-0.63%)

84,679.86

-4.69 %

-1.90 %

-1.74 %

85,213.36	84,800 84,800 84,700	min
	9:15 am	11 am
TITAN	+1.60 %	
BHARTI AIRTEL	+1.44 %	TOP
M&M		

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

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 dom-

inated 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-booking, particularly across realty, financial services, metal and IT names,' Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and

84,679.86

wealth tech firm, said.

HCL TECH

TATA STEEL

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

IndiGo mass flight cancellations dent ATF sales by 4.1% in Dec

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 16: IndiGo's widespread flight cancellations in early this month resulted in aviation turbine fuel (ATF) sales falling by over 4 per cent in the first fortnight of December, according to preliminary industry data on Tuesday.

Jet fuel or ATF demand had been consistently rising for the past two years as India's aviation sector rebounded from the lows of the Covid pandemic-induced disruptions But this trend changed when IndiGo saw mass flight cancellations in December as India's largest airline struggled with new pilot duty-time rules, crew shortages, and winter weather disruptions like dense fog at major airports.

IndiGo cancelled almost 5,000 flights - over 1,600 out of about 2,300 daily flights at the peak. Operations stabilised over the weekend.

ATF sales during December 1 to 15 dropped to 3,31,400 tonnes from 3,45,400 tonnes in the same period a vear back, the data showed. Month-on-month, the sales were down 7.2 per cent.

Jet was an outlier in the fuel basket, with other maior fuels such as petrol, diesel, and LPG posting robust growth. India's diesel consump

tion - the most consumed fuel in the country, accounting for almost 40 per cent of the fuel consumption basket rose by nearly 5 per cent to 3.3 million tonnes during December 1-15. Month-onmonth sales were, however, down 5.5 per cent as festive demand wore off.

GOLD SNAPS 4-DAY RALI

New Delhi, Dec 16: Snapping the four-day record rally, gold prices declined by Rs 1,700 to Rs 1,35,900 per 10 grams in the national capital Tuesday as investors booked profits amid weak global cues, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had surged by Rs 4,000 to touch an all-time high of Rs 1,37,600 per 10 grams on Monday. The metal rose by Rs 6,000 over the previous four days, trading at record highs.

"Gold prices witnessed profit booking and remained volatile, with the yellow metal slipping towards the USD 4,275 level in global markets and staying under pressure," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.

Echoing sentiments, Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HD-FC Securities, said, "Domestic gold prices also softened, curtailing a four-day advance. These losses were, however, notably mitigated by the persistent weakness in the Indian Rupee which quoted at a record low level".

In the local bullion markets, silver prices also depreciated by Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,98,500 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). The white metal had ended flat at Rs 1,99,500 per kg, also its all-time high level, as per the

Parmar added that physical jewellery demand is expected to be subdued commensurate with the onset of the inauspicious period, investment demand is forecast to remain robust, a tendency driven by prevailing risk-averse market sentiments.

In the international markets, spot gold snapped a five-day winning streak, declining by USD 27.80, or 0.65 per cent, to USD 4,277.42 per ounce.

"Gold prices experienced a modest decline, easing follow ing five consecutive sessions of appreciation, as market partic ipants strategically positioned themselves ahead of a critical suite of US economic data re leases this week," Dilip Parmar These incoming reports are

poised to offer significant clarity regarding the Federal Reserve's predilection for imple menting further interest-rate cuts, a key macroeconomic catalyst for the non-yielding asset, he added. Spot silver also dropped by

USD 1.07, or 1.67 per cent, to USD 63.02 per ounce in the over seas markets.

Bullion prices are trading lower as caution prevails ahead of US nonfarm payroll (NFP) data to be released lat er in the day, which will show NFP figures of both October and November, Praveen Singh, Research Analyst, Mirae Asset ShareKhan, said.

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 Bandopadhaya, 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 Branchalong 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

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 collater-

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

The regulator has also emphasised reporting on compliance with the Minimum Holding Period (MHP). This includes disclosure of the prescribed regulatory require ment, 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 require ments 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, in vestment 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 receiv ables, defaults by significant obligors, prepayment rates, recovery actions, and the utilisation of credit enhancement and liquidity facilities

Ford's \$19.5bn EV writedown signals tough road ahead for legacy carmakers

Detroit, Dec 16: Ford's \$19.5 billion writedown tied to a reset of its electric-vehicle business highlights the mounting challenges for legacy automakers as they navigate waning demand and a changed regulatory backdrop, analysts said Tuesday.

The writedown was seen as the most visible sign to date of the auto industry's pullback from a technology carmakers wholeheartedly embraced early this decade, exacerbated by President Donald Trump's cancellation of electric-vehicle tax breaks

Ford Motor's shares rose 1.3% before the bell Tuesday following the announcement. Tesla edged 0.6% lower and General Motors was flat. U.S.-listed shares of Stellantis were up about 1%.

Washington's action has deepened the decline in sales, forcing the Detroit Three automakers - Ford, GM and Chrysler-parent Stellantis - to roll back their ambitious EV plans in the U.S. and pivot back to their hybrids and gasoline-powered vehicles.

"Ford's strategic reset is a clear acknowledgement of shifting market realities and



consumer demand," Morgan Stanley analysts said.

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

with consumer interests which would eventually improve profitability and returns for Ford, 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

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 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

that it would likely take more

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.

KKR splurge ₹25.2cr on Green Pressure on Sky as India eye series

Abu Dhabi, Dec 16: Kolkata Knight Riders splurged a record-breaking ₹25.20 crore to land top Australian all-rounder Cameron Green and ₹18 crore to acquire the services of Sri Lankan pacer Matheesha Pathirana in the Indian Premier League

players' auction IPL auction. far as Green is concerned, his Uncapped salary for the season cerned, his Indian playsalary ers were alwould still be ₹18 crore so a big hit with Uttar as the rest of the amount would still will go towards the BCCI's De 718 Crore (USD 1.9 mil-20-year-old

player development programme as per the rules of the auction Rajasthan's for foreign players

19-year-old keeper-batter Kartik Sharma going to Chennai Super Kings for ₹14.20 crore each.

left-arm

spinner

Veer

Prashant

Both became the highest paid uncapped players in the history of IPL auction after coming in at a base price of `30 lakh each. Jammu and Kashmir pacer Auqib Nabi Dar also attracted a hefty sum of `8.40 crore from Delhi Capitals to be among the top gainers in the mini auction. Dar's base price was also ₹30 lakh. India internationals Prithvi Shaw and Sarfaraz Khan went unsold despite their good run of form with the bat. However, Sarfaraz was later bought by Chennai Super Kings for ₹75 lakh during the accelerated auction. Green surpassed compatriot Mitchell Starc (₹24.75 crore) to become the most expensive overseas player at an IPL auction. This was after Kolkata Knight Riders and Chennai Super Kings were involved in an intense bidding war for him before the latter emerged winner.

KKR also went after Venkatesh Iyer before pulling out of the race against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, who got the India all-rounder for ₹7 crore. The three-time champions

Pathirana after Delhi Capitals and Lucknow Super Giants withdrew following an intense bidding war between the two franchises

Entering the auction at a base price of ₹2 crore, Pathirana became the expensive Sri Lankan sold in an

Green is conthe season

lion) as the rest of the amount will go towards the BCCI's player development programme as per the rules of the auction for foreign players.

Pathirana will get the full amount as it falls within the who previously

Green, turned up for Mumbai Indians and Roval Challengers Bengaluru, has so far played 29 matches in the IPL to aggregate 707 runs and take 16 wickets.

Bangladesh's seasoned leftarm pacer Mustafizur Raham was sold to Kolkata Knight Riders for ₹9.20 crore, while uncapped Madhya Pradesh left-arm fast bower Mangesh Yadav went to Royal Challengers Bengaluru for ₹5.20 crore.

Cameron Green bought

by KKR for ₹25.20cr



vailing over Sunrisers Hyderabad after an intense bidding war for the 23-year-old. Sunrisers Hyderabad spent ₹13 crore to buy English hitter Liam Livingstone, while Lucknow Super Giants secured the services of Australian keeper-batter Josh Inglis for ₹8.60 crore. Cooper Connolly of Australia was snared by Punjab Kings for ₹3 crore in what was the franchise's first buy of Tuesday's mini auction.

Shaw, however, went unsold despite his fine run of form in the domestic circuit lately. Big-hitting South African batter David Miller was bought by Delhi Capitals for his base price of ₹2 crore, but New Zealand swashbuckler Devon Conway, whose base price was also ₹2 crore, went unsold in the auction.

Seasoned South African opener Quinton de Kock returned to his old base Mumbai Indians for a base price of ₹1 crore. Spencer Johnson remained unsold, while Anrich Nortje, who came with a base price of ₹2 crore, was enlisted by LSG, who opened the bidding for the South Africa pacer. Lungi Ngidi joined Delhi Capitals for his base price of ₹2 crore. A total of 359 players -- 246 Indians and 113 overseas players -- are part of the mini auction pool with the 10 franchises bidding to fill up a maximum of 77 slots, including 31 reserved for foreign players

Auqib Nabi Dar Venkatesh Iver bought

by RCB for ₹7cr



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Dec 16: Shubman Gill's lean patch has been the talking point but an equally "out of runs" skipper Suryaku mar Yadav is also under intense scrutiny as India look to find the right balance and seal the five-match series against South Africa in the fourth T20 here Wednesday.

The third game was an ideal opportunity for Suryakumar to rediscover his touch while India chased a modest 118-run target, but the ease that once made him the top ranked batter in the world was noticeably missing.

Shots that defined his dominance have been producing erratic results and the match in Dharamsala was no different as he fell to his trademark pick-up stroke, highlighting a continued struggle.

But he was defiant when it came to self-assessment.

The thing is, I've been batting beautifully in the nets I'm trying everything that's in my control. When the runs have to come, they'll definitely come. I'm not out of form,

but definitely out of runs, Suryakumar confidently said at the post-match presentation ceremony after India's win in Dharamsala Sunday.

However, the numbers tell a worrying story. The Indian captain has been searching for fluency for over a year, averaging under 15 in the format this season.

Additionally, he's still without a half-century in 2025, the longest such phase of his career. Only twice during this period has he managed to bat beyond 20 balls. With the T20 World Cup less than two months away, the defending champions would want their leader and premier batter to rediscover his rhythm sooner rather than later.

Vice-captain Shubman Gill's struggles are as bad if not worse. His elevation to the opening slot has seemingly unsettled India's top order.

Gill replaced a well-settled Sanju Samson. The Kerala wicketkeeper-batter was first pushed down the order and eventually dropped despite forming a promising partnership with Abhishek Sharma other formats, but in T20Is he is yet to come across the assured batter that he is in Tests

While he survived during Sunday's low-target chase, his scratchy run-a-ball 28 did little

to ease concerns with seven matches to go before the World India have added Shahbaz Ahmed to the squad following Axar Patel's illness-enforced ex it from the series, a move that could open the door for Kuldeep

Yadav to get an extended run. Jasprit Bumrah's availabil ity remains uncertain after missing the previous match

for personal reasons. In his absence, Arshdeep Singh returned to form with a player-of-the-match performance, while Harshit Rana complemented him well in Dharamsala.

He can win you 5 out 5 games alone: Dube

Lucknow: All-rounder Shivam Dube Tuesday threw his weight behind the out-of-form Suryakumar Yadav, describing the India T20 captain as the kind of player who can singlehandedly win matches, and will regain his touch at the right time. Runs have dried up for Suryakumar, with his last T201 fifty coming back in October 2024. With the World Cup less than two months away, the pressure has begun to mount. "He's the kind of player who can make you win five out of five matches on his own. If he is not in form, it doesn't mean he's not a good player," Dube said, backing his captain on the eve of the fourth T20I against South Africa here. "He is one of the best players. No one can do what he can. Yes, he is short of runs, but his form will return at the right time. He can blast at any moment," he added. Dube stressed that Suryakumar's mindset and impact go beyond numbers. "He is a fighter. Whether he's scoring runs or not, he remains the same. He always wants to do something for the team. He is an innovative and threatening player. I think he is a 360-degree player," Dube added.

Aishwary wins 3P gold, Gurjoat bags skeet event

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Bhopal, Dec 16: World Championship silver medallist Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar delivered a landmark performance at the 68th Shooting Nationals Tuesday, firing a world record 470.5 to clinch gold in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions final at the Madhya Pradesh State Shoot-

Aishwary's score is 1.6 points more than the current world record

In simultaneous shotgun action at the Karni Singh Shooting Range in Delhi, Gurjoat Singh produced a composed display to win the skeet men's gold with 55 hits, narrowly defeating nine-time national champion Mairaj Ahmad Khan, who finished second with 54 hits.

Aishwary was clinical from the start, equalling his own national record of 597, which he had first achieved at the recently concluded ISSF World Cup Final in Doha, to finish on top of the qualification.

Navy shooter Niraj Kumar secured the silver with 463.7, and Uttar Pradesh's Akhil Sheoran completed the podium with 451.8. Defending national champion Kiran Ankush Jadhav finished fourth with 440.0, followed by Paris Olympic bronze medallist Swapnil Suresh Kusale with 429.7, and his teammate Arjun Babuta in sixth with 414.9.

Monu Kumar with 403.2, and Manvendra Singh Shekhawat with 401.6 completed the final line up. Gurjoat Singh claimed the gold medal in the men's skeet final with 55 hits, edging out Olympian Mairaj Ahmad Khan, who settled for silver with 54 hits at New Delhi.



BWF WORLD TOUR FINALS

Matheesha Pathirana

bought by KKR for ₹18cr

Satwik-Chirag brace for stern test Abhigyan's 209 guides win over Malaysia



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hangzhou, Dec 16: Satwiksairai Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will face a stern examination of form and resilience when the season-ending BWF World Tour Finals begin here Wednesday, with the Indian men's doubles duo drawn in what is widely regarded as the 'group of death'.

The showpiece features the top-eight players or pairs in each discipline, determined by performances across the World Tour calendar.

Former world No 1 Satwik and Chirag, currently ranked world No 3, are the only Indian representatives at this elite

Placed in Group B, the Asian Games champions will take on a formidable line-up that includes multiple Olympic med-

Ravi Bishnoi bought

by Rajasthan

They open their campaign against China's Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang, the Paris Olympic silver medallists, before facing Indonesia's Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Shohibul Fikri, a pair known for their pace and attacking depth.

In their final group match Friday, the Indians will meet their long-time nemesis, Malaysia's Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik who are the Paris Olympic bronze medallists and second seeds.

U19 ASIA CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

bought by

Dubai, Dec 16: Abhigyan Kundu delivered a record-breaking innings to lead India to a dominant win over Malavsia in their Under-19 Asia Cup Group A match in Dubai. He scored an impressive 209 not out off 125 balls as India set a total of 408 for 7, bowling Malaysia out for

Kundu came in at No 5 in the 11th over and anchored India's innings all the way to the end. His score ranks among the highest in youth cricket. However, Kundu's double hundred does not have official youth ODI status. Jorich Van Schalkwyk from South Africa holds the recognised double century with his 215 off 153 balls against Zimbabwe earlier this year in Harare. Bangladesh's Soumya Sarkar also scored 209 off 135 balls against Qatar in 2012, but that match lacked official status

as well. Kundu took control after Vaibhav Suryavanshi got India off to a quick start with a 50 off 26 balls. Kundu then formed a massive 209-run partnership for the fourth wicket with Vedant Trivedi, who made 90 off 106 balls. This partnership lasted from the 11th to the 41st over. When Trivedi was out, Kundu



was already well set with 128 off 92 balls.

In the final 10 overs, Kundu changed gears dramatically, adding 81 runs in just 33 balls, helping India surpass the 400-run mark. Earlier in the tournament, he had also contributed 32 not out off 17 balls against the UAE and 22 off 32 balls against Pakistan.

For Malaysia, left-arm medium pacer Muhammad Akram was the standout bowler, taking 5 wickets for 89 runs in his ten overs, which included key dismissals of Suryavanshi, Vihaan Malhotra, and Harvansh Pangalia.

This strong victory keeps India at the top of the Group A table, following earlier wins against the UAE and Pakistan. Meanwhile, Malaysia remains at the bottom of the group after losing to the same teams. **Brief scores:**

India U19 408/7 in 50 overs (Abhigyan Kundu 209, Vendant Trivedi 90; Muhammad Akram 5/89) beat **Malaysia** 93 all out in 32.1 overs (Deepesh Devendran 5-22, Udhav Mohan 2-24)

Faizan Anwar bags WBA **Intercontinental C'ship**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Dec 16: Indian boxer Faizan Anwar won the WBA (World Boxing Association) Intercontinental Championship defeating Russia's Khuseyn Baysangurov by split decision in a well-fought 10-round professional bout here.

The 24-year-old from Kolkata produced a controlled and dis ciplined performance against Baysangurov, who entered the contest with a record of 25 wins and one loss and had remained unbeaten since 2018.

Over the course of the 10 rounds. Anwar's sharp combinations and sustained pressure visibly damaged the left side of Baysangurov's face, underlining his effectiveness across the rounds. The bout was part of a major professional boxing event organised by IBA Professional and featured fighters from sev-

eral countries. Anwar dictated the tempo for longer periods, showing composure and tactical awareness to edge past a seasoned opponent and secure the WBA Intercontinental belt. With the victory, Anwar extended his unbeaten professional record to 21 wins from 21 bouts.

He currently trains at the Round 10 Boxing Club and is managed by AAM Seddiqi Boxing.

Chance for Indian tennis stars to learn from global icons

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Dec 16: The Indian tennis fraternity will get a golden chance to watch and learn up-close from an array of top stars including the former US Open champion Daniil Medvedev when the World Tennis League begins here Wednesday.

The Indian names in the fourth edition of the four-day event, which is being played on these shores for the first time, are no less experienced on the circuit themselves.

But being part of the squad and getting a chance to exchange notes with some high-achievers will certainly help the tour

regulars like Sumit Nagal, D Suresh, Ankita Raina and Sa haja Yamalapalli to add a new dimension to their game.

The younger names such as Shrivalli Bhamdipaty and Maaya Rajeshwaran Revathi too will be eager to use the tournament as a study time to sharpen their skills ahead of the imminent new season.

Apart from the former world No 1 and current No 13 Medvedev. the Indian players are clubbed with world No 23 Denis Shapovalov and No 67 Gael Monfils. Another notable name in the competition is of the temperamental Nick Kyrigos, who is currently ranked 652 in the ATP list.



But that's largely because he missed major parts of 2023 and 2024 due to an injury and a subsequent surgery, and his

appearances this year too have been very limited.

It will be interesting to see how his ravaged body stands up to the challenge, particularly when he has expressed his desire to play in the Australian Open 2026, his home Grand Slam.

If the Aussie can revive some of his sublime shot-making skills, then it will be a treat for fans here.

Among the women's names, world No 14 Elina Svitolina, No 25 Paula Badosa, a regular in Grand Slams, and No 26 Marta Kostyuk, who reached the round 4 of this year's US Open,

will lead the show. **Teams and format**

There will be four teams in the competition — Hawks, Falcons, Kites and Eagles, containing two men and two women players each.

The tournament will begin with a match between Hawks and Kites followed by the contest between Eagles and Falcons. It will be played in the round robin format and each tie consists of four sets. The teams will get one point for each game they win in a tie.

If the team that wins the fourth set is trailing, the match will go to overtime.

If the overall game score is equal after four sets, a first to 10 super shootout tie-break will be played. The top two teams will advance to the final on Saturday.

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