

HERE . NOW

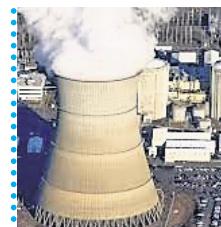
Orissa Post



Ananya bats for Gen Z

Actor Ananya Panday says Gen Z is the first generation that's really embracing mental health and freedom of expression

LEISURE | P10



Japan's nuclear comeback

Japan approves restart of world's largest nuclear plant, marking major step since Fukushima disaster

INTERNATIONAL | P9



India-NZ conclude FTA

India and New Zealand finalise talks on a free trade deal that will give India tariff-free access to the island nation's markets

BUSINESS | P11



Spain on top

In the final FIFA men's world rankings of 2025, Spain maintain its position at the top of the global standings

SPORTS | P12

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BLAST UNDER CAR KILLS RUSSIAN GEN AGENCIES

Moscow, Dec 22: A Russian general was killed Monday morning after an explosive device detonated underneath his car in Moscow, and investigators said Ukraine could be behind the attack, the third such killing of a senior military officer in a year.

Lt Gen Fanil Sarvarov, head of Operational Training Directorate of the Russian Armed Forces' General Staff, died from his injuries, said Svetlana Petrenko, the spokesperson for Russia's Investigative Committee, the nation's top criminal investigation agency. P9

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



True, I ordered jungles to be cut
- but I also planted many trees,
especially during my foreign trips

Another B'desh student leader shot in head

PNN & AGENCIES



BANGLADESH SUSPENDS VISA SERVICES IN DELHI, TRIPURA

New Delhi: Bangladesh has suspended visa services in its High Commission in New Delhi and its mission in Tripura amid mounting strain in ties between the two countries. The decision to suspend the visa services was taken after groups of protesters held demonstrations outside the two missions, people familiar with the matter said. The Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi put out a public notice mentioning suspension of visa services in view of unavoidable circumstances. Also, the Assistant High Commission of Bangladesh in Tripura also made a similar announcement.

The Kaler Kantha newspaper, quoting hospital sources, said Shikder was shot on the left side of his head, and was bleeding profusely when he was brought to the facility, where the doctors started emergency treatment.

The attack came days after Hadi, a prominent leader of the student-led protests last year

The 32-year-old Inqilab Man-

cha spokesperson died while undergoing treatment in Singapore December 18.

After Monday's clandestine attack on Shikder in Khulna city's Majid Sarani area, police said they are yet in dark about the perpetrators or motive but launched an "immediate man-hunt" for their arrest. Local police station chief Animesh Mondal said KMCH authorities have shifted Shikder to its City Imaging Centre to pinpoint the state of his injury.

Meanwhile, the editors of leading Bangladeshi newspapers Monday said the country's media is facing a fight for survival and the freedom of expression has been overtaken by concerns over journalists' "right to stay alive".

P9



were asleep in a room but didn't wake up Monday morning.

Finding no response from inside, other family members broke open the door to find the three lying unconscious.

Vomit was strewn inside the room, they said. Family members also noticed that charcoal had been burned and kept inside the room overnight. Villagers and relatives tried to revive them by sprinkling water, but

to no avail. They were rushed to the district headquarters hospital, Angul, where doctors pronounced them dead.

Kantabania police recovered the bodies and began an investigation. The bodies were sent for postmortem to ascertain the exact cause of death.

Investigators are also examining the possibility that the family used burning coal or embers inside the house to keep warm, which might have led to suffocation, officials said. Preliminary inquiry has not indicated any foul play, police said.

The puke samples collected from the scene have been sent to a forensic laboratory for analysis, the police added.

3 die of suspected food poisoning

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, Dec 22: In a shocking incident, a 56-year-old woman and her two sons died of suspected food poisoning at Itap village under Kantabania police limits in Dhenkanal district Monday morning, police said.

The deceased were identified as Golap Sahu, wife of Antaryami Sahu, and her two sons Bharat Sahu, 32, and Lipun Sahu, 24, of Ashanbani Colony in the village.

According to family members, Golap cooked poultry meat, spinach and other leaves Sunday night. The trio had dinner after Lipun returned home from duty around 10:30pm. They

Dacoits kill retd health supervisor

POST NEWS NETWORK

strangled with a shawl she was wearing, investigators said. All the gold ornaments she was wearing were missing, indicating a robbery.

After committing the crime, police said, the assailants fled the scene along with her scooter, which they later abandoned on Biju Expressway. Dharmagarh police, along with a scientific team and a sniffer dog squad, reached the spot and launched an investigation.

Duped of ₹8cr, ex-IPS officer shoots self

Patiala: Former IPS officer Amar Singh Chahal allegedly shot himself here Monday and in a purported note, he claimed that he had been duped of ₹8.10 crore by cyber thugs who posed as wealth management advisors. He was shifted to the hospital in a critical condition, Patiala Senior Superintendent of Police Varun Sharma said. Chahal was one of the accused in the 2015 police firing cases related to anti-sacrilege protests in Faridkot. Police found a note which shows that he is a victim of some financial fraud.



KIIT Nanhipari

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Femina Miss India World 2024



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- Miss Monalisa
- Miss Active
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Girl with most beautiful hair
Girl with best costume in both rounds
Girl with best pose in Photoshoot round
Girl with highest marks in quiz round
A graceful walk & pose and a positive attitude
Sharp intelligence, confidence & communication skills
Most beautiful girl with most beautiful smile
Most active girl in Sports round
Girl with Best Talent



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1st Runner Up
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FM fire sets off a streak



called the student to his office for discussions. After returning from the meeting, she allegedly poured petrol on herself and set herself ablaze. She suffered nearly 95% burns. She was rushed to the DHH and later to AIIMS-Bhubaneswar for specialised treatment. Despite intensive medical care, the student succumbed to her injuries July 14.

Following the incident, police arrested Sahu and the college Principal Dillip Kumar Ghose. The state government constituted a three-member high-level committee to conduct a thorough inquiry. CM Mohan Charan Majhi assured the victim's family of justice and stringent action against all those responsible. The student's death triggered strong political reactions across the state.

position
Rahul

with Opposition parties across the state.

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Gandhi described the incident as an "organised murder by the system," alleging a grave institutional failure to protect a student who had spoken out against sexual harassment.

Strong political ties stagnated the state.

position
Rahul

July 12, sending shockwaves across the state. The young woman had earlier accused HoD of Education department Samir Kumar Sahu of demanding sexual favours from her.

Sahu allegedly threatened to fail her on the pretext of irregular attendance and subjected her to repeated humiliation and mental harassment.

Soumyashree took the extreme step after her repeated pleas before the higher authorities seeking action against Sahu went unheard. The College Principal had

been unable to respond to her concerns.

Even as this was not enough for the

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downtown

Odisha govt plans world-class diagnostic centres in each dist



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 22: The Odisha government aims to establish world-class diagnostic and interventional facilities in every district of the state by 2026, Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida announced Monday.

Addressing the inaugural session of the two-day SUM Ultimate Medicare Meet on Imaging and Interventional Therapy, Summit-2025, Parida said the government plans to integrate digital technologies such as telemedicine and telediagnosis. She added that the initiative would promote medical education, research, and strong public-private partnerships.

possible policy adoption.

Parida highlighted the role of SUM Ultimate Medicare in positioning Odisha as a regional hub for advanced healthcare and medical tourism, attracting patients from West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and neighboring states.

Welcoming the participants, Swetapadma Dash, CEO of SUM Ultimate Medicare, said Summit 2025 promotes responsible innovation guided by evidence-based practices and patient-centric values.

The summit, themed "Advanced Patient Care with Interventional Radiology and Cardiac Imaging: When Imaging Leads, Interventions Heal," brought together leading clinicians and researchers from across the country.

The Deputy Chief Minister outlined an outcome-driven healthcare roadmap aligned with Vision Odisha 2036, placing equity, innovation, digital access, and mental well-being at the centre of public health strategy. She noted that the vision aligns with national initiatives led by the Prime Minister. Recommendations from the summit will be reviewed for



SO CHRISTMASY: Girls pose for a selfie as Santa clause photo bombs them at a roadside Christmas gift shop in Bhubaneswar, Monday PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

Meeting after nine years, OWSSB hikes DLR incentive



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 22: After a gap of nine years, the 27th Board Meeting of the Odisha Water Supply & Sewerage Board (OWSSB) was held today under the chairmanship of Minister for Housing & Urban Development, Krushna Chandra Mohapatra. The previous Board meeting of OWSSB was held in 2016. The Board reviewed and ratified the payment of gratuity to three Daily Labour Roll (DLR) employees, and approved an enhancement of Rs 200 in the special incentive for DLRs working in OWSSB.

The Board has been reconstituted in October 2025 as part of the state government's concerted efforts to revive, strengthen and enhance the institutional effectiveness of OWSSB in line with the growing urban water supply and sewerage management requirements of the State. Principal Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department, Usha Padhee, Vice-Chairperson of the Board, was present and led the detailed deliberations.

Pradhan urges CM to reconstitute OSCBC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 22: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Monday urged Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi to reconstitute the Odisha State Commission for Backward Classes (OSCBC).

In a letter to Majhi, Pradhan said Odisha has 216 socially and educationally backward class (SEBC) communities, and they continue to face challenges in accessing benefits in the absence of a functioning commission.

"I would like to draw your kind attention towards the reconstitution of OSCBC, which is presently functus officio following the completion of its tenure January 3, 2024 and the absence of appointed members," he said.

"In the absence of a functioning commission, these communities are deprived of a statutory representation to voice their concerns and seek redressal of their legitimate concerns," he added.

Pradhan said OSCBC plays a pivotal role in examining requests for inclusion of communities in the SEBC list, addressing their grievances and advising the government on policy matters.

The Board emphasized the importance of holding Board meetings on a regular basis to ensure effective governance, timely decision-making and improved overall functioning of OWSSB in the larger public interest.

NATIONAL MATHEMATICS DAY

Mathmagic Fest 2025 celebrated at City RSC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 22: Marking the birth anniversary of legendary mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan, the Bhubaneswar Regional Science Centre (RSC) celebrated National Mathematics Day with great enthusiasm by organizing Mathmagic Fest-2025 Monday. The event aimed to highlight the importance of mathematics in everyday life and to inspire young minds to explore the subject creatively.

The festival featured a variety of engaging activities including an exhibition and contest of mathematical models, activity-based mathematics stalls, and a mathematics quiz. A major attraction of the event was the mathematics exhibition, where students from schools across Odisha showcased in-



A total of 77 projects were exhibited, comprising 31 projects

in the Junior category and 46 projects in the Senior category, reflecting originality and innovation by young students from different parts of the state.

Several prominent organizations actively participated in the fest, including NIST University, Vidya Bharati Shiksha Samiti, Odisha, Samanta Chandrashekhar Vigyan Club, Balasore, Curiblox Kreng Education Pvt. Ltd., and The Book Point, Bhubaneswar, contributing through interactive demonstrations and educational resources. The RSC, Bhubaneswar also showcased its initiatives through an activity-based stall and a popular 'Make & Take' corner.

The festival was inaugurated by Tarakant Nayak, Professor of Mathematics, IIT Bhubaneswar. A motivational talk on mathematics was delivered by Subas Chandra Raut, Instructional Leader & Mentor (Mathematics), KIIT International School, Bhubaneswar, inspiring students to develop a deeper interest in the subject.

The Valedictory Function was graced by Hadibandhu Patnaik, Former Principal of Sailabala Women's College, Cuttack, along with other dignitaries including Subas Chandra Raut and Kapil Jain, Project Coordinator, RSC Bhubaneswar. During the ceremony, all meritorious participants were felicitated with prizes and certificates in recognition of their outstanding efforts.

The successful organization of Mathmagic Fest-2025 reinforced the role of mathematics as a powerful tool for understanding the world and nurturing scientific temper among students.

ENTHRALLING

Dancers mesmerize spectators with their performance at Odissi International program at Bhanjakala Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Monday



ISKCON spreading misinformation against Jagannath culture: Gajapati



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 22: The king of Puri, Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb, Monday, accused the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) of spreading "misinformation" against Shree Jagannath culture and called upon religious scholars and devotees to oppose the holding of "untimely" Rath Yatra.

Deb, who is also the chairman of Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee (SJTMC), said conducting Rath Yatra on dates not sanctioned by scriptures amounted to serious deviation from established tradition and posed a threat to the sanctity of Jagannath culture.

The Gajapati Maharaja was addressing a congregation of the Shree Jagannath Chetana Research Institute here Sunday evening. He cautioned the people of Odisha and across the country against what he described as de-

viations from scriptural injunctions in the name of propagating Jagannath culture.

According to scriptures, Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath is held annually on Asadha Shukla Paksha Dwitiya Tithi (June-July). However, ISKCON, in a letter to the SJTMC, has said it would not be possible to conduct the globally celebrated Rath Yatra on one specific date.

The organisation, however, agreed to observe 'Snan Purnima' ritual on a single day worldwide in line with the tradition of the original shrine at Puri.

"The practice of holding Rath Yatra on dates not sanctioned by scriptures has emerged as one of the most serious misinformation campaigns against Shree Jagannath culture," Deb said. "In the name of propagation of Jagannath culture, there are rampant violations and spread of misinformation. In October this year, ISKCON expressed its view that it will not hold Rath Yatra as per the date prescribed by scriptures," he added.

"In most countries outside India, worship of Lord Jagannath is followed by a small minority, and permissions for processions are difficult to obtain. Most government authorities in the West allow such processions only on weekends to avoid disruptions," the ISKCON said.

Bihar delegation visits City to study waste management



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 22: A delegation from the Chapra Municipal Corporation of Bihar, led by Mayor Lakshmi Narayan Gupta, visited the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) area Monday to study its waste and fecal sludge management system, sanitation practices, and green initiatives.

The visiting team expressed high appreciation for BMC's efficient waste management, cleanliness, and efforts to maintain greenery across the city. It was informed that the Mayor, Commissioner, and corporators actively monitor sanitation systems in their respective wards and lead various developmental activities.

lidity of their PUC certificates. Petrol pump employees and the general public will also be sensitized through awareness programmes on how pollution certificates will be verified.

The Transport Department clarified that all petrol and diesel vehicles, including BS-IV and BS-VI models, must carry valid pollution certificates. Verification has already been integrated into the state's e-detection system at toll gates.

SI recruitment scam: Another accused arrested from Bihar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 22: The CBI arrested another accused from Bihar in the sensational police SI recruitment scam case.

The accused has been identified as Amit Bharati, who was apprehended from Bihar.

According to sources, the arrest comes after extensive questioning to the prime suspects Shankar Prusty and Suresh Nayak in custody, which helped the investigating team to accumulate crucial Intel.

Based on the information, the investigating team traced out Bharti and arrested him from Bihar. It is suspected that Bharti had a crucial role in cross-border operations, coordination or communications linked to the recruitment scam.

During the probe, the investigating team had questioned an SP-rank OPRB officer and summoned three board members.

It is to be noted that November 1, the mastermind behind the scam Shankar Prusty was arrested from Nepal-Uttarakhand border while trying to flee from the country. Besides, the CBI also arrested several people including middlemen, a police constable and others for their involvement in this high-profile recruitment scam.

Bhubaneswar Mayor Sulochana Das, BMC Commissioner Chanchal Rana, Additional Commissioner Kailash Chandra Das, Chairman of the Health Standing Committee Biranchi Narayan Mahasupakar, and other senior officials. The Chapra Municipal Corporation representatives were felicitated with bouquets and mementos.

During the interaction, BMC officials explained the city's solid waste and fecal sludge management systems, initiatives to create urban forests for maintaining greenery, and the use of mechanical sweeping at night to keep major roads dust-free. They also highlighted public awareness campaigns and regular mass cleanliness drives conducted across the city. It was informed that the Mayor, Commissioner, and corporators actively monitor sanitation systems in their respective wards and lead various developmental activities.

The event was attended by

CM: Hyd event shows growing investor confidence in Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 22: The two-day Odisha Investors' Meet and roadshow in Hyderabad demonstrated growing investor confidence in the coastal state, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said here Monday.

Addressing media at Lok Seva Bhawan in the City after returning from Hyderabad, the CM described the visit as highly encouraging and satisfying.

"The Hyderabad outreach clearly demonstrated growing investor confidence in Odisha, driven by policy clarity, infrastructure development, and proactive governance. The feedback from investors confirms that Odisha's industrial journey has moved from promise to execution," he said.

The CM said Odisha is fast emerging as one of India's most attractive investment destinations, asserting that the state is on course to become the country's next major growth engine.

During the two-day visit, the state government held 73 high-level meetings and conducted two sector-specific roundtable discussions — one with eight leading pharmaceutical companies and another with 27 defence sector companies. The CM also held 38 one-on-one meetings with industrial leaders.

"These interactions have helped position pharma and defence — currently underrepresented sectors in Odisha — as new growth drivers," Majhi said. Discussions covered investments in pharmaceuticals and medical devices, defence manufacturing, renewable energy equipment, electronics and IT, data centres, textiles and technical textiles, and advanced manufacturing.

The Hyderabad roadshow resulted in the signing of 13 MoUs involving investments worth



₹27,650 crore, expected to generate 15,905 jobs. Additionally, nine investment intention filings (IIFs) were received, indicating potential investments of over ₹39,131 crore and employment for 40,435 people.

Overall, the meet and roadshow generated investment commitments of ₹66,781 crore, with an employment potential of 56,340 jobs, making it one of the most successful investor outreach programmes undertaken by the Odisha government.

The CM said 'Enterprise Odisha' will be held in Rourkela January 28 and 29, 2026, marking a new milestone in the state's industrial roadmap. A separate industrial conclave is also planned in Kolkata.

He said the next three months will be crucial, with the government focusing on converting investment proposals into grounded projects through faster approvals and swift execution.

To further improve the investment climate, the state government is undertaking 23 amendments across various laws to enhance ease of doing business. Outdated regulations are being reformed to align

with current industrial needs," the CM said.

"The faster projects take off on the ground, the stronger investor confidence becomes," he added.

During the visit, the CM and senior officials toured Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) in Hyderabad, a leading defence manufacturing company. Majhi said Odisha will develop a defence manufacturing ecosystem, with special focus on MSMEs, startups, skilled manpower, and precision manufacturing. Preparations are underway for missile component manufacturing within the state.

Majhi said that since Ut-karsh Odisha: Make in Odisha Conclave 2025, projects worth ₹4.38 lakh crore have been approved, with employment potential for 2.55 lakh people. In the last 18 months alone, industrial projects worth ₹2.10 lakh crore have been inaugurated or grounded, creating 1.63 lakh jobs.

Sector-specific conclaves in pharma, textiles, and other industries have been held, while Odisha also signed two MoUs at the Semicon Conclave in Delhi — reflecting sustained focus

■ Enterprise Odisha will be held in Rourkela January 28 and 29, 2026. A separate industrial conclave is also planned in Kolkata

■ To improve ease of doing business, 23 amendments are being made to various laws

► The next three months will be crucial, with the government focusing on converting investment proposals into grounded projects through faster approvals and swift execution

MOHAN CHARAN MAJHI, CHIEF MINISTER

on industrialisation.

Industrial leaders who participated in the meetings praised Odisha's transparent policies, infrastructure improvements, responsive governance, and the CM's personal monitoring of projects. Many investors expressed confidence that Odisha is poised to become India's next growth engine.

"The rising interest across pharma, defence, electronics, renewable energy, IT, textiles, and advanced manufacturing reflects Odisha's transformation into a diversified, value-driven, and employment-generating industrial economy," the CM said.

Summing up the visit, Majhi said Odisha's industrial mantra rests on trust, continuous effort, and long-term partnerships, adding that the success of the Hyderabad roadshow marks a significant chapter in the state's growth story.

Among others, Industries Minister Sampad Chandra Swain, Handlooms and Textiles Minister Pradeep Bal Samanta, School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond and MSME Minister Gokulanda Mallik were present during the Monday's press meet.

Locals alerted police after



FOR A CAUSE: OUAT students stage a sit-in on the institution premises in Bhubaneswar, Monday, demanding immediate release of stipends

OP PHOTO

Retired Health dept supervisor found murdered in Kalahandi

POST NEWS NETWORK



Bhawaniapatna, Dec 22: A retired supervisor of the Health department was found murdered at her residence and her gold jewellery missing at Gadijor village under Dharmagarh police limits in Kalahandi district, police said Monday.

"The deceased, identified as Suchitra Khuntia, 62, had injuries on her neck and hands, suggesting she was strangled with a shawl she was wearing," they said, adding, "All the gold jewellery she was wearing was missing, indicating a dacoity."

According to preliminary information, the incident took place late Sunday night. Khuntia was alone at home as her husband, a retired high school teacher, and their two sons, both government employees, live outside the village.

Police said the assailants

spotting a lifeless Khuntia lying in front of the house in the morning. Officials from Dharmagarh police station, along with a forensic team and a sniffer dog squad, reached the spot and launched an investigation.

While police were probing the case from multiple angles, family members claimed the murder may not have been committed solely for dacoity.

A case has been registered at Dharmagarh police station. The exact reason behind her killing is yet to be ascertained, they said.

According to family sources, Khuntia had retired from service in December 2024. She was a native of Mahadevstv village under Kapatpur police limits in Puri district.

After the postmortem, the body was handed over to the family.

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Farmers stage protest over delay in opening of mandis

POST NEWS NETWORK



Jhariaon, Dec 22: Farmers staged a blockade in three blocks of Nabarangpur district Monday to protest delays in opening of mandis, distress sale of paddy and maize, and a sharp cut in maize prices to ₹600 per quintal.

The agitation led by the Chashi Mahasangh affected Jhariaon, Umerkote and Raighar blocks. The outfit warned that the protest would continue for seven days unless the district administration intervenes and resolves the issues.

At Jhariaon bus stand, farmers staged a sit-in, displaying sacks of paddy and maize. Jhariaon tehsildar Suman Kumar Patra reached the spot

and held discussions with the protesters, urging them to withdraw the blockade. However, the farmers said the agitation would be called off only after the district Collector personally assures a solution in writing.

The Biju Janata Dal and the Congress extended support to the protest. Leaders from both

While maize fetched between ₹2,300 and ₹2,400 per quintal around this time last year, prices in Odisha have dropped to about ₹1,800 per quintal, despite the Centre fixing the minimum support price at ₹2,400. Farmers said they are incurring losses of ₹500 to ₹600 per quintal.

They also alleged that the state's Chief Minister's maize mission has not been implemented effectively in the area. Paddy procurement has also been delayed this year, with no targets issued so far as agreements with millers are yet to be finalised.

Farmers warned that if the issues are not addressed immediately, the agitation would be intensified across the district.

3 get 10-yr RI for drug peddling

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 22: A court here Monday awarded 10-year rigorous imprisonment (RI) to three persons after convicting them of peddling brown sugar in the City in 2020.

The 3rd Additional District Judge-cum-Special Judge, Bhubaneswar, Khurda held Sk Sagar, Tamay Kumar Sahoo and Sk Faikir guilty in a drug peddling case

at both the Centre and the state, Odisha continues to lag behind in the IT sector. They said the state has immense potential for IT growth, but the opportunities are not being fully utilised.

As a result, many Odisha youths are being forced to seek employment outside the state.

Speakers at the conference said the government must focus on how the IT sector in Odisha can grow in the coming years and stressed the need to provide land, basic infrastructure and a single-window clearance system to generate large-scale employment.

Among others, Global Odisha SAP president Deepak Mishra and secretary Satyaranjan Swain attended the mega event.

Bonai/Lahunipara, Dec 22: A young man and a woman drowned in Brahmani river near Biratola temple under Chandiposh police limits in Sundargarh district Monday.

The deceased were identified as Gyanendra Swain and D Monalisa Rao, both residents of Rourkela area. Chandiposh police registered two unnatural death cases (23/25 and 24/25) and began an investigation. Locals spotted a motorcycle and clothes lying near the riverbank around 10am and alerted the police and Fire Services personnel. Police recovered them from the water body and rushed them to Bonai sub-divisional hospital, where they were declared dead.

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX
DOLLAR 89.65 ▲ 0.38		SENSEX 85567.48 ▲ 638.12
EURO 105.41 ▲ 0.53		NIFTY 26172.40 ▲ 206.00

CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
GOLD ₹136,528 ▼ 2322				SILVER ₹213,559 ▼ 5,120	



WEATHER		FORECAST	
Max Temp	26.7°	25.0°	
Min Temp	13.6°	12.4°	
Humidity	77%	90%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	



Angul's OP Jindal School hosts 2-day annual function



POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, Dec 22: OP Jindal School, Angul celebrated its annual function December 19 and 20 at Eden Garden in Jindal Nagar in a vibrant and festive atmosphere.

The two-day event featured cultural programmes — 'Medallage' on the first evening and 'Punarbhavat' on the second.

While Jindal Mahila Samiti's Seema Malhan and Anita Mittal graced the first evening as chief guests, Jindal Steel's Vice President and Head of Administration Colonel Sudip Majhi attended as the event as guest of honour.

On the second evening, Angul Superintendent of Police Rahul Jain was the chief guest. Jindal Steel, Angul Executive Director (In-Charge) and Chairman of the School Management Committee Pankaj Malhan, Executive Director (Projects & Iron Zone) and Vice Chairman Damodar Mittal and Jindal

Addressing the gathering, the dignitaries motivated students to strive for excellence and become responsible citizens, while appreciating the school's academic and co-curricular achievements. Principal Ashwini Kumar Sahu welcomed the guests and presented the annual report.

Around 600 students from Nursery to Class V performed on the first day, while nearly 500 students from Classes VI to XI showcased their talents on the second day. A total of 160 students were felicitated for academic excellence, attendance, and overall performance. Successful alumni qualifying in NEET, JEE Main and other competitive examinations were also honoured.

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The happiness you give makes you happier than the happiness you receive.

THE MOTHER

Far-Right Chile

Far-Right politics has claimed yet another South American country – Chile – with the recent victory of the ultraconservative lawyer, Jose Antonio Kast who defeated his rival, the Left party candidate Jeannette Jara in the presidential race. Jara is a minister in the outgoing Communist government. Kast's victory marks the latest win for the resurgent Right in Latin America. He joins Ecuador's Daniel Noboa, El Salvador's Nayib Bukele, Argentina's Javier Milei and Bolivia's Rodrigo Paz who ended in October almost two decades of socialist rule in his country.

The election result of Chile was a foregone conclusion with the combined vote share of the Far-Right and Right forces far exceeding that of the Left candidate in the first round of election that failed to produce a clear-cut winner making the run-off inevitable. The surprising element of the outcome is that Chile is the most stable and peaceful among South American countries where the space for ultra-Right politics was supposed to be limited. However, crimes and entry of migrants from neighbouring Peru, Bolivia and Venezuela have been problematic for the average Chilean population. It is said that a common refrain of the average Chilean has been that day to day life is no longer as peaceful as before. This is an oversimplification of the reality since official crime data shows people taking refuge in Chile are much less prone to committing crimes than homegrown criminals. But, Kast eloquently leveraged voter fears over rising crime and migration to take the country to its sharpest rightward shift since the end of a ruthless dictatorship clamped by General Pinochet in 1990. He secured 58.30 per cent of the vote in the runoff with Leftist candidate Jara, managing to get 41.70 per cent.

The political background of Kast reveals his rightist bent of mind from the beginning of his career and he conducted his presidential campaign in a clever manner, avoiding many of the controversial issues such as his family's closeness to Pinochet, abortion and same-sex marriage. Being the father of nine children, he is a staunch opponent of abortion. His strategy was not to harp on issues on which his position is well known. Instead, he focused on a severe crackdown on crimes, setting up super-secure jails, creating a police force inspired by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement to rapidly detain and expel illegal migrants in the country. He has also touted massive cuts in public spending and embracing a market economy with least government control as the answer to the livelihood crisis. He is an admirer of US President Donald Trump's politics and has declared he would replicate the Trump-style Make America Great Again (MAGA) to safeguard Chile's economic interests first.

However, Kast's more radical proposals are likely to face pushback from a divided Congress. While Right-wing parties won seats in both legislative houses in a November general election, most of those gains came from more traditional parties. The Senate is evenly split between Left and Right-wing parties, while the swing vote in the lower legislative body belongs to the populist People's Party. For example, changing the country's abortion laws would require the support of more than half of the Congress to pass.

Chile is the world's largest copper producer and a major producer of lithium. Expectations of less regulation and market-friendly policies have already buoyed the local stock market and equity benchmark.

Among the contributory factors to the rise of the Far-Right is the people's frustration due to the failure of the liberal political parties to deliver. In Chile's case a section of the population is not also averse to the return of the dictatorial politics represented by Pinochet's regime. The past close ties between Kast's family and the Pinochet government do not make him untouchable to this section of the people. However, during the campaign Kast rather kept silent over facts such as his father being German and an ardent supporter of Nazism and his brother a minister during Pinochet's rule.

The challenge before Kast will be how he can demonstrate his political skill to get his job done in the Congress where he will not have an absolute majority. He will need to forge a coalition with the right party if he hopes to govern without trying to trample down the country's democratic gains, however noticeable or otherwise.

WISDOM CORNER

“The truth is a snare: you cannot have it, without being caught. You cannot have the truth in such a way that you catch it, but only in such a way that it catches you.”

SOREN KIERKEGAARD

“Through pride we are ever deceiving ourselves. But deep down below the surface of the average conscience a still, small voice says to us, something is out of tune.”

CARL JUNG

“We're so engaged in doing things to achieve purposes of outer value that we forget the inner value, the rapture that is associated with being alive, is what it is all about.”

JOSEPH CAMPBELL

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1815: Jane Austen published her fourth novel, Emma, which centres on a precocious young woman whose misplaced confidence in her matchmaking abilities occasions several romantic misadventures.

1888: The incident at the Yellow House. Vincent van Gogh cut off part of his own left ear on this day in 1888 after a heated argument with fellow artist Paul Gauguin, with whom he had been sharing a house in the south of France. Van Gogh reportedly then delivered his ear to a nearby brothel. Art historians have debated the incident for decades.

1941: Early in World War II, invading Japanese forces defeated U.S. troops at the Battle of Wake Island.

1968: Eighty-two crewmen of the USS Pueblo were released after being held in captivity for 11 months by North Korea, which claimed the U.S. Navy intelligence ship had crossed into its waters.

1990: Slovenian referendum on independence from Yugoslavia. The Eastern European country had joined the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a socialist republic state in 1945. Actual independence for the country did not occur until June of 1991, when the Slovenians rejected Yugoslavian interference in the form of a 10-day war that ended on July 7, 1991. A new constitution for the country came into force on December 23, 1991.

LOL

MOVE YOUR CARS

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FOCUS VB-G RAM G A STEP BACKWARD



Ajit Ranade

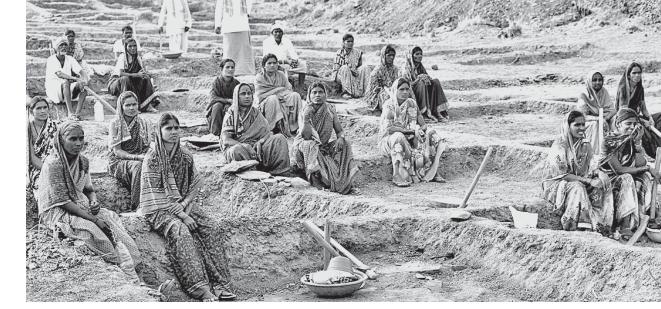
A RIGHT THAT DEPENDS ON FISCAL DISCRETION IS NOT A RIGHT; IT IS A FAVOUR

The passage of the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025 called the VB-G RAM G Bill, marks a decisive break from one of India's most consequential social legislations. It replaced the landmark National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) of 2005, which was later named after Mahatma Gandhi. While the government insists that the new law is a reform that raises the ceiling of guaranteed work from 100 to 125 days, this claim does not survive even cursory scrutiny.

What the new Bill does, in substance, is far more troubling: it dismantles the justiciable right to work, decentralises control, shifts the fiscal burden to states, and weakens labour's bargaining power in rural India.

NREGA was never just another welfare scheme. It was a legal innovation that translated Article 41 of the Constitution - the state's obligation to secure the right to work - into an enforceable entitlement. If work was not provided within 15 days of demand, the state was legally bound to pay an unemployment allowance. Under NREGA, employment was demand-driven, universal, and the right was justiciable. NREGA was a proxy for genuine unemployment insurance, a social security measure, which is still a distant dream despite the new Labour Codes. VB-G RAM G replaces this rights-based, demand-led framework with a supply-driven, budget-capped scheme whose guarantees are conditional on Central allocations and administrative discretion.

Recall that the roots of NREGA were in Maharashtra's Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS). Born out of the devastating droughts of the early 1970s, EGS was financed through a dedicated tax on urban workers and backed by a statutory guarantee of rural employment. Its genius lay in its simplicity: work on demand, locally determined public works, and wages paid as a matter of right. For



A programme that modestly improves the bargaining power of labour in one of the most unequal labour markets in the world should be celebrated, not dismantled

over three decades, EGS acted as an unemployment insurance programme for rural Maharashtra. It became the intellectual and institutional template for NREGA. The design of EGS itself was inspired by pilot projects implemented in the early 1960's, under the leadership of VS Page, a dhoti-clad Gandhian, who was the speaker of Maharashtra's Legislative Council for a record eighteen years.

EGS also revealed a political truth that remains relevant today. By setting a floor on wages and offering workers an exit option, it reduced labour's dependence on landlords and contractors. Unsurprisingly, it faced resistance from the landed elite who complained about "labour shortages" and rising wages. That resistance never disappeared; it merely went underground. The new Bill's provision allowing a 60-day pause in employment during peak agricultural seasons – ostensibly to "facilitate labour availability" – reads less like neutral policy design and more like a concession to agrarian power structures that have long resented NREGA's impact on rural labour markets. Even at its peak, NREGA has provided a tiny fraction of total person-days of employment in rural areas. So, its distortionary impact on the labour market is overstated.

The centrepiece of the government's defence is the increase in guaranteed employment from 100 to 125 days. But this is largely symbolic. Even under NREGA, only a small fraction of households actually received the full 100 days of work in most years. Raising the ceiling without ensuring an enforceable demand-based provision is like promising a taller ladder while quietly removing the ground beneath it.

More importantly, the new Bill caps total expenditure through "State-wise normative allocations" determined by the Centre. Any spending beyond this ceiling must be borne by the states, following procedures prescribed by the Centre itself.

A right that depends on fiscal discretion is not a right; it is a favour. By embedding budget caps in the statute, the Bill converts a legal guarantee into a Centrally-rationed programme. NREGA, for all its flaws, embodied a workable form of cooperative federalism. The Centre bore the full wage cost and most of the material cost, recognising that poorer states with higher unemployment also have weaker fiscal capacity. VB-G RAM G overthrows this logic. The proposed 60:40 cost-sharing pattern shifts a significant additional burden onto the states – estimated at over ₹50,000 crore annually – at a time when the fiscal autonomy of the states has already been eroded by GST and borrowing constraints. This is not merely a fiscal issue; it

is a constitutional one. Employment and public works fall squarely within the State List and the domain of local self-government under the Eleventh Schedule.

Defenders of the Bill argue that NREGA was inefficient, corruption-prone, and administratively rigid. But these were problems of implementation, not of design. The response to delayed payments, biometric failures, and exclusion errors should have been institutional repair, not legal dilution.

NREGA's most radical feature was its universality. It did not rely on poverty lines, beneficiary lists or targeting errors. Anyone willing to do unskilled manual work could demand employment. This self-targeting design minimised exclusion and leakage, a point repeatedly affirmed by empirical research. VB-G RAM G departs from this principle by allowing the Centre to notify specific rural areas where employment will be provided. A guarantee that applies only where the Centre chooses to apply it is a contradiction in terms. During the COVID-19 shock NREGA acted as a shock absorber, sustaining rural demand and preventing mass destitution. It has also raised the labour force participation of women, improved bargaining power for the poorest workers, and reduced distress migration. These were not side effects; they were central to its design. A programme that modestly improves the bargaining power of labour in one of the most unequal labour markets in the world should be celebrated, not dismantled.

A nation aspiring to be "Viksit Bharat" by 2047 should be expanding the scope of social citizenship and social security, not shrinking it. Reforming NREGA was both necessary and desirable. Replacing a justiciable right with a discretionary scheme is neither reform nor progress. It is a constitutional, economic and moral step backward.

The writer is a noted economist.

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SPECTRUM GEOPOLITICS



Joschka Fischer

BETRAYING LONGSTANDING US ALLIES WILL NOT MAKE PUTIN MORE INCLINED TOWARD PEACE

The Transatlantic Rupture

The North Atlantic is undergoing sweeping historical changes as the rift between Europe and America widens. Under President Donald Trump, the US is seeking to create a world order based solely on spheres of interest, and dominated by the "big three" global powers: the US, China, and Russia. To achieve this, the Trump administration is prepared to abandon the traditional foundations of US influence: its network of alliances to the values that have underpinned American democracy for 250 years.

As Trump and his MAGA movement see it, Europe is the second major battleground (after the US itself) that needs to be conquered. And because this will require breaking up the EU, the decades-long transatlantic alliance has given way to enmity in remarkably short order. It is worth dwelling on how radical a break this is. The US emerged from World War II as the principal victor in both the European and Pacific theaters. It then went on to defeat the Soviet Union in the Cold War, which was not just a costly thermonuclear arms race between two superpowers, but also a struggle between two

socioeconomic and normative systems. The Western combination of individual liberty, democracy, and the market economy was pitted against the Soviet one-party police state, with its sclerotic planned economy. The choice between two alternatives was clear, and America's model ultimately prevailed. The Soviet Union collapsed, dissolved, and vanished, leaving a Russian rump that, unable to reconcile with a post-imperial identity, became increasingly revisionist.

But with Trump's election and then re-election, Americans made clear their frustration with serving as the world's policeman and shouldering whatever burden that entailed. Thus, Europe's great failure over the past decades after the end of the Cold War is that it did not assume more responsibility for defending its own borders – a precondition for preserving sovereignty.

From the Kremlin's perspective, Europe's vulnerability was an opportunity. The new US National Security Strategy, together with Trump's plan to end the war in Ukraine – which largely endorses Russia's maximalist positions – leaves no doubt about this administration's objectives. In a typically deranged fashion, Trump and his MAGA acolytes claim that the EU is an anti-American project that must be destroyed. Countries that have been friends and allies for eight decades are now being portrayed as adversaries, while Vladimir Putin's Russia is to be admired.

By staking out these positions, Trump has effectively dismantled the transatlantic West. In its place, he is creating an imperial America to mirror Russia's imperial dreams, as well as those increasingly being pursued by China. In this new world order, raw power, not the rule of law, is all that matters.

In pursuit of this vision, Trump has made George Orwell's gifts of prophecy look even more impressive. In Orwell's classic dystopian novel, 1984, the world is similarly divided between three continental powers. Under Trump, the traditional values of American democracy have become obstacles to sweep aside, while foreign authoritarian regimes have become models to emulate.

Perhaps Trump hopes that

by betraying Ukraine – and, by extension, Europe – and siding

with Putin, he can draw Russia onto his side in the struggle with China. But Putin is not going to play ball. He knows that without China at his side, Russia is far too weak to maintain its precarious great-power status. Besides, both China and Russia are seeking a reordering of the global hierarchy at America's expense.

Betraying longstanding US allies will not make Putin more inclined toward peace. On the contrary, he will be further emboldened. Drunk from his victory over the West in Ukraine, he will start planning his advance westward. A ceasefire on his terms is nothing but a tactical pause.

Already, the risk of a wider war is rising along Eurasia's main axes: in the Far East between China and Japan, over Taiwan, and on NATO's eastern flank. Europe must prepare for hard times ahead. This dangerous geopolitical crisis has been compounded by its own weak growth and failure to keep pace with China and America technologically. This gap must be closed. Sovereignty may come at a high price, but Europe's freedom is priceless.

The writer is a former foreign minister of Germany.

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Bangladesh turmoil

Sir, Bangladesh is heading into its February 12 parliamentary elections amid instability, underscoring the fragility of the interim government led by Muhammad Yunus. The immediate trigger for the unrest was the death of Sharif Osman Hadi, a leader of the July movement and an election candidate, which sparked violent protests in Dhaka and other cities. Mobs attacked media houses, public infrastructure and Indian diplomatic premises, alarming citizens and neighbours. Although the interim administration declared a day of mourning and appealed to people to resist mob violence by "fringe elements," its response has failed to inspire confidence. The crisis has exposed Yunus' limited ability to control rival political forces, Islamist hardliners and street mobilisation. Anti-India slogans and graffiti have become common since former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's departure to New Delhi, turning India into a convenient political target. For New Delhi, the implications are serious. Communal violence and radical mobilisation affect border security, while China and Pakistan exploit the vacuum. People to people ties are eroding, goodwill is diminishing, and uncertainty over Hasina's stay in India complicates diplomacy. The election outcome will shape regional stability.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Simplify language

Sir, The renaming of laws and regulations in complex, Sanskritised Hindi risks widening the existing resentment against Hindi in non-Hindi states, a challenge the government at the Centre is already confronting. In regions like Punjab, many citizens struggle to pronounce, spell or remember new titles such as BNS replacing IPC, MGNREGA by VB GRAM G Act making laws feel distant and intimidating. Instead of promoting unity, such linguistic complexity alienates people. If renaming is unavoidable, terms should be simple, short, brief and easily understood across regions. Governance should aid smooth assimilation, not fuel linguistic anxiety. Laws exist for the common citizen, not just for scholars and examiners; simplicity builds acceptance, complexity breeds resistance.

RS Narula, PATIALA

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

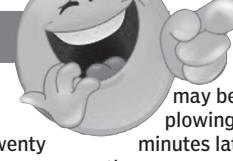
OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010



MOVE YOUR CARS

It had been snowing for hours when an announcement came over the intercom: "Will the students who are parked on University Drive please move their cars so that we



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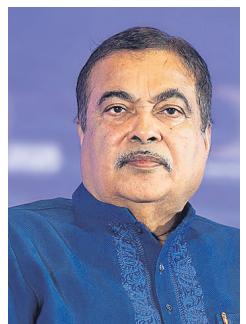
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national

of the day quote



“The progress of the country, resources, and technologies are important, but what is more important is the futuristic technology and knowledge. The future of any country is based on what type of futuristic technology it possesses

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

RARE MIGRATORY BIRDS SPOTTED AT LATUR LAKES

Migratory birds like the Bar-headed Goose (*Anser indicus*) and the Common Crane (*Grus grus*) have begun arriving at the Pangaon and Kamkheda lakes in Latur's Renapur tehsil, wildlife experts said Monday



ARAVALLI DEFINITION ISSUE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Dec 22:

AICC general secretary Sachin Pilot Monday said that the Congress will hold a massive protest in Jaipur December 26 against the Centre on the Aravalli definition issue.

He was referring to the recent recommendations of a committee under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change on the definition of the Aravalli hills and ranges, accepted by the Supreme Court November 20.

According to the new definition, "Aravalli hill is any landform in the designated Aravalli districts with an elevation of 100 metres or more above its local relief", and an "Aravalli range is a collection of two or more such hills within 500 metres of each other".

Speaking to reporters here, Pilot said a massive protest will be held to stop the government from doing what it intends.

"To my mind, the only incentive could be to oblige few people who make money in the mining sector. Whoever may be involved - there should be a judicial probe as to who started it, who is doing and behind all this."

Pilot said he will take part in the march December 26 in Jaipur to raise a voice against the



CONG SPREADING LIES: BHUPENDER

NEW DELHI: Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav Monday

accused the Congress of spreading "misinformation" and "lies" on the issue of the new definition of the Aravallis and stressed that mining can be carried out legally in only 0.19 per cent of the area covered by the mountain range. At a press briefing, he said the Narendra Modi government remains "fully committed" to protecting and restoring the Aravallis. "The Congress, which allowed rampant illegal mining in Rajasthan during its tenure, is spreading confusion, misinformation and lies about the issue," the minister alleged.

intention of the BJP ruled governments to allow the Aravallis to disappear. "It is a death warrant, as I can see it, in the next few years, what is going to happen to the Aravallis."

"The Aravallis issue is something that the central government and more importantly the BJP leadership has to answer. All the four states where the Aravalli exists -- Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi -- are ruled by BJP," Pilot said.

He further said no matter what excuses they make, the fact of the matter is that today, for the first time ever the Aravalli range is in absolute risk and that will be catastrophic not just to that region, but even for areas around it.

"The Aravallis have served as a safeguard to the NCR, Delhi region, by stopping the desertification, and supporting monsoon, crops, irrigation, all of those things for a millennium," he said.

Questioning as to why a report given by some foreigner in 1968 regarding the height and breadth of Aravallis is being taken into consideration, the former union minister said that the Government of India and the government of Rajasthan should come forward and say categorically that they will not allow any illegal mining, and protect the Aravallis for the next generation.

"Young people of India are watching every step of the government...the forest survey of India has given a report, the empowered committee chairman has resigned. More than ten thousand entities are doing illegal mining, even today. Why do the four state governments, all belonging to BJP, not stop the illegal mining? Why are we endangering the future generations' livelihood and prosperity, risking the Aravallis," he asked.

The Centre Sunday rejected claims that the new definition of the Aravalli range will allow large-scale mining and cited a Supreme Court-ordered freeze on new mining leases in the region.

It said a Supreme Court-appro

DRAFT ROLLS

Mamata blames EC for 'gross errors'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Dec 22: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Monday lashed out at the Election Commission, alleging that there were "gross errors" in the draft rolls published following the enumeration phase of the SIR in the state.

Addressing a meeting of TMC's Booth Level Agents (BLAs) at the Netaji Indoor Stadium here, she dubbed it an exercise "riddled with blunders from A to Z".

Banerjee also accused the poll panel of housing "a BJP agent in its office" and "altering electoral rolls as per his advise". She alleged that the EC was appointing observers without informing the state government, and working to foster the interests of the saffron camp.

"The EC is working only as per the directions of the BJP. There are gross errors in mapping of voters during the enumeration phase of the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise in the state. The exercise is a blunder from beginning to end," the CM asserted.

Alleging that thousands of "legitimate voters" have found their names deleted from the draft rolls, Banerjee said, "We don't know how the problems of so many genuine electors can be solved in so little time."

In the draft electoral rolls published after the enumeration phase, 58,20,899 names have been excluded, reducing the electorate to 7.08 crore in West Bengal.

Around 1.36 crore entries

have also been flagged for "logical discrepancies", while 30 lakh voters were categorised as unmapped - a significant percentage of whom are likely to be called for verification hearings. The TMC supremo also asserted that central officers who have been appointed micro observers for SIR hearings have "little knowledge" of the local language, and are "unfit" to conduct hearings.

"Several central agencies have played a role in appointing BLAs. They have also appointed observers without our knowledge. The state will extend all cooperation to them, but I must know the details of all these people, including where they live and which departments they serve."

The chief minister accused the EC of "forcefully" conducting the exercise, "which takes two years to complete", within two months, ahead of the assembly elections, so that the state is unable to carry out its development activities.

Banerjee warned the BLAs that "indiscriminate" use of AI in mapping of rolls has also resulted in wrongful deletions.

Without directly referring to Banerjee's own Bhabanipur assembly seat in south Kolkata from where nearly 45,000 names were deleted in the draft rolls, Banerjee said, "Several wards in the Kolkata municipal area underwent delimitations recently on account of which many addresses were realigned. That led to faulty mapping in the SIR rolls. This isn't BLO fault, it's an error of the commission".

UDF announces 3 new associates

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Dec 22: Ahead of the Assembly polls, the Congress-led UDF in Kerala Monday decided to expand its base by adding three more political parties, including the Trinamool Congress, to its fold.

However, the leader of one of the parties named as a UDF associate, said they had never approached the Congress-led alliance for a tie-up. Speaking to reporters after a UDF meeting, leader of opposition in Kerala assembly, V D Satheesan, said the Trinamool Congress (Kerala unit), led by former MLA P V Anvar; the Janadhipathy Rashtra Party (JRP), led by tribal leader C K Janu; and the Kerala Kamaraj Congress, led by Vishnupuram Chandrasekharan, will become associates of the UDF.

C K Janu and Vishnupuram Chandrasekharan were earlier constituents of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and had quit the front, Satheesan said.

After showing signs of abating in the wake of the breakfast diplomacy by the CM and Shivakumar, the leadership row has once again come to the forefront over the past few days.

AICC General Secretary Sachin Pilot sought to play down the power tussle, saying the two top leaders were working like "brothers," even as Shivakumar sought to blame the media over the matter.

"There are no issues to resolve. You (media) are creating

LEADERSHIP ROW

No issues in K'taka Cong to resolve: DKS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Dec 22: A day after Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the leadership row involving Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar was at the local level and not the high command, the deputy CM Monday said no such confusion exists locally.

Siddaramaiah reiterated that the party high command and top Congress leader Rahul Gandhi should decide on the matter and that everyone will abide by it.

After showing signs of abating in the wake of the breakfast diplomacy by the CM and Shivakumar, the leadership row has once again come to the forefront over the past few days.

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"There are no issues to resolve. You (media) are creating



issues. I have said what I have to. The chief minister has said what he has to. Kharge has said whatever he has to..." Shivakumar told reporters.

He urged the media not to worry about the party's internal dynamics.

He was responding to a question on Congress president Kharge's statement that the confusion over the leadership issue in the party's Karnataka unit exists only at the local level and not with the party high

command.

Kharge had also said that the local leaders should take ownership of the internal disputes rather than blaming the high command. The power tussle has intensified amid speculations of a change in chief minister in the state, after the Congress government reached the halfway mark of its five-year term on November 20. The speculation was fuelled by a "power-sharing" pact between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar in 2023.

Delhi court reserves order on Michel's plea

New Delhi:

A Delhi court

reserved its order for Tuesday on a plea filed by Christian James Michel seeking release from custody in a CBI case related to the alleged AgustaWestland VVIP chopper scam. Michel has sought release on the grounds that he had already undergone the maximum period of sentence of seven years for the charges against him.

More than 500 flights delayed at Delhi airport

New Delhi:

More than 500

flights

were

cancelled

at

the

Delhi

airport

due

to

bad

weather

and

low

visibility

conditions.

An official said that 14

flights

including

6 arrivals

and

8 departures

were

cancelled.

These also include

international

flights.

DIAL

operates

the

Indira

Gandhi

International

Airport (IGA),

the

country's

largest

airport,

which

generally

handles

around

1,300

flights

daily.

HC protects Madhavan's personality rights

New Delhi:

The Delhi High

Court

Monday

protected

the

personality

rights

of

Bollywood

actor

R Madhavan

by

restraining

several

websites

and

online

platforms

from

illegally

using

his

name

or

images

for

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gain

without

his</p

national

of the day quote

The railway link between Kashmir and the rest of the country has immensely benefited the valley as it has provided an all-weather connectivity for the residents here

FAROOQ ABDULLAH | NC PRESIDENT

As part of the follow-up exercise, I spoke to Swami Suvirananda, general secretary of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Kolkata, and requested him to introduce foreign language courses at Viveknagar. I am happy to share that the proposal has been approved

MANIK SAHA | TRIPURA CM

I witnessed (developments related to) the Jhiram Valley incident. Today, I want to say with great responsibility that no one else was providing information and inside details about the Jhiram Valley incident; it was people from within their own ranks who were involved in getting their own people killed and were in contact with the Naxalites

JP NADIA | BJP PRESIDENT

POST OF THE DAY

Someone said India can't protest. Here is India. The Rajasthan Government is now on the back foot, saying only 0.01% of trees are being cut. Why cut even that 0.01%? Did your father plant those trees? You can't ensure planting or survival, yet you cut what already stands. A tree takes decades to give the oxygen you erase in minutes. Who gave you this right? Trees are not your property.

You are not the owner of the forest you're only its caretaker, a chaprasi of that jungle

@th_anonymous

SHORT TAKES

Sabarimala gold loss: Cong slams SIT

Kochi: The Opposition Congress Monday expressed dissatisfaction with the ongoing SIT probe into the alleged gold loss case in Sabarimala, saying it is being controlled by the state Home department. Speaking to reporters here, KPCC Chief Sunny Joseph accused the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of "failing" to find the actual perpetrators of the crime. He said the Kerala High Court itself raised concerns over the pace of the investigation by the SIT.

13 cybercriminals held in separate ops

Dhanbad/Deoghar (Jharkhand): Jharkhand Police arrested 13 cybercriminals in separate operations across Dhanbad and Deoghar districts, recovering mobile phones, SIM cards, ATM cards, cash and other materials used to dupe people, officials said Monday. In Dhanbad, five cybercriminals from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand were arrested following a late-night raid at a hotel within Bank More police station limits.

Female Asiatic lion cub dies at zoo

Visakhapatnam: An 83-day-old female Asiatic lion cub died at the Indira Gandhi Zoological Park here Monday following a severe intestinal complication, officials said.



India no longer hosts any of the world's leading universities... While a few universities have now entered the top 200, none figure among the top 10 or even the top 50 worldwide

SHASHI THAROOR | SENIOR CONG LEADER

NATIONAL HERALD CASE

Delhi HC seeks response from Gandhis' on ED plea

Justice Ravinder Dudeja issued notice to the Gandhis and others on the main petition as well as on the ED's application seeking a stay on the December 16 trial court order, which held that cognisance of the agency's complaint in the case was "impermissible in law" as it was not founded on an FIR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



offence of money laundering is "not maintainable"

in the absence of an FIR for the offence mentioned in the schedule to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). It said the agency's probe stemmed from a private complaint and not an FIR.

During the hearing Monday, Mehta contended that the trial court has gone "horribly wrong" with its view and this would affect other cases.

He said that after investigation, the ED officials gather evidence and other material, and, like the police files a report, the ED files a prosecution complaint.

Singhvi disputed the submissions made on behalf of ED but said he will accept notice and file a reply in the matter. "I want to say something. I am only saying that there is a perspective which is contrary to what my friend is saying," he said.

The ED, in its plea, said the trial court order has in effect given a hall pass to a category of money launderers only on the ground that the scheduled offence is reported by a private individual by way of a complaint to a magistrate.

It claimed there are such grave allegations levelled against Gandhis and others which cannot be brushed aside lightly by relying upon judicial

precedents cited to conclude that the ingredients of the criminal offences alleged are lacking.

"The sole ground given for declining cognisance is that a prosecution complaint filed by an authorised officer under the PMLA cannot be based on a scheduled offence emanating from a private complaint filed by a private individual and such scheduled offence must be registered only by a law enforcement agency, that is, either by way of an FIR by the police or a complaint by a person authorised to investigate the scheduled offence," the plea said.

The ED said the special judge has failed to appreciate that cognisance taken by a competent court on private complaint stands on a much higher footing than a mere FIR registered by police, wherein there is a possibility that cognisance may be declined after filing of a chargesheet by police.

The plea said the trial court judgment created two impermissible classes of scheduled offences leading to complete manifest arbitrariness in which a person who commits a scheduled offence will not be prosecuted for generation and laundering of proceeds of a crime only because it is based on a private complaint to a magistrate, of which cognisance was taken by applying judicial mind.

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It claimed there are such grave allegations levelled against Gandhis and others which cannot be brushed aside lightly by relying upon judicial

Delhi to seal polluting units without notice

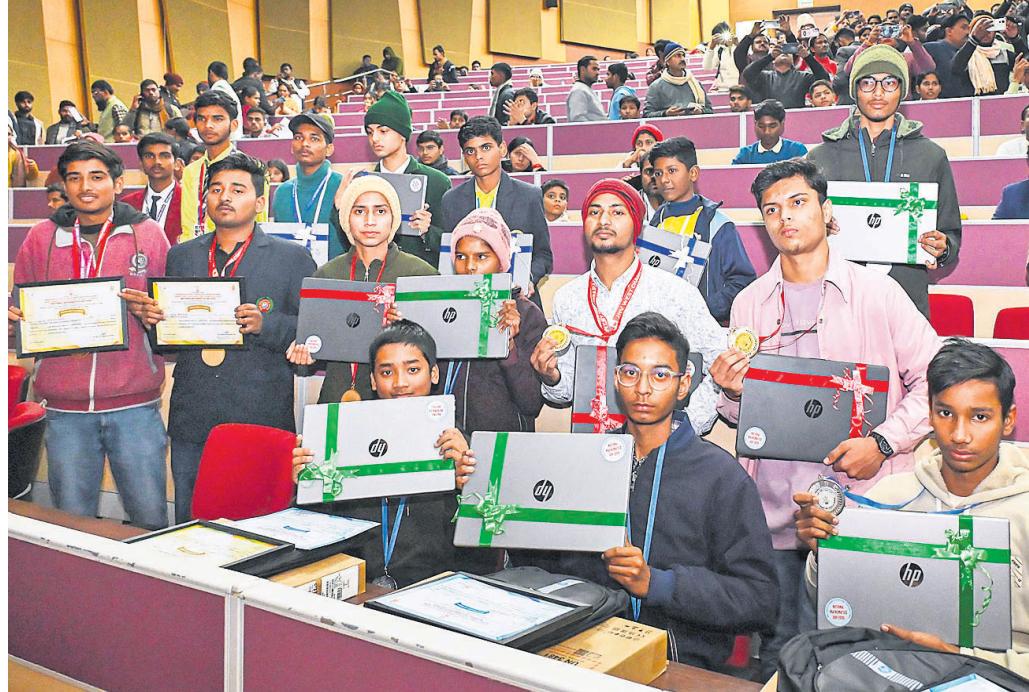


PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

During the survey, a total of 1,586 units in notified industrial areas were inspected till December 20, of which 232 were found operating without the consent of DPCC and causing visible pollution. In redevelopment areas, 1,102 units were inspected and 179 were found violating pollution norms, according to officials.

Based on the findings, DPCC issued closure orders December 21 to all 411 non-compliant units, an official said. He said the three agencies launched the inspection following the directions of Delhi Environment and Forest Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa.

The survey, which began December 9, is still underway. Apart from this, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi is also conducting inspections.



Meritorious students display laptops distributed by the Bihar Education Department on the occasion of National Mathematics Day, at Gyan Bhawan, in Patna, Bihar



PM MODI TO CHAIR 5TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CHIEF SECRETARIES

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair the fifth national conference of chief secretaries in the national capital this week, a senior government official said Monday. The fifth national conference of chief secretaries will be held in Delhi from December 26-28, and it will be a significant step towards further strengthening the partnership between the Centre and state governments, the official told PTI

Trial of all seven accused in Zubeen death case begins in sessions court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Dec 22: All the seven accused in the death of singer Zubeen Garg appeared virtually before a sessions court here, as the trial in the case got underway on Monday.

The Kamrup (Metro) District and Sessions Court, after examining the accused via video-conferencing, fixed the next date of hearing January 3, 2026.

It will consider framing of charges on the date of the next hearing, a senior lawyer said.

The court will call for their production, either in person or virtually, to ask them

whether they plead guilty or will stand for trial in the case, he said.

Garg had gone to attend the North East India Festival (NEIF) in Singapore, where he died under mysterious circumstances while swimming in the sea September 19. The accused - NEIF chief organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta, the singer's secretary Siddhartha Sharma, his cousin Sandipan Garg, and two personal security officers (PSOs) Nandeswar Bora and Paresh Baishya appeared from the Baksa Jail, while musician Shekharjyoti Goswami and singer Amritprava Mahanta were present online from Haflong Jail.

The celebrated singer's sister Palme Borthakur was present in court during the hearing, and later told reporters that the family has full faith in the judiciary.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the case had charged Mahanta, Sharma, Goswami and Amritprava with murder in the chargesheet filed before the Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) December 12.

The singer's cousin and suspended Assam Police officer Sandipan Garg has been charged with culpable homicide not amounting to murder, while the two PSOs were charged with criminal conspiracy and criminal breach of trust by misappropriating funds or property entrusted to them.

Surgery conducted under mobile light

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hazaribag, Dec 22: A video showing a tubectomy being conducted on a woman under a mobile phone flashlight in a government health centre in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district has gone viral, prompting the administration to order an investigation, an official said Monday.

Tubectomy is a surgical procedure performed to achieve permanent contraception in women. The administration has also decided to take action against a worker who recorded the video and uploaded it on social media, the official said. The incident shown in the 29-second video clip occurred at the Community Health Centre (CHC) in Keredari. It was seen in the video that the lights suddenly went out during the surgery, but the procedure continued under a mobile phone flashlight.

Ashok Kumar, the Civil Surgeon of Hazaribagh, told PTI that a 45-year-old 'sahiya' (a community health worker) shot the video during the tubectomy operation and shared it on social media platforms.

He said that the CHC has a generator facility to supply power in case of outages, but it took some time to change the system and during that period, the phone flashlight was used.

The patient's operation was performed on December 13, while the video surfaced on social media platforms on December 18, Kumar said.

The district health department will take action against the 'sahiya', and a show-cause letter will be issued to her in this regard, the civil surgeon said. A thorough investigation into the matter is being carried out, he said.



the world's largest source country of international students with over 13.35 lakh students studying overseas in 2024. Also, the country has the largest higher education age cohort (18-23 years) in the world, 15.5 crore. In 2024, for every 1 interna-

tional student coming to India, 28 Indian students went abroad, underscoring a significant brain drain for the country," it said.

About the inflow of foreign students in India, the report titled 'Internationalisation of Higher Education in India' pre-

sented the data of 2021-22.

Nepal, Afghanistan, the USA, Bangladesh and the UAE were the top source countries of international students in India in 2021-22, it said.

As per the report, Canada, the US, UK and Australia host 8.5

lakh Indian students who spent ₹2.9 lakh crore on higher education in 2023-2024. At the same time, Latvia has the highest 17.4 per cent of Indian students, followed by Ireland hosting 15.3 per cent, and Germany, 10.1 per cent.

The report, citing numbers recorded in 2020, said that among states, Andhra Pradesh was the top source with 35,614 students going overseas, followed by Punjab, which sent 33,412, and Maharashtra 29,079 students for higher education.

It noted a surge in outward remittances from ₹975 crore to ₹29,000 crore during 2014-24 under the RBI's Liberalised Remittance Scheme for Indian students studying abroad.

international

of the day quote

Russian special envoy Kirill Dmitriev will report to President Vladimir Putin on US proposals for possible Ukrainian settlement as soon as he arrives in Moscow from Miami

DMITRY PESKOV | SPOKESPERSON, RUSSIA

Peserving the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Denmark, its sovereignty and the inviability of its borders is essential for the European Union

ANOUAR EL ANOUNI | SPOKESPERSON, EU

The Cambodians want a ceasefire, let's have a discussion on a ceasefire. We proposed that our two militaries should meet as soon as possible

SIHASAK PHUANGKETKEW | FOREIGN MINISTER, THAILAND

SHORT TAKES**China slaps tariffs on EU dairy**

Hong Kong: China will impose up to 42.7 per cent of provisional tariffs on dairy products, including milk and cheese imported from the European Union, its Commerce Ministry said Monday. The elevated duties, which take effect Tuesday, were based on preliminary results from an investigation opened by China's Commerce Ministry in August 2024 as tensions between Beijing and Brussels flared. Beijing reviewed subsidies provided by EU countries for their dairy and other farm products. Beijing's probe was launched as part of tit-for-tat measures as the EU investigated Chinese subsidies on electric vehicles, and later imposed tariffs as high as 45.3 per cent on China-made EVs. China had initiated other probes into European brandy and pork imports as countermeasures for the EU's tariffs on Chinese EVs.

Pak-China sign 24 digital MoUs

Islamabad: Pakistan and China have signed 24 MoUs aimed at strengthening digital collaboration between the two countries, state media reported Monday. The MoUs were signed in Beijing under the Joint Working Group on IT Cooperation and included one government-to-government, seven government-to-business, and 16 business-to-business agreements, state-run Radio Pakistan reported. The initiative focuses on developing an innovative and pragmatic digital corridor to enhance cooperation in the IT industry. The digital corridor will create new avenues for Pakistani technology companies and expand cooperation in ICT infrastructure development. The Ministry of IT and Telecom has been pursuing multiple international collaborations to train up to 300,000 Pakistani youths in advanced digital skills, promote AI adoption.

Iran conducts missile exercise

Dubai: Iran held missile drills in various cities Monday, state media reported, citing unnamed sources and witnesses, in what was the second such reported exercise in a month. NBC News reported Saturday that US President Donald Trump was to be briefed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that any expansion of Iran's ballistic missile programme poses a threat that could necessitate swift action. Western powers regard Iran's ballistic missile arsenal both as a conventional military threat to Middle East stability and a possible delivery mechanism for nuclear weapons should Tehran develop them. It denies any intent to build atomic bombs.



China is firmly opposed and has lodged solemn representations with the Japanese side

LIN JIAN | SPOKESPERSON, CHINA

ASIM MUNIR RECEIVES SAUDI CIVILIAN HONOUR

Pakistan's Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, has been awarded Saudi Arabia's highest civilian honour, the King Abdulaziz Medal of Excellence

**BANGLADESH UNREST**

Minorities protest against persecution



Unidentified gunmen Monday shot in the head Motaleb Shikder, another leader of the violent student-led 2024 uprising, in southwestern Khulna city

AGENCIES

Dhaka, Dec 22: Minority groups in Bangladesh Monday held a protest in the national capital over the interim government's failure to prevent the persecution of minorities, as authorities announced the arrest of 21 suspects linked to the lynching of a Hindu man, attacks on media offices and violent demonstrations near an Indian diplomatic mission.

Leaders of Hindu and other minority organisations Monday formed a human chain in Dhaka against the lynching of Dipu Chandra Das, saying the interim government has failed to stop violence, killings and persecution of minority communities.

A police spokesman Monday said 12 people were now in jail or custody as investigations were underway about the killing of Das.

His killing sparked widespread protests by factory workers, students and rights groups while India expressed concerns as well.

"He (Muhammad Yunus) claims he will build a humane Bangladesh, but in reality, he is an inhumane chief adviser," Joint Coordinator of the Minority Unity Front Manindra Kumar Nath told the protesters in front of Jatiya Press Club.

The Hindu population in Bangladesh has been affected by a series of incidents against minority communities in the country after the ouster of then-prime minister Sheikh Hasina in August last year.

Meanwhile, the anti-crime Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) arrested 10 suspects over the lynching of Das. Later, police arrested two more suspects.

A police spokesman Monday said 12 people were now in jail or custody as investigations were underway about the killing of Das.

The office of the interim government chief, who earlier called Das' killing a "brutal crime", Monday said nine people were arrested over the violent attack on the mass circulation Prothom Alo and Daily Star newspapers and prestigious cultural groups Chhayanat and Udichi Shilpi Goshthi in the capital.

The government has called for restraint, responsibility, and unity as Bangladesh navigates a critical democratic phase ahead of its upcoming general elections.

"Police and other law enforcement agencies informed the Chief Adviser that they primarily identified 31 suspected perpetrators of these incidents, analysing video footage," his press wing said in a statement.

Besides, it said, video footage analysis detected three people who "tried to create rowdiness" in front of the residence of India's assistant high commissioner in the southeastern port city of Chattogram.

Unidentified gunmen Monday shot in the head Motaleb Shikder, another leader of the violent student-led 2024 uprising, in southwestern Khulna city. Shikder's condition is critical. "The Khulna Division head of NCP (National Citizen

- Editors warn of escalating threats against journalists
- Protests after youth leader's death lead to media office attacks
- Interim government blames fringe elements

general elections.

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Unidentified gunmen Monday shot in the head Motaleb Shikder, another leader of the violent student-led 2024 uprising, in southwestern Khulna city. Shikder's condition is critical. "The Khulna Division head of NCP (National Citizen

Party) and central coordinator of the party's workers front, Motaleb Shikder, was shot a few minutes ago," NCP's joint principal coordinator Mahmuda Mitu said in a Facebook post.

Mob violence targets media

Bangladesh's top media editors warned Monday that threats against journalists have escalated into a fight for survival, after the killing of a prominent youth leader triggered violent attacks on newspaper offices last week.

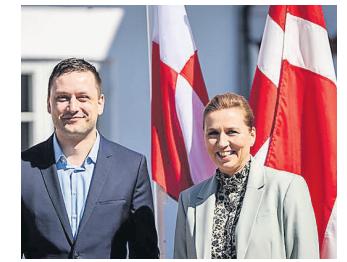
Assailants accused the newspapers of "serving the interests of India and Sheikh Hasina," allegations editors strongly denied. Hasina fled to India after her ouster and remains in New Delhi despite Dhaka seeking her extradition. At a protest meeting organized by the Editors' Council and the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh, The Daily Star editor Mahfuz Anam said journalists were receiving explicit death threats.

"On social media, we have seen messages saying journalists of The Daily Star and Prothom Alo should be hunted down and killed in their homes," Anam said. "Freedom of expression is no longer the main issue. Now it is about the right to stay alive."

Bangladesh ranks 149th out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index. Rights groups say continued attacks on journalists and activists could further shrink civic space ahead of the election. Editors' Council president and New Age editor Nurul Kabir, who was assaulted while trying to rescue colleagues, accused the attackers of attempting to burn journalists alive inside their offices.

Denmark, Greenland reject US takeover bid

Denmark, Greenland vow that US won't take over Greenland after Trump appoints envoy



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Copenhagen, Dec 22: The leaders of Denmark and Greenland insisted Monday that the US won't take over Greenland and demanded respect for their territorial integrity after President Donald Trump announced the appointment of a special envoy to Greenland.

Trump's announcement Sunday that Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry would be the US special envoy prompted a new flare-up of tensions over Washington's interest in the vast, semi-autonomous territory of Denmark, a NATO ally. Denmark's foreign minister said in comments to Danish broadcasters that he plans to summon the US ambassador.

"We have said it before. Now, we say it again. National borders and the sovereignty of states are rooted in international law," Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and her Greenlandic counterpart, Jens-Frederik Nielsen, said in a joint statement. "They are fundamental principles. You cannot annex another country. Not even with an argument about international security."

"Greenland belongs to the Greenlanders and the US shall not take over Greenland," they added in the statement, emailed by Frederiksen's office. "We expect respect for our joint territorial integrity."

Trump called repeatedly

during his presidential transition and the early months of his second term for US jurisdiction over Greenland, and has not ruled out military force to take control of the mineral-rich, strategically located Arctic island. In March, Vice President JD Vance visited a remote US military base in Greenland and accused Denmark of underinvesting there.

The issue gradually drifted out of the headlines, but in August, Danish officials summoned the top US diplomat in Copenhagen following a report that at least three people with connections to Trump had carried out covert influence operations in Greenland. Denmark is a NATO ally of the United States.

On Sunday, Trump announced Landry's appointment as special envoy, saying that "Jeff understands how essential Greenland is to our National Security, and will strongly advance our Country's Interests for the Safety, Security, and Survival of our Allies, and indeed, the World."

Landry wrote in a post on X that "it's an honour to serve you in this volunteer position to make Greenland a part of the US." Danish Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen said in a brief statement that "the appointment confirms the continued American interest in Greenland."



Katharina Schmid of Germany soars through the air during the women's FIS Ski Jumping World Cup competition at the Gross-Titlis Schanze, Switzerland

Car bomb kills Russian general



rency camera footage.

"Various versions for the killing are being examined, one of which involves the possible role of Ukrainian intelligence services in organising the crime," she said.

There was no official comment from Ukraine.

Myrotvorets, an unofficial Ukrainian website that provides a database of people described as war criminals or traitors, updated its entry on Sarvarov to say the 56-year-old had been "liquidated".

A string of Russian military figures and high-profile supporters of Moscow's war in Ukraine have been assassinated during the nearly four-year-old conflict, and Ukrainian military intelligence has said it was responsible for a number of the attacks.

Among those killed in previous car bombings in or near Moscow were a senior member of the General Staff, the chief of Russia's Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Protection Troops and the daughter of a prominent Russian national figure.

Interfax news agency quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying President Vladimir Putin had been instantly informed of the attack on Sarvarov.

The bomb exploded under the Kia Sorento car driven by Lieutenant General Fanil Sarvarov, head of the Russian General Staff's army operational training directorate, as he left a parking space at 06:55 Moscow time (0355 GMT).

Russia's State Investigative Committee said Sarvarov had died from his injuries. It published video of the wrecked vehicle, with blood visible on the driver's seat and one of the doors blown off.

Svetlana Petrenko, a spokesperson for the committee, said investigators were gathering forensic evidence, questioning witnesses and reviewing secu-

rency camera footage.

"Various versions for the killing are being examined, one of which involves the possible role of Ukrainian intelligence services in organising the crime," she said.

There was no official comment from Ukraine.

Myrotvorets, an unofficial Ukrainian website that provides a database of people described as war criminals or traitors, updated its entry on Sarvarov to say the 56-year-old had been "liquidated".

A string of Russian military figures and high-profile supporters of Moscow's war in Ukraine have been assassinated during the nearly four-year-old conflict, and Ukrainian military intelligence has said it was responsible for a number of the attacks.

Among those killed in previous car bombings in or near Moscow were a senior member of the General Staff, the chief of Russia's Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Protection Troops and the daughter of a prominent Russian national figure.

Interfax news agency quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying President Vladimir Putin had been instantly informed of the attack on Sarvarov.

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JAPAN PLANS HISTORIC NUCLEAR RESTART



- Niigata assembly votes to restart Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant
- Watershed moment in Japan's pivot back to nuclear energy
- Japan idled all reactors after 2011 Fukushima disaster
- Many residents are wary of restart
- Around 300 people protested against the plan Monday in Niigata

reactors at the plant January 20, public broadcaster NHK reported.

Kashiwazaki-Kariwa's total capacity is 8.2 GW, enough to power a few million homes. The pending restart would bring one 1.36 GW unit online next year and start another one with the same capacity around 2030.

"We remain firmly committed to never repeating such an accident and ensuring Niigata residents never experience anything similar," said TEPCO spokesperson Masakatsu Taka-

ta. Taka declined to comment on timing.

TEPCO shares closed up 2% in afternoon trade in Tokyo, higher than the wider Nikkei index (.N225), opens new tab, which was up 1.8%.

ers stood in the cold holding banners reading 'No Nukes', 'We oppose the restart of Kashiwazaki-Kariwa' and 'Support Fukushima'.

"I am truly angry from the bottom of my heart," Kenichi-

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"I am truly angry from the bottom of my heart," Kenichi-

leisure

**KATE REVEALS HOW SHE COPED WITH UNWANTED ATTENTION**

Kate Winslet believes life is "better" with a "good meal and a good poo" and they were among the things that helped her cope with unwanted attention. The *Titanic* actress said this while recalling the "horrorific" intrusion into her personal life when she was younger.

ALEC BALDWIN BATTLED SUICIDAL THOUGHTS AFTER RUSTSHOOTING

Actor Alec Baldwin has revealed he battled suicidal thoughts in the aftermath of the *Rust* shooting as he faced charges in connection with the death of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins on the set of his film. The 67-year-old actor was holding a prop gun on the set in 2021 when it discharged, killing Hutchins.

**FORTUNE FORECAST**

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES

You will be very enterprising and industrious today. You make your plans very carefully and execute them perfectly. Despite this, your progress will be very slow. However, Ganesha advises you not to despair and showers his blessings on you.

**TAURUS**

This one of those ordinary days that, somehow, do not turn out too well. Unexpected expenses, that could totally upset your budget, cannot be ruled out. Something or the other is likely to give you an uncomfortable stomach upset. Ganesha urges you to take your medicines on time, and exercise moderation and discretion while deciding what and how much you should eat.

**GEMINI**

You had better start sharing your feelings with your family today, says Ganesha. Also, it's time to tell your family about your current financial status. It will help you feel better. Your energy levels will soar and you will approach everything with renewed vigour. Your spouse will bring good luck to you. How about a dinner extraordinaire with your loved ones?

**CANCER**

You may discuss certain serious issues with your beloved today, predicts Ganesha. Your time till afternoon will be spent in discussions and deliberations about the issue. However, this issue may not be enough in letting you off the hook on the work front. Think twice before you act.

**LEO**

After a long time, it seems as if the stars are aligning to bring something special for you. Call it your field day, but today, everything will go your way, says Ganesha. Expect to get appreciated for your hard work in office. As for the home front, you will get all the support you need from your family members for refurbishing your home. From little tips to personal desires, fulfilling them may involve more expenses than you expect.

**VIRGO**

The extraordinary way in which you do things will earn you many admirers. Superiors at work will laud you for your commitment. Evenings will be fun-filled and entertaining. Look to relax with some meditation or music... or both.

**LIBRA**

Working for the government is always a key responsibility, says Ganesha. But today of all days proves to be fabulous and phenomenal for all those in government service. Your actions will translate into accomplishment and you may rest assured that you shall be duly recognized and rewarded for your meritorious service. Keep your ears and eyes open and your lips preferably sealed, your bosses may wish to confide and speak confidential matters to you.

**SCORPIO**

Your business associates will emerge as intangible assets for you today, says Ganesha. You will probably start off an innovative joint venture without any doubt or indecision. Hard work and enthusiasm are always a good combination for achieving success. Your skill and business sense will bring you positive feedback from your seniors, feels Ganesha.

**SAGITTARIUS**

The horizons of your thoughts are open and serene. Forgive and forget will be your mood today - even for the most serious mistakes. Generosity was never your Achilles' heel, says Ganesha.

**CAPRICORN**

Plans for expanding business may require you to take risks, leaving you in a dilemma on more than one occasion. In such desperate circumstances, following your instincts can lead you to success, advises Ganesha.

**AQUARIUS**

It's a busy day at work, and you're probably involved in some pending project work. It's advisable that you don't get complacent. Keep an eye on your opponents to have an edge over them, suggests Ganesha. Colleagues will be supportive, and so will family.

**PISCES**

A day wherein you will be handling responsibilities on both the home front and at the workplace awaits you, says Ganesha. Expect to be involved in home refurbishing projects, where expenses are likely to soar. Appreciation and gratitude will come your way at the end of a hard day's work.

**MENTAL HEALTH****Ananya defends Gen Z**

Mumbai: A lively generational debate unfolded on the talk show *Two Much With Kajol and Twinkle* when guest Ananya Panday along with host Twinkle Khanna, and co-guest Farah Khan shared contrasting perspectives on Gen Z, emotional awareness, and the evolving language around mental health. The candid conversation, marked by humour and differing viewpoints, has since caught the attention of viewers online.

During the discussion, Ananya Panday spoke passionately about how Gen Z is often misunderstood. "Gen Z knows a lot more than people give them credit for and they're very..." she began, before being interrupted by Farah Khan, who jokingly quipped, "What do they know? Everything! They know about sourdough and..." drawing laughter from the panel.

Ananya continued, stressing emotional awareness as a defining trait of her generation.

"No, no, they're very in touch with their emotions," she said, prompting an instantly sharp response from Twinkle Khanna. "What emotions? They're traumatized by everything!" Twinkle remarked, staying true to her trademark wit. Refusing to let the point slide, Ananya defended her generation, saying, "No, they're not traumatized. They're the first generation that's talking about feelings. It has nothing to do with the question, but it's the first generation that's really embracing mental health and freedom of expression."

AGENCIES

Mumbai: Global icon Priyanka Chopra Jonas has spoken about her daughter Malti Marie Jonas' love for India and Indian culture.

The actress who was seen as a guest in the opening episode of *The Great Indian Kapil Show* season 4 revealed how Malti is in love with the idea of 'Indian Princess'.

"Malti travels with me to India and has seen a lot of places; from Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad and Ayodhya, she has travelled to a lot of places. I am trying to help her know more about the Indian culture, traditions and values," the *Aitraaz* actress shared.

She further said, "Whenever she wears Ghagra Choli, she calls herself an Indian princess. She loves her bindi, bangles, and accessories."

To this Navjyot Singh Sidhu added, "A queen's daughter will obviously call herself a princess," referring to Priyanka as

**Mahima on women's remarriage in India**

Mumbai: *Durlabh Prasad Ki Dusri Shaadi* seems like a fun family film, yet the filmmakers highlight its focus on women's remarriage and the attached stigma. Recently, Mahima Chaudhry, who plays a key role in the movie, talked about changing mindsets, society pressure.

Mahima, who plays Babita, said, "Marriage is a very important thing in our culture... In India, it's such a big part. We've seen so many grand weddings this year alone, and in everyone's life, especially in our culture, marriage is a huge deal."

She highlighted the changing attitudes toward remarriage, pointing out its growing acceptability for women in modern times. "Aaj kal, especially women ke liye toh acceptable ho gaya hai. Pehle aadmi toh do-do shadiyan kar lette the. You know unki

karwa dete the kisi bhi age me," she noted.

The actress referenced historical cases to highlight how men remarried without facing any opposition. "For example, if they became widowers, like Shrikant Verma ji's (co-actor) grandfather had four marriages arranged because whenever his grandmother passed away, he'd remarry right away," she shared, while stressing that women deserve the same acceptance today.

AGENCIES

**Reason Tamannaah was rejected for *Dhurandhar* song**

Mumbai: The soundtrack of Aditya Dhar's *Dhurandhar* is getting as much attention as the film itself. While the title track and *Fafla* have become viral hits, other songs are topping the charts, too. Among these is the dance number *Shararat*, picturised on Ayesha Khan and Krystle D'Souza. Now, the song's choreographer has revealed that the original choice for the dance number was Tamannaah Bhatia, only for director Aditya Dhar to veto her.

In an interview with Filmyyan, the song's choreographer Vijay Ganguly revealed that his choice was Tamannaah. "In my head, she was the (one). I had suggested her, but Aditya was very clear that he did not want what people call an item song, something that went out of the story. If it were just about one girl, it would have taken attention away from the story," he explained.

Eventually, Aditya convinced Vijay to have two dancers, instead of one in the song, which is how Ayesha and Krystle came into the picture. "He (Aditya) didn't want the attention to be about this one person. If it were Tamannaah, it would've been about her and not the story." He also added, "Jo ho raha tha film mein, there was a lot going on, and if you go away from the story, then the song is just a cut-to song," Vijay explained.

AGENCIES

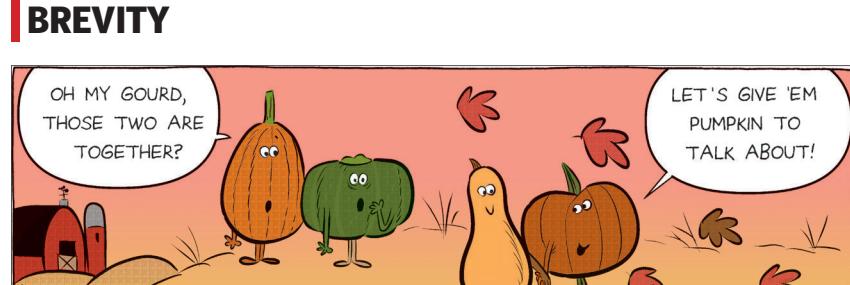
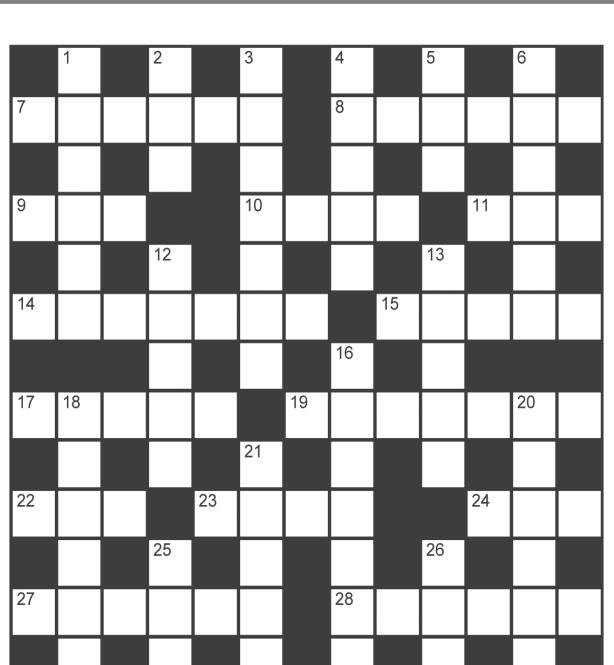
PC's revelation about daughter

queen.

In the same episode, the actress revealed how her American popstar husband, Nick Jonas, once took her in his plane over the clouds to see the moon and break the fast on the eve of Karva Chauth.

The actress had flown to India specifically to shoot for the first episode of Kapil Sharma's talk show, marking the start of its fourth season.

IANS

**PEANUTS****CALVIN AND HOBBES****BREVITY****FUN POST****CROSSWORD**

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Across

- 1 Mexican wrap
- 24 Frigid
- 8 Wealth
- 27 Banquets
- 9 Keep out
- 28 North Sea
- 10 Collagist's need
- 11 Kimono tie
- 14 Bland
- 15 Spiral-horned antelope
- 17 Lover
- 19 One of the ABC islands
- 22 Consume
- 23 Hoodwink
- 26 Archipelago
- 25 Recipe amt.
- 26 Cousin of calypso

Down

- 5 Air hero
- 6 Mouselike jumping rodent
- 12 Deadly snake
- 13 Think tank output
- 16 Pug-nosed pooh
- 18 Blueprint
- 20 Bowed
- 21 Crow
- 25 Recipe amt.
- 26 Cousin of calypso
- 1 Hoodwink
- 2 Frigid
- 3 Banquets
- 4 North Sea
- 5 Kimono tie
- 6 Bland
- 7 Spiral-horned antelope
- 8 Lover
- 9 One of the ABC islands
- 10 Collagist's need
- 11 Kimono tie
- 12 Deadly snake
- 13 Think tank output
- 14 Bland
- 15 Spiral-horned antelope
- 17 Lover
- 19 One of the ABC islands
- 22 Consume
- 23 Hoodwink
- 24 Frigid
- 25 Recipe amt.
- 26 Cousin of calypso

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SUDOKU

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

**SOLUTIONS****SUDOKU**

Neeraj shines amid athletics turmoil

Olympian finally breaks 90m barrier but no end to country's doping woes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 22: Despite a rare blip in form, Neeraj Chopra was the biggest saving grace for India's doping-marred athletics landscape after getting the 90m "monkey off his back" even as the sport's administrators worked towards making the country a hub of big-ticket events in a bitter-sweet 2025.

The 27-year-old Chopra went past the coveted mark, considered the gold standard in javelin throw, in the Doha Diamond League but suffered a heartbreak when he failed to win a medal in the World Championships final in Tokyo later in the year.

Young Sachin Yadav outperformed Chopra to emerge as a potential world-class javelin thrower with a fourth-place finish.

But the doping menace showed no signs of decline with several top Indians caught in the net, including Olympian javelin thrower Shivpal Singh and former Asian Games medallist discus thrower Seema Punia.

An athlete-coach duo was also suspended for doping in a first of its kind instance, while two minor athletes too joined the Hall of Shame.

There was a silver lining though, as India staged two World Athletics Continental



Tour events, with Chopra hosting and winning one of them.

The country also mounted bids on some high-profile continental and global events, including the 2031 World Athletics Championships with Ahmedabad as the proposed venue.

90m high for Chopra
One of the most eligible bach-

elors in the country, Chopra tied the knot with tennis player Himani Mor in an intimate ceremony in a private resort in Himachal Pradesh with just a few close relatives and family members present.

The outside world got to know of the event only after Chopra himself posted the marriage photos in his social media handles.

A few months later, Chopra sent his spear to 90.23m to become the third Asian and 25th overall to achieve the feat.

Chopra clinched three more major titles -- the Paris Diamond League, the Golden Spike meet and the inaugural NC Classic. He realised his dream of hosting a world-class event in front of the home crowd and family members.

He, however, came up short in the Diamond League Finals, finishing second to German Julian Weber. He was bidding to regain the trophy he had won in 2022, but was barely able to touch the 85m mark.

But the most unexpected happened during the World Championships in Tokyo in September at the very venue where he achieved fame and Olympic gold in 2021.

Never-ending doping menace

India continued to occupy the second spot in the global list of athletes ineligible to compete due to doping offences, with 128 athletes in the list released by Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU).

Some of the country's top athletes caught for doping included Shivpal, Pune Half Marathon winner Pradhan Vilas Kirulakar, sprinter Sekar Dhanalakshmi and 2014 Asian Games medallist hammer thrower Manju Bala.

Two minors were also handed three-year bans by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA).

Former Indian junior team head coach Ramesh Nagpuri was suspended for "complicity" in doping.

Two more coaches -- Karamveer Singh and Rakesh -- were also suspended for "complicity" and "administration of prohibited substances" respectively.

Asian Games silver medal-winning long distance runner Kartik Kumar accepted a three-year ban from the US Anti-Doping Agency after testing positive for a range

of banned anabolic agents during out-of-competition tests there.

Alarmed by the rising doping cases, the AFI set up an anti-doping cell to track down coaches and training centres suspected to be involved in substance abuse.

It also made it mandatory for all coaches -- qualified and unqualified -- to register on its portal from this season onwards if they wanted to continue training athletes. It will also not recommend anyone who trains with unregistered coaches for national honours like the Arjuna and Khel Ratna award.

City takes centre stage

India successfully hosted a World Athletics Continental Tour bronze level meet on August 10 at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar. The event will be upgraded to silver level next year, to be held at the same venue August 22, 2026.

India also made bids for 2028 Asian Indoor Athletics Championships -- with Bhubaneswar as venue -- and the 2026 Asian Relays.

The AFI decided to introduce the National Indoor Athletics Championships in Bhubaneswar in March next year, to prepare for the 2028 Asian Indoor Championships for which it has made a bid.

Meanwhile, Adille Sumarwalla's reign as AFI chief came to an end with 2002 Asian Games gold-winning shot putter Bahadur Sago replacing him.

SHORT TAKES

Pakistan colts get hefty cash reward

Karachi: Prime Minister Shahbaz on Monday announced a special cash award of 10 million rupees for Pakistan's U19 Asia Cup-winning squad members. The Pakistan colts thumped India by 191 runs Sunday to claim the title. Sharif made the announcement at a reception for the team and officials in Islamabad where he lauded the team's performance.

Sarfaraz Ahmed, the mentor and manager of the team, told the media after the reception that the Prime Minister has announced cash award of 10 million (Approx \$36,000) to each of the players. Sarfaraz said he was enjoying working with a bunch of talented players who had a great future in the sport.

NZ rise to second in WTC rankings

New Delhi: New Zealand climbed to second on the ICC World Test Championship table after completing a dominant 323-run win over the West Indies in the third and final Test at Mount Maunganui. The comprehensive victory lifted New Zealand above South Africa, with only Australia ahead of them in the WTC standings. New Zealand's next assignment is a three-match World Test Championship series against England, scheduled for the middle of next year. The West Indies, meanwhile, remain ninth on the table and will return to action at home next year in a series against Sri Lanka and Pakistan. The Black Caps sealed the result midway through the final session at Bay Oval, with left-arm seamer Jacob Duffy claiming the final wicket to bring the match to a close.

England's Kane lands kicker honour

Berlin: England star Harry Kane's rise from the most expensive debut signing in Bundesliga history to a record-setting scorer and commanding team figure has turned his Bayern Munich spell into a full-blown success story, capped by prominent football magazine Kicker naming him its 2025 Personality of the Year. Praise poured in from every corner, and the 32-year-old England captain could not hide his grin when told about the award during an on-pitch TV interview. He had just scored his 81st league goal in only his 78th appearance in Bayern's 4-0 win over last-placed Heidenheim. "Really? Oh, that's great," he said. Kicker ran the headline "King and servant," calling Kane the ideal ambassador who has won over German fans. His impact has gone far beyond the 100-million-euro fee and the goals that followed, reports Xinhua. Kane was the Bundesliga's top scorer in each of his first two seasons, and finally won a league title in May 2025 after 14 years at Spurs and several brief loans earlier in his career.

HUGE PAY HIKE FOR WOMEN CRICKETERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 22: The BCCI has more than doubled the match fees of women cricketers and officials in domestic cricket, a move triggered by India's maiden ODI World Cup triumph and aimed at creating a more equitable pay structure across the circuit.

The substantial hike was approved by the Board's Apex Council.

As per the revised structure, senior women cricketers plying their trade in domestic tournaments will now earn between Rs 50,000 and Rs 60,000 per day, a significant jump from the existing Rs 20,000 (Rs 10,000 for reserves) per match day.

For senior women's domestic one-day tournaments and multi-day competitions, players in the first XI will receive Rs 50,000 per day, while those in reserves will be paid half the amount at Rs 25,000 per day.

In national T20 tournaments, first XI players will earn Rs 25,000 per match day, with reserves receiving Rs 12,500.

If a top domestic women cricketer now features across all formats during a full season, she can earn anywhere between Rs 12 lakh and Rs 14 lakh, according to BCCI officials.

The Apex Council has also increased the remuneration for junior women cricketers. Players in the Under-23 and Under-19 categories will be paid Rs 25,000 per day, while reserves will get Rs 12,500.

2ND WT20I

Women in Blue look to consolidate lead vs SL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Visakhapatnam, Dec 22: The Indian women's cricket team will look to raise its fielding standards by a few notches and build on a comprehensive opening win when it squares off against Sri Lanka in the second WT20I here Tuesday.

Playing its first international game after a historic World Cup triumph last month, Harmanpreet Kaur's side didn't need to break much sweat in the batting and bowling departments during an eight-wicket win over the island nation.

However, the team's fielding, especially catching, left a lot to be desired despite the bowlers managing to restrict the Lankans to a paltry 121 for 6.

"We are working on our fielding. Don't know why we keep dropping catches. It is wet out here, but it is not an excuse. That is something we really need to think about. In the next match, we will come about with better approach," skipper Harmanpreet Kaur had said after the match.

The Indian team had a well-deserved six-week break following the World Cup high. The players converged for a week-long camp at the Centre of Excellence in Bangalore after that.

Some rustiness in fielding was pretty much expected and the seasoned skipper feels that the team would be getting into



the groove very soon.

"We are playing after a month. We don't want to unnecessarily challenge ourselves. We just want to do well for the team.

"We just wanted to bowl first and see how it goes. We wanted to show the better approach," Harmanpreet had said.

On paper, India are overwhelming favourites to win the series against Chamari Athapaththu-led visitors.

In the form of her life, Jemimah Rodrigues commenced her post World Cup journey from where she left during the title victory.

She looked in rhythm and was especially severe on Shashini Gimhani, a left-arm wrist spinner, which is a rare breed in women's cricket.

Gimhani bowled a lot of over-pitched deliveries and failed to get her length right and Ro-

drigues alone creamed her for half a dozen boundaries.

The biggest gain for India was 20-year-old left-arm spinner Vaishnavi Sharma, who was recently ignored at the WPL auctions.

Although Vaishnavi went wicket-less, she gave away only 16 runs and didn't concede a single boundary.

For Shafali Verma, the series is an important one and she would like to be more consistent while batting in the format that suits her game.

In the opening game, Sri Lanka's inept performance didn't test India's batting much.

But the likes of Rodrigues, Harmanpreet, Deepthi Sharma would like to be challenged during the course of this series before embarking on a tough tour of Australia after the conclusion of the Women's Premier League.

68TH NAT'L SHOOTING CHAMPIONSHIP

Navy's Jadhav bags 10m air rifle gold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Dec 22: Navy's Kiran Ankush Jadhav held off the challenge of Olympian Arjun Babuta to clinch the gold medal in the men's 10m air rifle event at the 68th National Shooting Championship here Monday.

Jadhav finished with 252.1 to claim top-of-the-podium place ahead of Babuta, who secured silver with 251.4, while reigning 50m rifle 3 positions national champion Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar bagged bronze with 229.8.

Arjun's Railways teammate Shahru Tushar Mane finished fourth with 209.3, followed by Himanshu (181.1), Ramayana Tomer (166.7), Onkar Vikas Waghmare (145.4) and Pradeep Singh (123.3) to round out the

final lineup.

In the men's 10m air rifle junior final, Gujarat's Mohammad Murtaza Vania delivered an authoritative display to secure the gold medal with 254.3.

Abhinav Shaw of West Bengal claimed the silver with 251.6, while Onkar Vikas Waghmare finished third with 230.1 to earn the bronze medal.

Odisha's dominant opener against MP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Narainpur (Chhattisgarh), Dec 22: Team Odisha started their campaign in the 79th National Football Championship for Santosh Trophy 2025-26 against Madhya Pradesh and registered a convincing 4-0 victory in the opening group-stage match held here Monday.

Kartik Hantul, captain of the Odisha team, broke the deadlock early in a 15 minute penalty kick. The score stayed stable at 1-0 until the second half was nearing the end where forward Jitu Muduli added the second in the 75 minute.

With Madhya Pradesh taking another hit, it became

SANTOSH TROPHY



easy for Odisha to add more. Forward Srikant Gadaba landed a brace (77' and 90'+4') to take the lead to 4-0. With the fourth goal in added time it

showed the team's resilience to fight for more.

Odisha will play its next match against Telangana December 24.

FIFA MEN'S WORLD RANKINGS

AGENCIES

Zurich, Dec 22: In the final FIFA men's world rankings of 2025, published Monday, Spain maintained its position at the top of the global standings. Despite clinching the 2025 Arab Cup title, Morocco remains 11th--just 0.54 points shy of breaking into the top 10 for the first time since April 1998.

Jordan rose two spots to 64th, making it one of the few teams on the entire leaderboard to climb more than a single position, alongside Vietnam (107th) and Singapore (148th).

India's position remained unchanged since its fall in Novem-



ber rankings despite the All India Football Federation (AIFF) struggling to get the top-flight football league, Indian Super League, running in the country.

While the top of the table showed little movement, the true success stories of 2025 emerged through the ranks.

Kosovo, 80th, finished the year as the standout performer,

accumulating a massive 89.02 points--the highest by any nation--following a stellar run of seven wins and two draws. This consistency fuelled a year-high surge of 19 places for the European side. Other notable climbers include Norway (29th position) and Suriname, the latter jumping 15 places over the last 12 months and ending in the 123rd spot.

Pro Wrestling League returns after seven-year hiatus

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 22: The Pro Wrestling League (PWL), sanctioned by the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), unveiled its new official logo ahead of the fifth season, signalling the league's revival after a seven-year hiatus.

The Pro Wrestling League is scheduled to return in January 2026, featuring top Indian and international wrestlers, promising high-intensity competition and a commercially viable framework designed to support the sport's growth.

The newly launched logo is a modern, dynamic emblem inspired by the traditional red-and-blue wrestling mat, symbolising strength, balance and competitive spirit. The lo-

go represents a complete reset for the Pro Wrestling League, which has undergone a significant structural and operational overhaul under its new ownership and management.

PWL's renewed mission is to create a world-class professional platform for wrestlers by bridging the gap between grassroots akhadas and the global competitive stage. The league

aims to provide structured opportunities, international exposure and a professionally managed environment for athletes, while contributing to the long-term growth and credibility of wrestling in India.

The revitalised vision is being implemented in close collaboration with the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), ensuring the league operates in line with national regulations and governance standards. The collaboration is expected to strengthen the pathway for emerging wrestlers to progress from traditional training systems to the national and international spotlight.

The league is now being operated under the ownership and management of ONO Media, led by partners Akhil Gupta