



Words of wisdom

Actor Priyanka Chopra says instead of speaking about resolutions or ambitious goals people should choose kindness

LEISURE | P2



Epstein files

Justice Department releases more Epstein files, prosecutor email alleges Trump flew Epstein's jet more times reported

INTERNATIONAL | P10



China moves WTO

China files a complaint at the World Trade Organization (WTO) against India over latter's support measures for the solar and IT sectors

BUSINESS | P11



India slide

Men in Blue suffer sharp drop from fifth to the eighth position in FIH world rankings

SPORTS | P12

WITCH HUNTING
Parida to officers: Spend an hr every month in villages

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: Deputy Chief Minister Pra-
vati Parida Tuesday asked
officers to spend at least
one hour every month in
areas where social evils like
witch-hunting still exist.

She was addressing a
state-level workshop on the
prevention of witch hunt-
ing and prohibition of child
marriage, organised by the
Women and Child Develop-
ment (W&CD) Department.

Noting the pivotal role of
women in the state's rural
economy, she stressed that
education and sustained
awareness are the most
powerful tools to eradicate
regressive practices such
as witch-hunting and child
marriage.

She called upon the par-
ticipating officers from dif-
ferent districts to proactively
visit villages for at least
one hour each month to cre-
ate awareness against su-
perstition and social evils.
Parida, who is in charge of
the department, urged offi-
cers to act not merely out
of administrative duty but
with a strong sense of hu-
manity and social respon-
sibility.

She said the state govern-
ment was committed to
providing a healthy,
progressive, and supersti-
tion-free society for future
generations.

Addressing the gathering,
W&CD principal secretary
Shubha Sharma said it was
important to combine le-
gal enforcement with mass
awareness to effectively
combat social evils.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Science can wait. Economics
can wait. The environment can
wait. Everything can wait.
History must be fixed first

We're biggest fugitives:
Lalit Modi mocks India

AGENCIES

London, Dec 23: Lalit Modi
Monday appeared to take a
swipe at India when he
shared a video from Vijay
Mallya's birthday party,
where he referred to him-
self and Mallya as the two
"biggest fugitives".

"We are the two fugitives,
the biggest fugitives of In-
dia," Modi is heard saying
on the video.

"Let me do something to
break the internet down
again. Something for you
folks. Wat your heart out
with envy (sic)," he cap-
tioned the video posted on
his Instagram.

The video drew sharp re-
actions. "What a mockery
they have made of Indian
government," commented a
user.

"You ain't breaking no
internet son sit down," com-
mented another.

Some found fault with
the Indian authorities for
the state of affairs. "Indian
law shame that they dare

After years of close ties, In-
dia-Bangladesh relations
are witnessing a significant
downturn with Dhaka adopt-
ing a confrontational stance
toward New Delhi following
the ouster of former Prime
Minister Sheikh Hasina.
The lynching of Dipu Chan-
dra Das, a Hindu worker, in
Bangladesh has sparked a
fresh diplomatic row, push-
ing Delhi-Dhaka ties deeper
into crisis. India expressed
alarm over the killing and
rising attacks on minorities,
summoning the Bangladesh
envoy after protests erupted
outside its missions. Dhaka,
in turn, accused Delhi of al-
lowing Hindu nationalist
groups to threaten its diplo-
mats and shut visa centres
in India. With both sides
trading blame and suspend-
ing consular services, the
incident has become a flash-
point in an already strained
relationship

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 23: Pro-
tests erupted Tuesday in



OUTRAGE: Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal members wave the national flag during a protest outside the Bangladesh High Commission over attacks on Hindus in the neighbouring country in New Delhi, Tuesday

several parts of the country,
including near the Bangla-
desh high commission in
Delhi and its missions in
other cities, against the
lynching of a Hindu worker
in the strife-torn neighbour-
ing country.

Holding saffron flags and
shouting slogans, the pro-

testers belonging to right-
wing outfits demanded
strong diplomatic steps by
India to ensure the safety
of Hindus living in Bangla-
desh.

On December 18, Dipu
Chandra Das, a 25-year-old
garment factory worker,
was lynched by a mob and

his body set on fire over
blasphemy in Baluka in
Mymensingh district of
Bangladesh.

The demonstrations were
held in multiple cities in-
cluding Kolkata, Mumbai
and Jammu. Protesters also
burnt effigies and photos of
Muhammad Yunus, the

CM flags off 150 ambulances



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23:
Chief Minister Mohan Char-
an Majhi Tuesday flagged off
150 new ambulances under
the Emergency Medical Ambu-
lance Service in the state.

The state government has
procured as many as 428 new
ambulances at a cost of ₹111
crore, and the chief minister
launched 150 of them in the
first phase at a function held
at Kalinga Stadium here, an
official said.

According to a release is-

sued by the CMO, of the 428
new 108 ambulances, 419 old
ambulances and 2 ambulances
that were completely dam-
aged in accidents will be re-
placed by new ambulances.
In addition, 5 ALS (advanced
life support) ambulances
will be used at airports/air-
strips under the Commerce
and Transport Department
and 2 ALS ambulances for
Jharsuguda Cardiac Care
Hospital.

The official said that
as many as 5,000 patients
are being taken to various

hospitals in the state dai-
ly through 108-ambulance
service.

After dedicating the new
ambulances to the state, Ma-
jhi said, "The government is
phasing out old ambulances
and introducing new ones to
make healthcare delivery
faster and more efficient.
This will strengthen the
108 Emergency Medical
Ambulance Service (EMAS)
across the state.

The chief minister said
that the remaining new
ambulances will soon be in-
ducted into the ambulance
service, along with the old
Emergency Medical Ambu-
lance Service (EMAS) fleet.

Health and Family Wel-
fare Minister Mukesh
Mahaling, Ekamra Bhu-
baneswar MLA Babu Singh,
Health secretary Ashwati S,
Mission Director of Nation-
al Health Mission, Odisha,
Brunda D and other senior
officers of the Health de-
partment were present on
the occasion.

11-YR-OLD RAPED,
KILLED IN BHADRAK

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chandbali, Dec 23: An
11-year old girl was alleged-
ly raped and later murdered
here in Bhadrak district, po-
lice said Tuesday. The mat-
ter came to the fore after the
partially unclothed body of
the girl was found Tuesday
evening on the grounds of a
panchayat office under this
civic body limits.

The incident has spread
shockwaves in the area. On
being informed, Chandbali
police reached the spot and
sent the body for post-mor-
tem to Chandbali hospital.
Allegations have surfaced
that the girl was raped and
killed before her body was
dumped at the site.

Tension gripped the
community, with angry
residents demanding the
immediate arrest of those
responsible. Police person-
nel were deployed at the
spot and kept a close watch
on the unfolding situation.

According to police, the
girl's father had filed a miss-
ing person report at Chand-
bali police station earlier Tues-
day evening, shortly before
the body was found by locals.

DSPL-436

ବିକଶିତ ଭାରତ ଯୁବ
ନେତୃତ୍ୱ ସଂଳାପ-୨୦୨୬

ଶ୍ରୀ ନରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ମୋଦୀ
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ଶ୍ରୀ ମୋହନ ଚରଣ ମାଝୀ
ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

ରାଜ୍ୟସ୍ତରୀୟ
ଯୁବୋତ୍ସବ ସମାରୋହ

ପ୍ରଗତିର ସାରଥୀ... ଆମ ଯୁବଶକ୍ତି

୨୪ - ୨୬ ଡିସେମ୍ବର ୨୦୨୫

କଳିଙ୍ଗ ଷ୍ଟାଡ଼ିୟମ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

ନିଃଶୂଳ୍କ ପ୍ରବେଶ

କ୍ରୀଡ଼ା ଓ ଯୁବସେବା ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

OIPR-290011/13/0120/2526

Being a graceful loser is just about as important as being a generous winner, for success does not come by every day. Lowering your expectations will help steel you against disappointments today. There are indications you will embark on a pleasure trip with your soul mate, says Ganesha.



individuals but for everyone around them.

Welcoming motherhood has further shaped her outlook.

Grown-Ups, slated for release in March 2026.

AGENCIES

Milind fla

Mumbai: Actor and enthusiastic Milind recently spoke about the importance of fitness and awareness in building a better nation.

Speaking exclusively to news during a program, Milind said that he is keen to play a central role in shaping healthy habits. He highlighted the importance of understanding and adopting healthy lifestyle choices that can help women guide their households toward better well-being.

AGENCIES

Speaking exclusively to this news agency during an event, Milind emphasised that women play a central role in shaping family habits. He highlighted how understanding and adopting a healthy lifestyle can help women guide their households toward better well-being. The

Paurashpur actor shared, "I feel that if women stay fit and understand what a healthy lifestyle truly means, they can also guide their families and help build healthier households. And if families become healthy, our society will become healthier, and in

Recently, Milind attended an event where over 50 senior women participated in a special Grandmothers' 10K run held at the Vivekanand Education Society grounds in Chembur. Speaking on the occasion, the actor highlighted the importance of active ageing, encouraging grandmothers to challenge long-held stereotypes through fitness and active participation.

1.830

At a time marked by noise, division, and constant online engagement, she reminded audiences of the power of simple human decency.

On the work front, she made her acting debut in 2020 with the comedy *Jawaani Jaaneman*, which also starred Saif Ali Khan and Tabu. She was most recently seen in *Bade Miya Chote Miya*, where she shared screen space with Akshay Kumar, Tiger Shroff and Prithviraj Sukumaran.

IAN

IT'S OVER! THE FIGHT IS OVER!

HEY, YOU GUYS! THE FIGHT IS OVER!

FINALE

YOU KNOW, SCHOOL WOULDN'T BE SO BAD IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO GO EVERY DAY.

...AND IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO LEARN ANYTHING...AND IF YOU TOOK AWAY ALL THE TEACHERS AND ALL THE OTHER KIDS...IF IT WAS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT, SCHOOL WOULD BE GREAT.

A LOT OF THINGS ARE LIKE THAT.

NBODY ASKS ME HOW THINGS OUGHT TO BE. I'VE GOT TONS OF IDEAS!

15-29

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A comic strip panel showing a customer asking for a specific '90s rock album and the clerk responding with "Nevermind." and "Ok, thanks for stopping in. Have a nice day!"

[illegible]

6-110895-2

Across

- Answers:**
- 1 Small salmon
 - 3 Chum
 - 9 Cut short
 - 10 Wedding member
 - 11 Indian grackle
 - 12 Gaudy
 - 14 Bird-to-be
 - 16 Sponge
 - 17 Stately tree
 - 18 Hummocks
 - 19 Prods

22 Scouting group

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 22 Scouting group | 6 A little rain |
| 23 Sophocles | 7 Utopia |
| tragedy | 8 Have crow for |
| 24 Scholarly one | dinner? (3,6,3) |
| 25 Catch sight of | 12 Blunders |
| | 13 Go-between |
| Down | 15 Venice |
| 1 Type of salad | transport |
| 2 Graceful bird | 20 Airport features |
| 4 Mouse catcher | 21 Greek portico |
| 5 Beer gardens | 23 Biblical high |
| (6,6) | priest |

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

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

D	G	P	F	A	J
S	E	R	A	P	E
T	G	N	R	I	C
B	A	R	G	L	E
I	V	U	D	I	A
I	N	S	I	P	I
P	N	B	E		
R	O	M	E	C	A
Y	R	O	B	L	S
U	S	E	F	O	L
T	T	A	D	S	H
F	E	A	S	T	K
R	P	T	G	A	N

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

12-storey parking facility to come up at SCBMCH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) in Cuttack will soon have a 12-storey parking facility, Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department sources said Tuesday.

This was revealed after Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi reviewed various programmes of the H&FW department at Lok Seva Bhavan here.

The meeting discussed in detail the ongoing redevelopment work at SCBMCH.

As the largest medical college and hospital in the state, thousands of patients and their relatives visit the healthcare facility every day. The state government has set a goal to develop SCBMCH into a world-class healthcare facility. Keeping this in mind, the meeting discussed the necessary parking facilities.

It was informed in the meeting that a 17-floor (G+16) building with ultramodern parking facilities will be developed on an area of 6.51 acres at SCBMCH.

"This building will have parking facilities up to 12 floors and the remaining floors will house administrative block, anatomy block, B. Pharma and D. Pharma colleges. The parking facility can be used by patients and attendants coming to both SCBMCH and Acharya Harihar Regional Cancer Centre," an official of the H&FW department said.

Along with this, indoor

Pradhan seeks Odisha SEBC inclusion in Central OBC list

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has written to Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Virendra Kumar seeking his personal intervention for the inclusion of 108 communities listed under the state list of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) in the Central list of Other Backward Classes (OBC).

In his letter, Pradhan stated, "I would like to draw your kind attention to a matter of great significance concerning the parity between the State and Central lists of Other Backward Classes (OBC) in Odisha. Several communities that are already recognised in the State List of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) by the Government of Odisha are yet to be included in the Central OBC list."

The Union Education Minister also noted that this inconsistency has created 'administrative ambiguities' and 'interpretational challenges' for members of these communities, especially during migration across states or while trying to access central government services, educational institutions, or job opportunities.

Pradhan also shared a detailed list of 108 SEBC communities proposed for inclusion in his letter for consideration and necessary action.

Capital lights up with festive cheer ahead of Christmas

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: With Christmas celebrations set to begin tomorrow, the Capital city has come alive in festive splendour, as churches, streets, malls and restaurants are decked up with lights and decorations, filling the air with cheer. From illuminated marketplaces to specially curated menus, the city is embracing the season with enthusiasm.

Restaurants and hotels have rolled out Christmas-themed offerings to welcome guests. A staff member at an OTDC restaurant said, "As Christmas approaches, we have



games and swimming pool facilities will also be made available to keep medical students stress-free in accordance with the NEP-2020 provisions. The CM has directed the H&FW department to prepare a DP for this soon.

As many as 13 housing towers are under construction near SCBMCH. A total of 672 residential units and hostel facilities will be provided for 2,244 students in the towers. The CM discussed this project in detail and directed to complete its construction work as soon as possible.

Along with this, the redevelopment work of Berhampur and Burla medical colleges was discussed in the meeting.

The CM suggested that the Panikolli Trauma Care Centre be made operational at

the earliest, by setting it up in PPP mode. He said that the Central government PSUs with experience in hospital management should be given priority in this area, and if necessary, the private sector should also be involved.

The meeting also discussed the construction of rest rooms for attendants in the government medical college campuses in Cuttack, Berhampur, Burla, Sundargarh, Koraput, Baripada and Bolangir.

The meeting was attended by H&FW Minister Mukesh Mahaling, Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Saswata Mishra, H&FW department Commissioner and Secretary Aswathy S, National Health Mission Director Brundha D and other senior officials.

EOW nabs accused in ₹20cr cheating case

Bhubaneswar: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police has arrested an accused in a cheating case worth over ₹20 crore and seized multiple properties, including high-value vehicles, an official said Tuesday. The accused, identified as Rama Narayan Bal of Bhadrak district, was arrested October 29 this year on the basis of an FIR lodged by a victim of cheating. He is now under judicial custody. Impersonating himself as an officer of a bank, Bal cheated many people of crores of rupees to facilitate the purchase of the landed property to be auctioned by bank due to default of loans against them, the EOW officer said. He was found cheating more than 20 crore from nine people, including the complainant, he stated. December 20, the EOW officials conducted raids at the residential building and business premises of Bal at Bhadrak and Bhubaneswar, leading to the seizure of 10 vehicles, 144 mobile phones, and sound systems, he added.

Mahanadi dispute will be resolved amicably: Singh Deo

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo Tuesday said the long-pending Mahanadi water dispute with Chhattisgarh will be resolved amicably.

The committee set up to address the dispute held its first meeting, attended by the Chief Secretary, Development Commissioner, both Revenue Divisional Commissioners (RDCs), with senior leader Jayanarayan Mishra joining virtually.

The Deputy CM said the committee was briefed on both the Odisha government's stance and Chhattisgarh's position on the inter-state river water dispute.

"It was decided that the issue will be resolved through negotiations in an amicable



manner, and Odisha's interests will be fully safeguarded," Singh Deo said.

The high-level committee has been tasked with evolving a comprehensive and strategic approach to protect Odisha's rights over the Mahanadi waters while seeking a mutually acceptable resolution with Chhattisgarh.

Meanwhile, senior BJD leader Niranjan Pujari, who is al-

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: The state government will develop Atal Bus Stand at Baripada in Mayurbhanj district with airport-like ultramodern facilities to enhance passenger convenience, urban mobility and tourism potential, Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra said Tuesday.

Chairing a high-level meeting on the proposed project, the H&UD minister described Atal Bus Stand as a landmark public infrastructure initiative for northern Odisha.

He reaffirmed the state government's commitment to building modern, inclusive, and sustainable transport systems.

"Baripada will be developed as a major transport hub. There will be no shortage of funds for this project," Mahapatra said, emphasising that all departments concerned must work in close coordination to ensure timely execution of the project with the highest standards of quality. Atal Bus Stand will be constructed on approximately five acres of already allotted land. Designed with a strong focus on passenger comfort, safety, accessibility, and operational efficiency, the terminal will follow an 'A-Class' passenger-oriented

FESTIVE FLAIR

Students of LR DAV Public School, Gandarpur, perform during a cultural programme at the school's annual day celebration at JN Indoor Stadium in Cuttack, Tuesday



Atal Bus Stand in Baripada soon



- Atal Bus Stand will come up on around five acres of land
- Key features include spacious and well-ventilated waiting halls, food courts, retail outlets, facilities for persons with disabilities, digital passenger information systems, CCTV surveillance, Wi-Fi connectivity, mobile charging points and child-friendly areas
- The ULB will undertake plantation of over 6,000 saplings in and around the project area. Additionally, Forest department has allocated funds for greening activities across 10 acres
- The existing Baripada bus stand, located in the city centre, is old and congested, resulting in traffic congestion and commuter inconvenience. The new terminal is expected to decongest the city core, improve road safety, and strengthen connectivity to major destinations

design, as presented by the Odisha State Road Transport Corporation (OSRTC).

Key features of the proposed terminal include spacious and well-ventilated waiting halls, clean restrooms, food courts, retail outlets, facilities for persons with disabilities, digital passenger information systems, CCTV surveillance, Wi-Fi connectivity, mobile charging points and child-friendly areas.

While reviewing associated

infrastructure planning, the H&UD minister asked the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to ensure that any proposed flyover near the site does not affect the visibility, accessibility, or architectural aesthetics of the 'Atal Bus Stand' or the city of Baripada. Emphasising environmental sustainability, Mahapatra informed that the local Urban Local Body (ULB) will undertake plantation of over 6,000 saplings in and

around the project area. Additionally, the Forest department has allocated funds for greening activities across 10 acres, ensuring ecological balance alongside infrastructure development.

The existing Baripada bus stand, located in the city centre, is old and congested, resulting in traffic congestion and commuter inconvenience. The new terminal is expected to decongest the city core, improve road safety, and strengthen connectivity to major destinations such as Bhubaneswar, Balasore, Kolkata, and other regional centres. The project is also poised to provide a significant boost to tourism, particularly to Simlipal National Park and nearby heritage destinations.

The 'Atal Bus Stand' project aligns with Odisha's broader vision of developing world-class bus terminals, similar to the upgraded Baramunda Bus Terminal in Bhubaneswar, and reflects the state government's resolve to deliver citizen-centric, future-ready public transport infrastructure.

The review meeting, held at Unnati Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, was attended by OSRTC Additional Secretary-cum-General Manager Arun Biswal, senior officials of NHAI, and representatives of other departments concerned.

HC rejects plea against MLAs' pay, perk hike

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: A division bench of Orissa High Court comprising Chief Justice Harish Tandon and Justice MS Raman Tuesday dismissed a writ petition questioning the constitutional propriety of Odisha Legislative Assembly (OLA) passing the bill that will pave the way for almost two-fold hike in the monthly salary of the Chief Minister, Ministers, MLAs, and a three-fold hike in pension of former legislators.

The division bench refused to intervene in the legislative action, stating that the Odisha Legislative Assembly Members' Salary, Allowances and Pension (Amendment) Bill, 2025, is presently pending assent of the Governor under Article 200 of the Constitution.

The Amendment Bill proposes a substantial and composite enhancement of salaries, allowances, perks, and post-tenure/pensionary benefits of sitting members of the OLA, resulting in a multi-fold increase and creating a recurring charge on the consolidated fund of the state.

As per legislation awaiting the Governor's assent, an MLA will draw ₹3.45 lakh per month against the ₹1.10 lakh in 2007. Basic pay has been hiked from ₹35,000 to ₹90,000, constituency and secretarial allowance from ₹20,000 to ₹75,000, conveyance allowance from ₹15,000 to ₹50,000, fixed allowance from ₹10,000 to ₹50,000, books, journals, and periodicals allowance from ₹2,000 to ₹10,000, electricity allowance from ₹5,000 to ₹20,000, and telephone allowance from ₹8,000 to ₹15,000.

Former MLAs will receive a monthly pension of over ₹1.20 lakh.

Odisha attends NITI Aayog meet on affordable housing

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 23: Housing and Urban Development Principal Secretary Usha Padhee, along with Odisha Urban Housing Mission (OUHM) Director Subhananda Mohapatra, participated in a national-level workshop on Affordable Housing organised by NITI Aayog in New Delhi Tuesday.

During the workshop, NITI Aayog released its report titled 'Comprehensive Framework to Promote and Enable Affordable Housing', followed by detailed deliberations and brainstorming sessions involving states,

policymakers, sector experts, and industry stakeholders.

Speaking on the occasion, Padhee said, "Affordable housing is central to building inclusive, resilient, and future-ready cities. The framework released by NITI Aayog provides a comprehensive roadmap for states to address challenges related to land and financing. Odisha will proactively work towards translating these recommendations into actionable strategies, strengthening Affordable Housing in Partnership projects, and ensuring that urban housing remains accessible and affordable for all sections of society."

FOCUS ANTITRUST

TAMING BIG TECH

When a US federal judge ruled in late November that Meta does not maintain an illegal monopoly in social media, it was a reminder that even the strongest evidence can look weak when enforcers act too late.

Rejecting the US Federal Trade Commission's narrow market definition, the court instead concluded that Meta, formerly known as Facebook, competes against a broad array of rivals such as TikTok and YouTube. While legal scholars can and will dissect the opinion, the biggest takeaway is that timing matters in dynamic markets, implying that anti-trust authorities must develop a preventive approach, rather than relying solely on reactive measures.

The case centered on Facebook's acquisitions of Instagram in 2012 and WhatsApp in 2014, when both were unmistakably competitive threats. Facebook said so itself: internal emails and strategy documents spelled out its intention to copy, acquire, or neutralize rivals, while the firm's leaders explicitly acknowledged the existential threat posed by Instagram. FTC lawyers rarely uncover this type of smoking-gun evidence.

But the case collapsed under the weight of today's market reality. Instead of considering the world as it existed when the mergers occurred, the court (incorrectly) cited the rise of TikTok, Snapchat, and YouTube Shorts as evidence that Facebook lacked monopoly power. But TikTok's success hardly disproves Facebook's earlier dominance, because ByteDance, its parent company, spent vast sums on user acquisition, at one point becoming one of the largest buyers of ads on Facebook, Instagram, and Snap in the United States. A Chinese company with almost unlimited capital breaking in to the market is hardly proof of healthy competition.

The flaws in the court's reasoning reflect a deeper problem with litigating consummated mergers: it asks judges to travel back in time and forget what



In fast-moving markets, prevention is better than cure, which is why intervening early to block illegal mergers must be the norm, not the exception

they now know. Questions like "Would Instagram have become this significant without Facebook's investment?" or "What competition might have emerged if the acquisitions had not taken place?" are inherently counterfactual. It is very difficult to measure the impact of competition that never existed.

This suggests that the acquisitions should have been challenged when they were first proposed – a difficult task, but not as hard as challenging consummated deals. Predicting the future is less formidable than reconstructing the present on the basis of an imaginary past.

The flaws of late enforcement were also on display in the Google antitrust trial. Even as a US federal judge ruled in 2024 that Google had illegally monopolised general-search services, the remedy was softened by the perception that AI chatbots were already reshaping the market. Even the boldest proposed remedies centered less on restoring competition in search and more on ensuring that the next tech frontier remains open.

The same dynamic was evident in the landmark antitrust case that the US federal government brought against Microsoft in the 1990s. Instead of reviving competition in operating systems, where Microsoft's dominance was entrenched, the litigation cleared space for the next generation of companies by preventing Microsoft from extending its monopoly into browsers and apps. Of course, this is a worthy goal. But ille-

gally monopolised markets need not be treated as a fait accompli.

In fast-moving markets, prevention is better than cure, which is why intervening early to block illegal mergers must be the norm, not the exception. Regulators should have prevented Facebook from acquiring Instagram and WhatsApp in the first place, but erred on the side of caution, fearing false positives and believing that the market would self-correct. But that decision has proved impossible to unwind, even though Facebook's acquisition of direct competitors in a competitive market should have been a straightforward win for antitrust authorities – the very kind of textbook harm the law is designed to prevent.

To their credit, the FTC and the Department of Justice under former US President Joe Biden had begun to develop and use their preventive toolkit. They challenged several mergers (including Nvidia-Arm, Illumina-GRAIL, and Microsoft-Activision Blizzard), examined practices in nascent industries such as AI partnerships, and launched early probes into emerging monopolies in the cloud computing and semiconductor markets. But the pendulum has swung back under Donald Trump's second administration, which has pursued merger settlements, dialed back investigations into AI giants, and revived the myth that tech firms are the guardians of innovation and national security.

It doesn't have to be this way. US antitrust regulators now have stronger merger guidelines and a clearer understanding of how digital markets work. What they need is the political will to act early and decisively.

The same applies to other governments. The most consequential tech mergers are reviewed simultaneously in multiple jurisdictions, and regulators in the European Union and the United Kingdom also have powerful preventive tools, including merger review and market studies. Even just initiating an investigation can create enough friction and uncertainty for parties to abandon a deal, as happened with Nvidia-Arm and Visa-Plaid. Until recently, the UK Competition and Markets Authority, like the FTC and DOJ in the US, was increasing its scrutiny of tech mergers and partnerships, particularly in the AI sector.

But the global scramble to attract AI investment has pushed competition enforcement into retreat. Amid increasing geopolitical turbulence, regulators are forgetting the hard-earned lessons of the platform era and pulling back precisely when they should be applying those lessons to block anti-competitive AI mergers and prevent the emergence of AI monopolies. The result is a classic collective-action problem, even though all it takes is one courageous competition authority to block a global deal and change the trajectory of an entire market.

The Meta decision can seem like much ado about nothing: one case that was too difficult to win despite overwhelming evidence. But viewed in a broader context, it becomes clear that timing makes all the difference in antitrust enforcement. Regulators must learn to flex their preventive muscle to have any hope of taming Big Tech.

The writer is Deputy Director of the Thurman Arnold Project and a resident fellow at the Information Society Project at Yale Law School.

©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Madhavi Singh

ILLEGALLY MONOPOLISED MARKETS NEED NOT BE TREATED AS A FAIT ACCOMPLI

WISDOM CORNER

Every man's life ends the same way. It is only the details of how he lived and how he died that distinguish one man from another

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Human greatness does not lie in wealth or power, but in character and goodness. People are just people, and all people have faults and shortcomings, but all of us are born with a basic goodness

ANNE FRANK

For everything you have missed, you have gained something else, and for everything you gain, you lose something else

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1814: The United States and Great Britain signed the Treaty of Ghent in Belgium, ending the War of 1812. The treaty did not resolve the issues that led to war, but a newfound sense of patriotism in many Americans, who were convinced that they had won, pushed the U.S. to pursue its national goals.

1865: Ku Klux Klan created. The extremist white supremacist organization, also known as the Klan, was created in Pulaski, Tennessee by Confederate Army veterans.

1877: On this day in 1877, the U.S. Patent Office received an application for a "Phonograph or Speaking Machine" from inventor Thomas Edison. He had demonstrated the device for the first time a few weeks earlier, when he played his recorded (and sometimes unintelligible) voice to magazine staffers in New York City.

1914: Christmas Truce begins. A much-studied event in war and peace studies, the Christmas Truce was a brief unofficial ceasefire between British and German troops along the Western Front of World War I. During the truce, soldiers from both sides sang carols, shared food, exchanged gifts and played football (soccer). Subsequent attempts to hold similar ceasefires around Christmas time failed.

1951: Libya gains independence from Italy. The North African country had been ruled by Italy since 1912. After independence, it became a constitutional monarchy under King Idris. King Idris was overthrown in a military coup led by Muammar Gaddafi in 1969.

1979: The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to aid the Afghan communist government in its conflict with anti-communist Muslim guerrillas during the Afghan War.



GIVING AWAY A HORSE

A retiring farmer in preparation for selling his land, needed to rid his farm of animals. So he went to every house in his town. To the houses where the man is the boss, he gave a horse. To the houses where the woman is the boss, a chicken was given. He got toward the end of the street and saw a couple outside gardening. "Who's the boss around

here?" asked. "I am," said the man. "I have a black horse and a brown horse," the farmer said, "which one would you like?" The man thought for a minute and said, "The black one." "No, no, no, get the brown one." the man's wife said. "Here's your chicken," said the farmer.

IN JEST THIS

Don't let your child bloom too early

If you have a child who isn't doing well in a particular subject or sport, don't lose hope. Your child may not be a top performer as a youth, but may end up being a late bloomer, outshining all those child prodigies as an adult.

A new study published in the journal Science found that adults who reach the peak of their fields, perhaps winning a Nobel Prize or Olympic gold medal, often performed worse than their peers as youths. They were not child prodigies. Some of them couldn't even spell the word "prodigy."

What does this mean? Well, if you have a friend who is bragging that his 10-year-old daughter won a chess tournament, you may want to say, "Oh no! That means she'll never become a grandmaster!" No, don't say that, but don't get envious either. Remind yourself that the vast majority of child prodigies fail to become top performers as adults. In fact, the European and American researchers who

conducted the study offered some interesting examples. Comparing world top-10 youth chess players and world top-10 adult chess players across time, they found very few people in both sets. Nearly 90 per cent were different individuals. The same was true among athletes. (For the purpose of the study, chess players were not considered athletes.)

The researchers also found that top secondary students and top university students are 90 per cent different individuals. I'm a little skeptical about this finding, but perhaps those who do well in high school get too confident and don't work hard in university. And what happens to those who don't perform well in university? They eventually become Nobel laureates!

Well, not exactly, but the researchers state that most top achievers, including Nobel laureates, world-class musicians, athletes, and chess players, didn't excel in their early years.

"When comparing performers across the highest levels of

achievement," the researchers wrote, "the evidence suggests that eventual peak performance is negatively associated with early performance."

What this means, of course, is that you'd better tell your child to not be top of their class. If they bring home a report card with perfect grades, tell them that they need to spend more time playing video games.

Actually, it's okay to be proud of your child's achievements, even if your child is a true prodigy, such as Sarwagya Singh Kushwaha. The three-year-old boy from Madhya Pradesh recently became the youngest chess player to be rated by FIDE, the sport's international governing body.

Sarwagya, who earned a rating of 1,572 in rapid chess by beating several rated players in chess tournaments, including three players aged 20 to 29, may indeed become a world chess champion one day. After all, when the researchers say that 90 per cent of high-achieving adults and children are dif-

ferent individuals, it means that 10 per cent are the same people.

Another important finding from the study is that child prodigies tend to focus on one discipline -- and one discipline only. If they're good at chess, that's all they do: chess, chess and more chess. It helps them progress quickly, but this progress eventually slows.

In contrast, those who reach the pinnacle of their fields as adults spend a lot of their early years on multidisciplinary practice. They don't focus on just one thing. It means that their progress in their eventual field of choice is much slower, but they keep working at it until they reach the top.

I find this study both interesting and inspiring, partly because I consider myself a late bloomer (I've yet to bloom). My progress has been slow, but gradual. And eventually, like the tortoise, I hope to cross the finish line ahead of a hare. Perhaps not all hares, but at least one.

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

Glorious centenary

Sir, The Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) or Radio Ceylon, one of Asia's oldest radio stations, celebrated its centenary on 16 December. SLBC was Asia's first commercial short-wave station. Radio Ceylon was once the Indian subcontinent's most favourite as it aired audio entertainment in Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada and English besides Sinhala. Spreading across boundaries, lands and seas it gave pure joy to listeners redefining radio listening. The Hindi slot with its old and new film songs, chat shows and the very popular Binaca Geetmala by Ameen Sayani remain evergreen in the memories of Indian radio lovers around the globe. The film song countdown show remains one of the most loved programmes in radio history. The SLBC showed how radio broadcasting can be blend with entertainment and information and commercially make it successful. Though time has changed and competition has risen from private and online channels, SLBC remains cherished among listeners. With its vast music archive, boasting over 70,000 recordings that span multiple decades, SLBC is definitely an encyclopaedia of radio broadcasting! .

M Pradyu, KANNUR

AI & employment

Sir, Across economies, the debate over artificial intelligence (AI) and employment has been framed too narrowly as a question of job destruction. The more consequential shift lies elsewhere. AI is not simply displacing workers; it is hollowing out the base of the career pyramid. In many sectors, the entry-level roles that once absorbed young talent, transmitted institutional knowledge, and sustained social mobility are quietly vanishing. This structural change matters far more for the long-term health of labour markets than short-term employment fluctuations. What makes this moment unusual is the reversal of historical patterns. Previous technological revolutions unsettled older workers while younger ones adapted. Today, it is early-career professionals who feel most exposed. Surveys across advanced economies show younger workers expressing greater anxiety about AI-driven displacement than their senior counterparts. As firms automate routine tasks, they increasingly prioritise experienced employees who can exercise judgement, manage complexity, and integrate AI into decision-making. The result is a paradox: fewer openings for beginners, even as demand for seasoned talent remains resilient. This trend poses a global risk.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

Roads turn crimson red as Shulia Jatra witnesses animal sacrifices



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Dec 23: The famous Shulia Jatra, a centuries-old festival symbolising tradition and faith, was held Tuesday at Khaigura Badakhala and Kumorura Sanakhala under Kulutapada panchayat in Deogaon block of Bolangir district.

Despite intense cold and dense fog, lakhs of devotees from Bolangir, Kalahandi, Boudh, Sonepur and Phulbani districts congregated at the twin shrines from early morning, and as per the age-old tradition, offered large-scale animal and bird sacrifices, leaving both ritual sites soaked in blood.

Devotees from the Kandha tribal community reached the shrines in procession from

Khaigura, accompanied by traditional instruments such as nishan and mahuri. Wearing flower garlands and vermilion, and carrying ritual objects and traditional weapons, they performed ceremonial dances before entering the sacred sites.

At Badakhala, chief priest Somanath Deheria initiated the rituals after invoking the deity, performing worship in accordance with tradition, beginning with offerings of coconut and vermilion. Similar rituals were later conducted at Sanakhala. Sacrifices were offered following the placement of ritual symbols at the shrines.

Sources said, more than 50 buffaloes, hundreds of goats and sheep, and thousands of fowls and pigeons were sacri-

ficed at Badakhala, while Sanakhala witnessed the sacrifice of over 30 buffaloes along with a large number of goats, sheep and birds. Many devotees also offered flowers, coconuts and incense sticks, praying for fulfilment of their vows.

Belief in the deity Shulia remains strong, with devotees citing legends associated with wish fulfilment, including childbearing. This faith continues to draw massive crowds every year.

Former minister Narasingha Mishra, senior leader Manmath Vijay Singhdeo, block chairperson Dayanidhi Khamari and former block chairperson Laxman Kumar Meher were among the prominent personalities who attended the festival and sought blessings.

Extensive security arrangements were made to maintain law and order. The Deogaon and Tushura tehsildars acted as executive magistrates, while an additional superintendent of police, three DSPs, five inspectors, 10 sub-inspectors, three platoons of force, ODRAF teams and traffic police were deployed. Traffic congestion was reported on Khaigura and Kumorura roads during the festival.

The three-day Shulia Mahotsav concluded peacefully with the cooperation of the festival committee and local volunteers.

Police hold flag march ahead of Christmas in Kandhamal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khajuripada/Baliguda, Dec 23: Ahead of Christmas celebrations, police conducted flag marches in various parts of Kandhamal district to ensure peace and maintain law and order.

Acting on the instructions of the SP, police personnel across all police station areas in the district have been placed on high alert including under the Khajuripada police station.

“Tuesday, police personnel conducted flag marches in several sensitive and important villages under the Khajuripada



da police station area of Kandhamal district. The police are maintaining a strict vigil to ensure that Christmas is cele-

brated peacefully without any untoward incident,” the officer-in-charge said.

Similarly, in Baliguda town

and its adjoining areas of Kandhamal district, a flag march was carried out to maintain law and order during the Christmas and New Year celebrations. The march was conducted under the direction of sub-divisional police officer Shubham Bhosale and led by Baliguda police station officer-in-charge Sambit Swain.

Along with increased patrolling, the SDPO has instructed all sub-divisional officers to keep close watch on sensitive areas and respond promptly to any situation. Plans are also in place to set up checkpoints at strategic locations if required, the SDPO said.

Jumbo dies in suspected blast; probe launched

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Dec 23: A female elephant that was undergoing treatment after allegedly consuming explosive-laced food, succumbed to its injuries Saturday, raising serious questions about wildlife security and the Forest Department's response.

Animal activists alleged that the forest department attempted to suppress information about the death.

Wildlife activists expressed anger, alleging no concrete action was taken against those responsible for the tusker's condition. The incident occurred when a herd was moving through parts of Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts, during which the injured elephant was seen roaming in a critical state. Unable to eat or drink, the animal was reportedly running in distress.

Forest officials tranquilized and rescued the elephant De-



cember 11 and shifted it to the Kanachhinda veterinary facility under the Talabandha forest range of the Similipal North Division tiger reserve. The elephant was treated by two veterinarians, officials said.

Reacting to the incident, animal rights activist Sanjukta Basa said the episode reflected a grim reality of human-animal conflict, where humans had “won at the cost of humanity.” She demanded strict action against those involved in such inhuman acts.

However, Regional Chief Conservator of Forests (RCCF) and Similipal Tiger Reserve Field Director Prakash Chandra Gogineni said there was no confirmation yet that the case involved explosives or explosives-related material. He said an intelligence team has been deployed to investigate the cause of death.

“Action will be taken after the postmortem report is received,” he said, adding that the investigation is continuing.

Vegetable-laden pickup truck crashes, driver killed

DARINGBADI: A driver was killed and his helper injured after a vegetable-laden pickup truck crashed near Dandima village under Daringbadi police limits in Kandhamal district late Monday night. he deceased was identified as Prahalad Gond (27) of Adhikariyuda village under Umerkote police limits in Nabarangpur district. The injured helper, Chhindra Batra (23) of Nehura village, was admitted to the Daringbadi community health centre, where his condition was stated to be stable. Police said the mini-truck (OD-24-M-5865) was transporting vegetables from Umerkote to Berhampur via NH-59 when it lost control due to dense fog and rammed into a roadside tree. The impact trapped the driver inside the vehicle. Locals and rescue teams attempted to free him, but he was pulled out around 6am by fire personnel from Baliguda and was found dead.

22 Maoists carrying total ₹2 crore bounty surrender

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar/Malkangiri, Dec 23: Twenty-two Maoists carrying a combined bounty of ₹2.18 crore surrendered before the police in Malkangiri district Tuesday, an officer said.

The surrendered Maoists handed over nine firearms and 150 cartridges, 20 kg of explosives, 13 IEDs, gelatin sticks, and other articles in the presence of Odisha DGP YB Khurania and other senior officers here.

All the 22 surrendered Maoists hailed from neighbouring Chhattisgarh but used to operate in Odisha, the officer said, adding that among them were 10 women, including a divisional committee member (DCM) and six area committee members (ACMs).



Of them, 19 cadres belonged to the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC), while two were from the Andhra-Odisha Border Special Zonal Committee (AOBSZC) and one from the Gachchiroli Area Committee. All of them were booked for Naxal activities in both Odisha and Chhattisgarh.

The surrendered Maoists also include DCM Linge, also known as Myre Madkam (45) of Sukma district, and ACMs Baman Madkam (27) and Sukka Muchaki and Rita Podiam.

According to provisions of

the state government's new surrender and rehabilitation policy, the 22 cadres will receive ₹1.84 crore in assistance, along with ₹25,000 immediate relief per person, housing under Antyodaya Yojana, marriage assistance, health insurance, ration cards, and other benefits, an official statement said.

“It is a major setback to the CPI(Maoist) outfit, weakening its leadership, morale, and operational strength,” Khurania, welcoming their decision, said. He attributed the mass surrender to multiple factors, including Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi's appeals, enhanced surrender and rehabilitation policy, sustained anti-Maoist operations, disillusionment with extremist ideology, and leadership vacuum within Maoist ranks.

17 hurt, 3 critical as picnic bus crashes into tractor

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dunguripali, Dec 23: At least 20 passengers were injured including three of them critical after a picnic bus carrying schoolchildren, teachers and parents for picnic rammed into a stationary paddy laden tractor from rear near Salepali on the Dunguripali-Rampur road in Subarnapur district Tuesday morning, police said.

Fire services personnel and local police rescued the injured passengers and rushed them to the Dunguripali Community Health Center.

After primary treatment, three seriously injured persons Soumyaranjan Bhoi, CRCC Sushil Kumar Sika and teacher Laxman Gadatia were shifted to Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) at Burla in Sambalpur district. The condition of the others improved after primary treatment. Police said the bus was carrying 55 persons which include students of Classes V to VIII from an upper primary school at Gyana village near Budhasamar under Melchhamunda police limits in Bargarh district for picnic to Patali Sriketra in Ulunda block of Subarnapur district. Teachers and parents also accompanied them.

90-yr-old dies in bee attack

Kamakhyananagar: A 90-year-old man died while undergoing treatment after a honeybee attack in Kada village under Kamakhyananagar police limits in Dhenkanal district, officials said Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Sarbeswar Sahu. He and another villager, Jatadhari Sahu, were critically injured when a swarm of honeybees attacked them Monday. Both were admitted to Kamakhyananagar sub-divisional hospital and later shifted to Cuttack for advanced treatment. Sarbeswar died at a private hospital Tuesday, while Jatadhari remains critical.

यूनियन बैंक
Union Bank of India

Regional Office: Sambalpur
1st Floor, Balaji Midtown,
Budharaja, Sambalpur- 768004,
Dist.: Sambalpur, Odisha

VEHICLE AUCTION SALE NOTICE

Applications are invited from interested bidders for purchase of following vehicles, seized by the Bank on "As is where is basis" as per terms and conditions listed below. This public notice will be treated as a notice to the borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors of the loans. They are hereby advised to be present at the auction venue on the auction date and are free to liquidate their entire dues before the auction date, failing which the vehicles will be auctioned and balance dues, if any will be recovered from them with interest and cost.

SI No.	Branch/Contact Number	Name of Borrower	Vehicle No.	Make & Model	Month / Year of Manufacturing	Reserve Price
1.	ROURKELA MAIN/9430330321	Mr. Vikas Agrawal	OD 14 AD 9099	KIA CARENES D 1.5 JMT LUXURY PLUS 7	08/2023	₹9,36,000/-

Auction Date & Time : 31.12.2025, 11.30 A.M. to 12.30 P.M., Auction Venue: At the Concerned Branch as stated above, EMD is 10% of the Reserve Price mentioned above.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: 1) Applications accompanied by ID/address proof copy (originals to be verified) and EMD as applicable for each vehicle in shape of Banker's cheque/Draft drawn in favour of **Union Bank of India**, payable at Concerned Branch should reach on or before **30.12.2025 upto 11.00 A.M.** 2) However the bank reserves the right to accept/reject/cancel the auction process of any/all vehicles at its own discretion at any point of time without assigning any reason whatsoever. 3) Bid amount does not include any statutory tax pending and applicable RTA fees. All these cost are additional and must be borne by the successful bidder. 4) Dispute pertaining to year of manufacture, documents, condition of vehicle/assets, etc. will not be consider after successful bid. 5) Entry to the event is strictly restricted to the registered bidder only. 6) The refund of EMD will be made immediately after the closure of the bidding process to the unsuccessful bidders. 7) Successful Highest bidder has to deposit a minimum amount of 25% of the bid amount inclusive EMD on the same day, failing which the bid taken will not be considered as EMD amount will be forfeited without further intimation. 8) The balance should be paid by the successful bidder within next **15 days** from the date of auction. 9) Delayed interest @18%p.a. will be charged against any amount due and payable by the successful bidder beyond 15 days from the date of the event, stipulated to a maximum waiting period of **22 days** from the date of auction. 10) Default in payment beyond the stipulated **22 days**, will lead to deal cancellation and forfeiture of EMD paid and the vehicle/equipment/machinery will be resold without further information. Acceptance of payment on later date will be sole discretion of Bank. 11) Successful Bidders are fully responsible for taking delivery of all vehicles or equipment from Stockyard after full payment is made. 12) Successful bidders must remove the vehicles/equipments within **7 days** from the date of release order along with RC Transfer in to their name.

Place: Sambalpur, Date: 23.12.2025 **Authorised Officer, Union Bank of India**

Bank of India
Zonal Office : Sambalpur, Near Sarlakani Chowk, Sambalpur - 768006 (Odisha)

POSSESSION NOTICE
(Rule-8(1)) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002

Whereas, the undersigned being the **Authorised Officer of Bank of India**, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the Borrower/Mortgagor in the loan account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest & expenses thereon within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Mortgagor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **possession** of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Sub-section (4) of Section 13 of Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 of the said rules. The Borrower/Mortgagor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of **Bank of India, Aska Branch** for an amount mentioned below with interest & other expenses thereon. **The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured asset.**

ASKA BRANCH/ Name & Address of Borrower/Mortgagor	Liabilities due as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice/ Date of Possession	Description of the Immoveable Property
Borrower/Mortgagor: Mr. Kishore Chandra Swain, S/o: Abhimanyu Swain, At: Khamara, PO: Mahupada, Dist.: Ganjam, Odisha - 761106	₹3,58,616/- as on 04.09.2025 + Interest & expenses thereon	04.09.2025 / 23.12.2025	All the part & parcel of the Land & Building situated at Khamara, Khata No.: 235/176, Plot No.: 1020/1593, Area: Ac.0.027 Dec, Kissam: Gharabari, Mouza: Khamara, Tahasil: Seragada, Dist.: Ganjam, standing in the name of Mr. Kishore Chandra Swain , Bounded by East: Road, West: Land of Kasinath Gouda, North: Land of Saifa Gouda, South: Remaining Land of Abhimanyu Swain

Place: Sambalpur Date: 23.12.2025 **Authorised Officer Bank of India**

PUBLIC NOTICE

OF

M/S EVOS BUILDCON PRIVATE LIMITED

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE

The State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Odisha has accorded Environmental Clearance to Residential Project named and styled as "EVOS AMANI" being developed over Plot No- 2161/7460 and 15 others and Khata No- 603/5485 and 13 others located in Mouza- Chandaka, Tahasil- Bhubaneswar, Dist- Khordha, Odisha by M/S EVOS BUILDCON PRIVATE LIMITED.

The copies of Environment Clearance vide EC Identification No. EC24B038OR161921 dated 09/02/2024 are available for the reference with the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Odisha and Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) and may also be seen at website of the authority/board.

The State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) has accorded the environmental clearance for the said project under the provision of EIA Notification, 2006.

For Evos Buildcon Private Limited
Kalinga Keshari Rath (Managing Director)
Authorized Signatory

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No.M-51

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (C),

DIRECTORATE OF FISHERIES, ODISHA, CUTTACK

E-MAIL : eefedcuttack@gmail.com

Bid Identification No. 2176/Dt.20.12.2025 //

- No. of works : 01 (ONE) Number of Civil works
- Type of works : Civil works
- Approximate : 20.91 Lakhs

Estimated Cost

- Class of Contractor : 'C'
- Period of Completion : 02 (TWO) Calendar months
- Date of Sale & Receipt : Dt.26.12.2025 to 2.00 P.M. of Dt.03.01.2026 (Working days only)
- Date of Opening : Dt.05.01.2026 at 11:00 A.M.
- Name of Office inviting : Executive Engineer (C), Directorate of Fisheries, Odisha, Cuttack

Further details can be seen in the bidding documents & can be down loaded from the Government of Odisha website (<http://www.odisha.gov.in>). Authority reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/- Executive Engineer (C)
Directorate of Fisheries,
Odisha, Cuttack

OIPR-06030/11/0054/2526

JCI

भारतीय पटसन निगम लिमिटेड

The Jute Corporation of India Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise)

क्षेत्रीयकार्यालय : भद्रक (आर.एल.बी.) लैंगुदि, अन्यापल, भद्रक - 756116

Regional Office : Bhadrak R.L.D. At/Po-Langudi, Via-Arnappal, Bhadrak-756116

सी.आई.एन.सी. : U17232WB1971GOI027958

Tender Notice

Sealed tenders are invited from Bidders/parties for disposal of old jute (Bales)/damaged raw jute as is where basis from different centres i.e. Bhadrak DPC, kendupatna DPC & Danpur DPC under Bhadrak Regional Office, JCI. Interested parties may obtain the tender documents from our regional office on all working days from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. or may visit the website i.e. <https://www.jutecorp.in> for tender details and download the documents. Last date of bid submission is up to 02:00 P.M. on 13.01.2026. Submitted bid will be opened at 3:00 P.M. on 13.01.2026.

The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./- Regional Manager
Regional Office-Bhadrak

CBC 41122/12/0042/2526

SNAPSHOTS

Foreign capital exodus

In 2025, Indian equity markets witnessed a sustained exodus of Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) and foreign institutional investors (FIIs), reversing the strong inflows seen in previous years. As of mid-December 2025, FIIs and FPIs have been net sellers in Indian equities, with total net outflows exceeding \$12.4 billion. This marks 2025 as the year with the highest-ever foreign selling in the Indian equity markets. Persistent selling by foreign investors emerged as a major drag on market sentiment, despite relative resilience in domestic inflows through mutual funds and insurance companies. Multiple global and domestic factors drove the FPI withdrawal. Tighter global financial conditions, delayed and uneven interest rate cuts in advanced economies, and a stronger US dollar made emerging market assets less attractive. Higher bond yields in the US encouraged a shift towards safer assets, reducing the appeal of Indian equities. At the same time, geopolitical uncertainties and trade tensions added to global risk aversion. Domestic concerns also weighed heavily. Slower earnings growth, elevated equity valuations, and questions over the reliability of macroeconomic data reduced foreign investor confidence.

Boosting bilateral trade

The India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) represents a significant milestone in the evolving economic relationship between the two countries, especially in the post-Brexit context. Aimed at boosting bilateral trade, investment, and services flows, the agreement seeks to reduce tariffs, ease regulatory barriers, and create a more predictable business environment for firms on both sides. For India, the FTA promises improved market access for labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, garments, leather, gems and jewellery, and engineering goods. Indian service providers, particularly in information technology, financial services, and professional services, are expected to benefit from easier mobility norms and recognition of qualifications.

RBI's monetary easing

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cut the repo rate four times in 2025, marking a decisive shift toward monetary easing. The RBI cut the repo rate by a cumulative 125 basis points (bps) across four separate occasions in 2025. The rate was lowered from 6.50 per cent at the beginning of the year to 5.25 per cent by the December policy review. Faced with weak private investment, slowing consumption, and sustained external headwinds such as high global interest rates and trade disruptions, the central bank prioritised growth support over inflation concerns. Each repo rate cut was aimed at reducing borrowing costs and improving liquidity in the financial system. Lower policy rates encouraged banks to pass on cheaper loans to businesses and households, supporting credit growth in sectors such as housing, MSMEs, and infrastructure. The RBI's actions also sought to counter the negative impact of foreign capital outflows and tighter global financial conditions.

GLOBAL EXPANSION OF UPI

In 2025, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) significantly widened its global footprint, marking a major step in India's effort to internationalise its digital public infrastructure. By the end of the year, UPI was operational or enabled for merchant payments and remittances in over 100 countries, primarily across Asia, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean region. UPI acceptance was strengthened in Singapore, the UAE, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka, where Indian travellers could make QR-based merchant payments directly from their Indian bank accounts. In France, UPI usage expanded beyond pilot projects to cover more tourist locations, making it one of the first European countries to adopt the system. New agreements were also finalised with Mauritius and select Gulf countries, driven by strong diaspora demand. A key development in 2025 was the linking of UPI with foreign fast payment systems, allowing real-time cross-border remittances. Transfers between India and Singapore, as well as India and the UAE, became faster and cheaper, cutting settlement time from days to minutes and significantly lowering transaction costs.

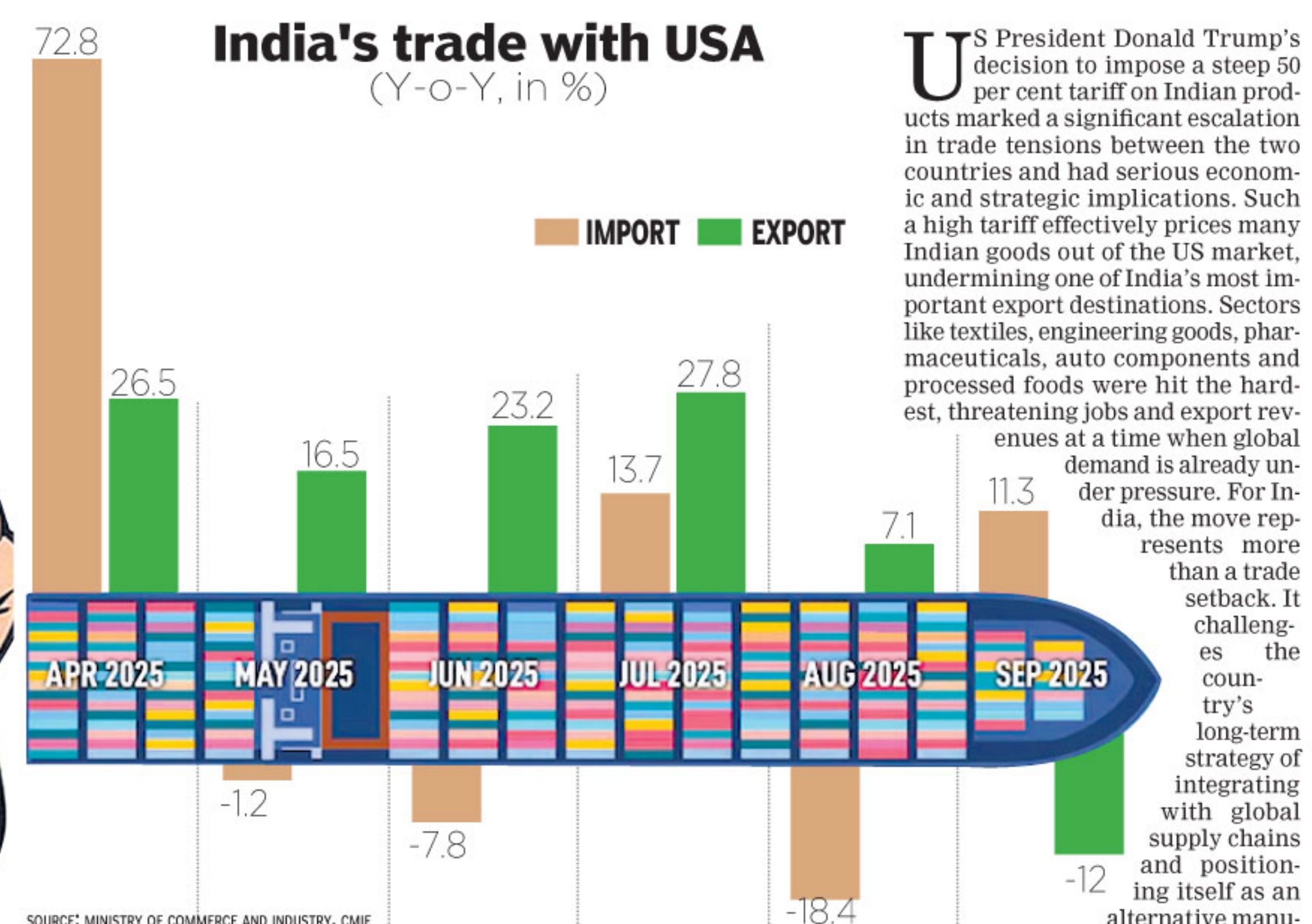
GST 2.0

5% Essential and mass-consumed goods
18% Standard goods and services
40% Luxury and sin goods

In 2025, India undertook one of the most significant overhauls of its Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime since its inception, aiming to simplify the tax structure, boost consumption, and reduce compliance burdens for businesses and consumers alike. The GST Council, led by the Ministry of Finance, introduced a rationalised slab system effective from September 22, 2025, cutting the previous four main GST rates down to primarily two broad slabs of 5% and 18%, while essentials received nil or low tax treatment and luxury or sin goods were placed in a higher bracket to balance revenue needs. This reform, popularly termed "GST 2.0", lowered rates on a wide range of everyday items including personal care products, food staples, healthcare goods, and consumer durables, making them more affordable for the middle class. These strategic cuts not only eased retail inflation by an estimated 25 to 35 basis points during the 2025 festive season but also stimulated a notable rise in overall consumer sentiment and market demand. Procedural improvements were also introduced to streamline filings and enhance digital compliance, benefiting MSMEs and exporters. These changes have been projected to reduce retail inflation modestly and increase disposable incomes, although full consumption boosts are still unfolding.



TARIFF TURMOIL



US President Donald Trump's decision to impose a steep 50 per cent tariff on Indian products marked a significant escalation in trade tensions between the two countries and had serious economic and strategic implications. Such a high tariff effectively prices many Indian goods out of the US market, undermining one of India's most important export destinations. Sectors like textiles, engineering goods, pharmaceuticals, auto components and processed foods were hit the hardest, threatening jobs and export revenues at a time when global demand is already under pressure. For India, the move represents more than a trade setback. It challenges the country's long-term strategy of integrating with global supply chains and positioning itself as an alternative manufacturing hub to China. Higher tariffs reduce the competitiveness of Indian products just as New Delhi has been pushing initiatives such as "Make in India" and production-linked incentives to boost exports. Small and medium enterprises, which lack the financial buffers of large corporations, are especially vulnerable to sudden market closures in the face of high tariffs. From the American perspective, the tariff reflects a growing protectionist impulse aimed at shielding domestic industries and reducing trade deficits. However, such measures also raise costs for US consumers and manufacturers who rely on Indian inputs, potentially fuelling inflation and supply disruptions. Historically, high tariffs have often triggered retaliation, increasing the risk of a broader trade war that harms both sides. Strategically, the move complicates the otherwise deepening India-US partnership, which spans defence, technology and geopolitics, particularly in the Indo-Pacific. With a trade deal between the two countries remaining in limbo despite several rounds of negotiations between both parties at various levels, the harsh US tariffs on India appear to remain intact for some more time.



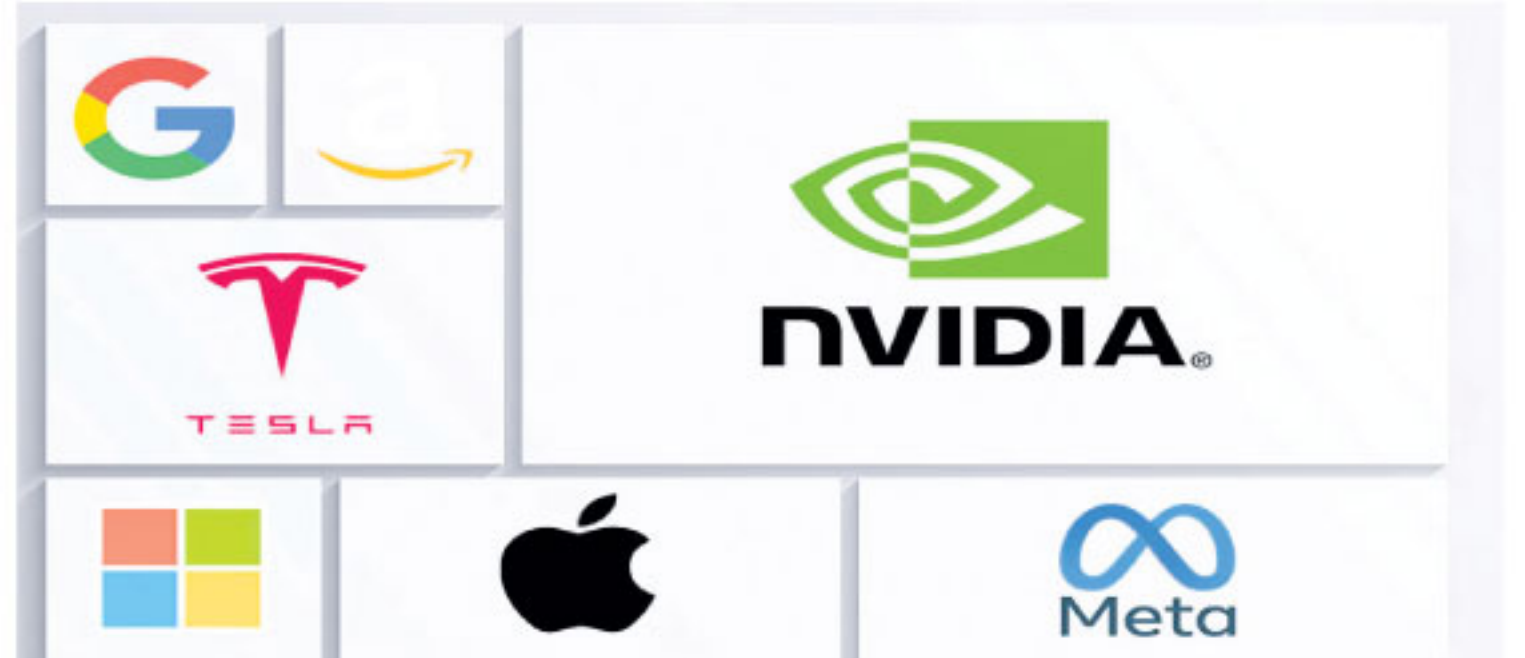
The rupee became Asia's worst-performing currency in 2025 after depreciating by about 6 per cent against the US dollar. As on December 23, the rupee's value was 89.65 against the US dollar. The rupee breached the 90-mark against the dollar on December 3 for the first time. The depreciation of the rupee in 2025 reflected a mix of global pressures and domestic economic challenges. A strong US dollar remained the single biggest external factor, driven by elevated American interest rates and continued global risk aversion. As investors sought safety in dollar assets, emerging market currencies, including the rupee, came under sustained

pressure. Even among its Asian peers, the rupee was the worst-performing currency. Capital outflows from Indian equity and debt markets further weakened the currency. Domestically, concerns over slowing growth, uneven recovery in manu-

facturing, and pressure on government finances added to the negative sentiment. Higher crude oil prices for much of the year widened India's trade deficit, increasing demand for dollar and putting additional strain on the rupee. While India's foreign exchange reserves helped prevent extreme volatility, they could not fully offset the underlying pressures. Rupee depreciation had mixed effects on the economy. Export-oriented sectors

such as IT services, pharmaceuticals and textiles benefited from improved competitiveness and higher rupee earnings. However, imports became more expensive, pushing up costs for fuel, fertilisers and electronics, and adding to inflationary pressures. The rupee's weakness highlights India's vulnerability to global financial cycles and underscored the importance of strong macroeconomic fundamentals and stable capital flows.

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN



In 2025, the US stock market rally was significantly driven by the resurgence of the "Magnificent Seven," a group of megacap technology and growth companies—Apple, Microsoft, Alphabet, Amazon, Meta, Nvidia, and Tesla—whose strong earnings and sector leadership helped propel major indices to record levels. As of December, the group accounted for over 40 per cent of the S&P 500's total return for the year, with specific companies like Alphabet, Nvidia, and Microsoft leading the charge. The group's year-to-date (YTD) return was approximately 20.6 per cent, outpacing the broader S&P 500's return of around 15.9 per cent. After trailing the broader market earlier in the year, these tech giants regained momentum in the latter half of 2025, with robust Q3 earnings reports and sustained investor

appetite for artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing, and digital services underpinning the rally. This renewed leadership helped push benchmarks like the S&P 500 and Nasdaq Composite higher, with gains often concentrated in technology stocks even as the broader market participation gradually broadened. Companies with deep exposure to AI—particularly Nvidia and Microsoft—saw heightened interest as markets priced in long-term growth from AI-driven demand, while continued optimism around digital advertising and e-commerce supported Meta, Amazon, and Alphabet. However, analysts have cautioned that such concentration in a few mega-caps also implied risk, with market breadth still a focus for investors. Also, there are concerns that this AI-led stock market rally could be a bubble.

CRIPPLED AVIATION



In December 2025, India's largest airline, IndiGo, faced one of the most severe operational crises in its history, marked by mass flight cancellations and widespread passenger disruption that rocked the aviation sector. The IndiGo operational crisis caused significant economic damage, with losses to Delhi's trade, industry, and tourism sectors alone estimated at Rs 1,000 crore. The disruption, which saw over 4,500 flight cancellations in a single week, led to a 25% drop in market footfall and a massive decline in hotel and business bookings during the peak holiday and wedding season. Beyond regional trade, the parent company, InterGlobe Aviation, experienced a staggering market capitalization erosion of approximately 53,000 crore (\$6.3 billion) as its stock price plummeted by over 20% at the height of the meltdown. The crisis also induced broader economic friction, as desperate travelers faced airlines surging up to ten times the normal rate on competing carriers and significant losses from misplaced baggage and missed business commitments. The turmoil began in early December when the airline cancelled hundreds of scheduled services nationwide, with thousands of passengers left stranded at major airports including Delhi, Bengaluru, and Mumbai amid long queues and chaotic scenes. Regulatory pressure compounded the situation, with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) ordering IndiGo to cut around 10% of its flights after repeated schedule failures, reflecting deep operational strain. The crisis triggered intense regulatory scrutiny as authorities investigated roster planning, crew availability, and safety norms compliance at the Gurgaon-based carrier. A public interest litigation seeking compensation for affected travellers was rejected by the Delhi High Court, highlighting legal limits on remedies despite the widespread impact. For passengers, the disruption meant cancelled plans, costly last-minute rebookings, and mounting frustration, while the airline worked to stabilise operations and restore confidence amid one of the busiest holiday travel periods of the year. The crisis also raised concerns about excessive market concentration in Indian aviation, as IndiGo's dominant position meant operational failures had system-wide ripple effects. The IndiGo crisis exposed structural vulnerabilities in India's aviation ecosystem, highlighting the need for stronger regulatory oversight, better capacity planning, and greater competition to safeguard economic stability.

Record mainboard IPOs

The year 2025 emerged as a landmark period for investors keen on initial public offerings (IPOs), with as many as 100 mainboard IPOs debuting on Indian stock exchanges. The market witnessed a vibrant mix of listings, ranging from new-age digital firms to well-established corporates, reflecting strong investor appetite and a buoyant primary market. Tata Capital led the pack with the year's largest public issue, raising 15,511.87 crore, followed closely by HDB Financial Services' 12,500 crore IPO. Other prominent listings included LG Electronics India, which mobilised 11,607.01 crore, along with issues from Hexaware Technologies, Lenskart Solutions and Billionbrains Garage Ventures. Significantly, 2025 marked only the second occasion when the primary market achieved the milestone of 100 listings, the previous instance being in 2007. That earlier boom featured iconic IPOs such as DLF, Power Grid Corporation of India, Idea Cellular, Mundra Port & SEZ, HDIL and Power Finance Corporation.



Tech & AI investments by global giants

In 2025, India solidified its position as a key destination for AI and technology capital, with cumulative AI investment commitments exceeding \$20 billion—a significant milestone reflecting both domestic and global confidence in the Indian tech ecosystem. Global tech giants made headline-grabbing commitments: Microsoft pledged about \$17.5 billion over four years to expand cloud and AI infrastructure, scale data centers, and train millions in AI skills—one of the largest foreign tech investments in India. Likewise, Amazon announced a \$35 billion investment by 2030, heavily focused on AI, cloud capabilities, digital exports, and job creation, complementing its broader expansion plans in India. Similarly, Google has also backed AI development with targeted funding for India's AI Centers of Excellence and language tech hubs to boost local innovation. These investments—spanning infrastructure, AI R&D, skills, and manufacturing—underscore India's 2025 tech momentum and its ambition to be a global AI innovation hub.

IT sector layoffs

The year 2025 turned out to be a turbulent phase for India's information technology sector, marked by widespread layoffs, job uncertainty and shifting business priorities. Thousands of employees lost their jobs as technology companies increasingly pivoted towards newer technologies and evolving market demands. According to a report by Intelligence, Tata Consultancy Services announced a workforce reduction of about 2 per cent in mid-2025, translating to nearly 12,000 job cuts, largely impacting mid- and senior-level professionals. This was among the biggest layoff exercises in India during the year. Global tech giants were not immune to the trend. Microsoft reportedly laid off around 9,000 employees, while PwC reduced its workforce by approximately 1,500. Meta also trimmed nearly 600 roles, and Google carried out multiple rounds of job cuts in 2025, though it did not disclose exact numbers. Beyond official announcements, several companies resorted to "silent layoffs" by removing employees from projects or encouraging resignations. The primary reasons cited included skill mismatches, cost-cutting pressures, efficiency drives and, most notably, job displacement due to artificial intelligence and automation. Nearly 64 per cent of Indian IT firms adopted generative AI tools in 2025, accelerating workforce rationalisation.



GOLD, & SILVER GLITTER

In 2025, gold and silver played a crucial role in India's financial landscape, witnessing sharp price movements amid global uncertainty and domestic economic pressures. Gold prices remained elevated throughout the year, with 24-carat gold trading at ₹1,40,850 per 10 grams as on December 23. As on date, gold prices in the domestic market have jumped by ₹61,900, or 78.40 per cent, from ₹78,950 per 10 grams recorded December 31, 2024. Persistent geopolitical tensions, a weakening rupee, central bank buying, and strong safe-haven demand supported gold's strength despite intermittent corrections. Silver outperformed gold in percentage terms, emerging as one of the best-performing commodities of 2025. The price of silver was ₹2,17,250 per kilogram as on December 23. Silver prices have rose by ₹127,550, or 142.2 per cent, from ₹89,700 per kilogram recorded December 31, 2024. The surge in silver price throughout the year was driven by robust industrial demand from renewable energy, electronics, and electric vehicle segments, alongside investment demand.

MAJOR DEALS

India witnessed a slew of big financial sector deals during 2025, leading to a huge inflow of foreign capital. Some of the major deals announced during the year are listed below:

MUFG-SHIRAM FINANCE: Japan's Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group Inc (MUFG) will acquire a 20 per cent stake in Shriram Finance for ₹39,618 crore (around USD 4.4 billion), marking the largest cross-border investment in India's financial sector to date.

EMIRATES NBD-RBL BANK: In October, Emirates NBD Bank, the second-largest in the UAE, decided to acquire a majority stake of 60 per cent in RBL Bank for ₹26,853 crore.

SMBC-YES BANK: Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) in May decided to acquire a 20 per cent stake in Yes Bank for ₹13,483 crore. The deal was concluded in September with stake transfer to the Japanese firm.

BLACKSTONE-FEDERAL BANK: Federal Bank board in October approved fundraising by issuance of preferential warrant worth over ₹6,196 crore to Blackstone group entity Asia II Topco XIII Pte Ltd. After the exercise of warrants into equity shares, Asia II Topco XIII Pte. Ltd will hold a 9.99 per cent stake in Federal Bank. The regulatory approval is awaited.

IHC-SAMMAAN CAPITAL: Abu Dhabi-based investor Avenir Investment RSC, an affiliate of International Holding Company (IHC), in October agreed to purchase a 43.46 per cent stake in housing finance firm Sammaan Capital for USD 1 billion (about ₹19,000 crore).

WARBURG PINCUS & ADIA-IDFC FIRST BANK: IDFC First Bank raised ₹7,500 crore

2025 TOP FINANCIAL DEALS

MUFG-Shriram Finance (December)	Rs 39,618 crore
Emirates NBD-RBL Bank (October)	Rs 26,853 crore
SMBC-YES Bank (May)	Rs 13,483 crore
IHC-Sammaan Capital (October)	Rs 9,000 crore
Warburg Pincus & ADIA-IDFC First Bank (April)	Rs 7,500 crore
Blackstone-Federal Bank (October)	Rs 6,196 crore
Zurich-Kotak Mahindra General Insurance (February)	Rs 5,560 crore
Bain Capital-Manappuram Finance (March)	Rs 4,390 crore

in aggregate by way of preferential share allotment to arms of Warburg Pincus LLC and Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA). Both entities together acquired a 15 per cent stake in the private sector bank.

ZURICH-KOTAK MAHINDRA GENERAL INSURANCE: Kotak Mahindra General Insurance promoter Kotak Mahindra Bank in February decided to sell its 70 per cent stake in the erstwhile Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company for a total consideration of approximately ₹5,560 crore.

BAIN CAPITAL-MANAPPURAM FINANCE: Bain Capital in March announced an investment of ₹ 4,390 crore to acquire an 18 per cent stake in gold loan provider Manappuram Finance.

As far as the outflow of capital is concerned, one major announcement was the exit of Allianz of Germany from Bajaj Finserv. Bajaj Finserv decided to acquire Allianz SE's 26 per cent stake in the erstwhile Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company and Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance Company for ₹2,180 crore.

of the day quote

Andhra Pradesh Vision: Quantum Valley in Amaravati. Andhra Pradesh will not follow, we will lead...everybody is prepared to produce quantum computers in Amaravati. Almost all 80 per cent or 85 per cent component partners are ready

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | ANDHRA PRADESH CM

The Aravalli region spans about 1.44 lakh square kilometres. Even 0.19 per cent of this works out to around 273.6 square kilometres, or nearly 68,000 acres. If mining leases of one hectare each are granted, over 27,200 legal mines can be opened

ASHOK GEHLOT | FORMER RAJASTHAN CM

I have seen for the first time that not a single adjournment motion, calling attention motion or short-duration discussion motion moved by the Congress was accepted

BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA | FORMER HARYANA CM

POST OF THE DAY

People Should Demand Accountability
• Air/Water: Polluted
• Healthcare: Private
• Education: Private
• Road Quality: Potholes
• Food Safety: Adulteration
• Real Estate: Lacks Transparency
• Public Parks/Toilets: Badly Maintained
These are Absolute Basic Necessities

@Ravisutanjani

SHORT TAKES

AP: Tiger found dead on highway

Palanadu : A tiger was found dead on the national highway here in Palnadu district Tuesday after being hit by a vehicle, a Forest Department official said. "Between 7 am and 7.30 am today, (on) NH - 565 from Markapur to Macherla towards Hyderabad, a road accident occurred. In that accident, one vehicle hit a tiger, and it died. It is a very unfortunate incident," the official told reporters at the accident site. He said a postmortem will be done, while the department will initiate an investigation on the vehicle involved in the big cat's death.

Delhi air quality slips into 'severe' category

New Delhi: The air quality forecast failed as Delhi's AQI slipped into the 'severe' category above 400, with the national capital and neighbouring Noida recording the worst air quality in the country. A grey haze enveloped the capital Tuesday as the 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) stood at 412 in the severe category at 4 pm, deteriorating sharply from 373 in the very poor category at the same time a day earlier, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

CBI arrests CGST official

New Delhi: The CBI has arrested a Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) superintendent in Mumbai for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 5 lakh from a private company after threatening the firm with a tax demand of Rs 98 lakh, officials said Tuesday.



No necessity for me to convey to the people the kind of fear minorities are enduring
M K STALIN | TN CM

COUNTDOWN FOR LAUNCH OF BLUEBIRD BLOCK-2 MISSION

The 24-hour countdown for the launch of LVM3-M6 rocket, which will carry a new generation US communication satellite, commenced Tuesday, ISRO said. In a dedicated commercial mission, ISRO is scheduled to launch the Bluebird Block-2 spacecraft on board its heavy lift launch vehicle LVM3-M6 at 8.54 am from the second launch pad at this spaceport Wednesday



Fresh violence erupts in Karbi Anglong

Despite prohibitory orders in force, a large number of people, including women and children whose shops were burnt by a mob Monday, came out to protest against the violence, while the agitators demanding eviction of encroachers from the tribal belt also gathered in the Kheroni market area

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Diphu/Guwahati, Dec 23: Fresh violence erupted in Assam's trouble-torn Karbi Anglong district Tuesday with at least eight people injured as two groups of protestors clashed and the police resorted to lathicharge and firing of tear-gas shells to disperse them, officials said. Despite prohibitory orders in force, a large number of people, including women and children whose shops were burnt by a mob Monday, came out to protest against the violence, while the agitators demanding eviction of encroachers from the tribal belt also gathered in the Kheroni market area.

Both the groups were agitated, and the security forces deployed in the area tried to pacify them, but suddenly stone pelting began from both sides, injuring several protestors, police personnel and media persons covering the incident, a senior police officer said. As the situation spiralled out



Security personnel keep vigil following a wave the violence

PTI PHOTO

INTERNET SERVICES SUSPENDED

GUWAHATI: The Assam government Tuesday temporarily suspended internet services in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong districts, following fresh violence during clashes between two groups over the issue of eviction, officials said. In an official order, the Home and Political Department said in the interest of maintaining greater public peace and tranquility, and to prevent any deterioration of the present situation, internet services have been temporarily suspended. The suspension will remain in force until further orders. "It is, however, clarified that voice calls and broadband connectivity based on fixed telephone lines shall remain functional during this period," the order stated.

of control, the police resorted to lathi charge and then fired tear gas shells to disperse both groups of protesters, he said. The situation is "tense" in the area, and additional forces have

been rushed to the spot.

The protestors had earlier torched two motorcycles in the Kheroni area. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the "situation in Karbi Anglong was

India calls in B'desh envoy, seeks thorough probe into killing of Hadi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 23: India Tuesday called in Bangladesh envoy Riaz Hamidullah and sought a thorough probe into killing of Bangladeshi student leader Sharif Osman Hadi amid sharp downturn in ties between the two countries.

New Delhi's move came hours after Indian envoy to Dhaka, Pranay Verma, was summoned to the foreign ministry to lodge a protest against "regrettable incidents" outside the Bangladesh high commission in New Delhi.

There have been protests outside the Bangladesh high commission against the recent

lynching of a Hindu worker in the strife-torn neighbouring country. At the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Hamidullah was told that Bangladesh should carry out a proper investigation into the killing of Hadi, people familiar with the matter said. India's call for a detailed probe into Hadi's killing came as unsubstantiated allegations about an Indian hand in his death triggered anti-India sentiment in that country. There have been protests outside Indian missions in Bangladesh following Hadi's death.

Last week, a group of angry protesters tried to storm India's assistant high com-

mission in Chittagong. India subsequently suspended its visa services in the mission. Following summoning of the Indian envoy, the Bangladesh foreign ministry said it conveyed its "grave concern" to the envoy over "regrettable incidents outside the perimeter of the Bangladesh high commission and residence in New Delhi" on December 20, and acts of vandalism at the Bangladesh visa centre in Siliguri on December 22. "Bangladesh also expressed deep concern over violent protests staged outside the premises of the different diplomatic missions of Bangladesh in India," it said.

When will you return? HC asks Mallya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 23: The Bombay High Court Tuesday asked fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya when he intends to return to India and told his counsel it would not hear his plea against the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act unless he first submits himself to the HC jurisdiction.

Mallya, based in the UK since 2016, has filed two petitions in the HC -- one challenging an order declaring him as a fugitive economic offender and the other questioning the constitutional validity of the 2018 Act.

The HC posed the question to the 70-year-old liquor baron, wanted in India to face trial on fraud and money laundering charges, on his return home while hearing his twin pleas.

A bench of Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekhara and Justice Gautam Ankhad made it clear to the embattled businessman's counsel Amit Desai that it would not hear Mallya's plea against the Act unless he first submits himself to the court's jurisdiction. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Enforcement Directorate (ED), opposed the pleas arguing fugitives should not be permitted to challenge the validity of an Act without being subjected to courts of the country. He submitted to the court that the FEO Act was brought to ensure such persons do not abuse the law by staying away from the country and filing petitions through their lawyers.

Mehta told the court that extradition proceedings initiated against Mallya were at an advanced stage. The bench insisted it cannot allow both petitions filed by Mallya to run together and asked the promoter of the now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines to clarify which plea he wants to press and which one to withdraw. Desai told the court that financial liability had been effectively neutralised with Mallya's assets worth Rs 14,000 crore attached and liabilities worth Rs 6,000 crore recovered by lending banks.

The Solicitor General maintained the fugitive businessman was entitled to legal representation even while staying abroad. The bench, however, questioned as to how does one wipe out criminal liability without submitting to the jurisdiction of the court.

2026 polls: AIADMK, BJP initiate preliminary talks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Dec 23: NDA constituents in Tamil Nadu--the AIADMK and the BJP Tuesday initiated preliminary talks ahead of the 2026 Assembly polls in the state, with saffron party leader Piyush Goyal holding talks with AIADMK chief Edappadi K Palaniswami here.

Speaking to reporters after the discussions, Goyal said he discussed with Palaniswami, the plans for the coming months to prepare for the polls, due by March-April 2026.

Palaniswami said Tuesday's talks focused on working out strategies to "defeat the anti-people DMK government" in the state. The discussions did not revolve around seat-sharing, BJP TN chief Nainar Nagenthiran later said.

Goyal said: "We had good discussions about strengthening



our political work together and fighting the 2026 Assembly election together as the NDA family under the leadership and guidance of PM Modi."

Exuding confidence that the NDA will have a "sweeping victory" in next year's poll, the Union Commerce minister added that the NDA partners would strive to meet the aspirations of

the people, especially their demand for progress.

Tamil Nadu has suffered under the corrupt regime of the DMK. It is important for people of TN to get good governance, a government which is development-focused and provides for a better future for our Tamil brothers and sisters, which is the commitment of the NDA, PM

Unnao rape case: Sengar gets bail



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Unnao (UP), Dec 23: The Delhi High Court Tuesday suspended the jail term of expelled BJP leader Kuldeep Singh Sengar, who is serving life imprisonment in the 2017 Unnao rape case, while imposing several conditions.

A bench of Justices Subramonium Prasad and Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar directed Sengar to furnish a personal bond of Rs 15 lakh with three sureties of the like amount. The high court also directed him not to come within a 5-km radius of the victim's residence in Delhi and not to threaten her or her mother. "Violation of any of the conditions would lead to cancellation of bail," the court said.

Sengar's sentence has been suspended by the high court till the pendency of his appeal challenging his conviction and sentence in the rape case. He has challenged a December 2019 trial court verdict in the rape case.

While pronouncing the verdict, the bench said the three sureties must be the residents of Delhi and also directed Sengar to stay in the national capital during the pendency of his appeal.

He should remain available to complete the remaining part of the sentence if found guilty. Sengar was also directed by

the high court to deposit his passport with the trial court and to report to the local police station every Monday at 10 am.

The high court listed his appeal before the roster bench on January 16, 2026, subject to orders of the chief justice.

Sengar kidnapped the minor and raped her in 2017. The rape case and other connected cases were transferred to Delhi from a trial court in Uttar Pradesh on the directions of the Supreme Court on August 1, 2019.

Sengar's appeal against his conviction in the case of the custodial death of the survivor's father is also pending, where he has sought suspension of sentence on the ground that he has already spent a substantial time in jail. He was sentenced to 10 years in jail in the custodial death case. Talking to PTI, the Unnao rape case survivor said she was not satisfied with the verdict. "I have small children. There is an elderly, differently-abled mother-in-law and my husband at home. The safety of my children is of the biggest concern," she said.

The survivor claimed that during the course of the trial, her family was repeatedly "forced" to make rounds of the court. "My uncle's bail plea was rejected," she said, while questioning why security cover provided to her family members, legal aides and witnesses was withdrawn.

"Usually, verdict is pronounced within two or three days after the conclusion of arguments. But in this case, the decision came after three months. Even before the verdict, security for the family and witnesses was withdrawn," she alleged.

REGULATED MARKET COMMITTEE, KHARIAR ROAD
EOI No.871, Date 18.12.2025

NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

No.H-47:Expression of interest are invited in two bid system from eligible reputed Firms/ Architecture/ Technical Organisations/ for preparation of plan, site map, detailed drawing and Structural design for establishment of plastic pallet industry in Nuapada district under RMC, Khariar Road. For more details, please log in to <https://nuapada.odisha.gov.in>.

Sd./
OIPR-01511/11/0021/2526 **Chairman, RMC Khariar Road**

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER JHARSUGUDA (K.L.) DIVISION

AT/PO-BADMAL, JHARSUGUDA, PIN-768202
Mob:8280342658, Email:dfokljds@gmail.com
Office Order No.139 1F/Dated 18.12.2025

Cancellation of Tender Call Notice

No.MM-415:The following tenders under Tender Bid Notification No.01 Dated 28.11.2025 are hereby cancelled due to the following reason.

Sl.No	Name of the Works	Remarks
1	Construction of Forest Guard quarter at Kanika K.L. Range Campus under Kanika K.L. Range of Jharsuguda K.L. Division	Cancelled due to non-response of any one
2	Construction of Forest Guard quarter at Duduka K.L. Range Campus under Duduka K.L. Range of Jharsuguda K.L. Division	Cancelled due to non-response of any one

Sd./Divisional Forest Officer
OIPR-08054/11/0032/2526 **Jharsuguda K.L. Division**

Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RURAL WORKS ELECTRICAL DIVISION, SAMBALPUR

E-mail- eerwlectricaldivn.sambalpur@gmail.com
Bid Identification No.EE/RWELECT/SBP/28/2025-26

- Name of the Work : 8 Nos. of E.I. Works
- Estimated Cost : From Rs.6,39,854/- to Rs.16,62,694/-
- Availability of bid document in the website : 11.30 Hours of 24.12.2025 to 17.00 hours of 08.01.2026
- Date of Opening of Tenders : 11.30 Hours on dt.09.01.2026

Further details and any corrigendum/Addendum/Cancellation of tender can be seen from the Website www.tendersodisha.gov.in only.

Sd./ Executive Engineer
OIPR-34175/11/0034/2526 **R.W.Electrical Division, Sambalpur**

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER KEONJHAR (R&B) CIRCLE, KEONJHAR

No.6390 dt.22.12.2025

2nd Corrigendum to EO Identification No. CCEKC-02/2025-26 Expression of Interest

No.B-892 : The following changes are made to EO Identification No. CCEKC - 02/2025-26 vide No. 6248 dt. 15.12.2025.

- Letter of Invitation of the Authority along with all other relevant details of Expression of Interest (EOI) will be available in the website: www.tendersodisha.gov.in from 10:30 A.M. of 07.01.2026 to 4:00 P.M. of 02.02.2026. Further details with any addendum, corrigendum and cancellation can be seen from www.tendersodisha.gov.in.
- Expression of Interest (EOI) shall be received only "On-line" latest by 4:00 P.M. on 02.02.2026.
- Proposals received "On-line" shall be opened at 11:00 A.M. on 03.02.2026 in the Office of the Chief Construction Engineer, Keonjhar (R&B) Circle, Keonjhar-758001 in the presence of bidders who wish to attend. Bidders who participated in the bid can witness the opening of bids after logging on the site through their DSC.
- If the office happens to be closed on the stipulated date of opening of Bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

All other terms & conditions remained unchanged.
Sd./ Chief Construction Engineer,
OIPR-34033/11/0107/2526 **Keonjhar (R&B) Circle, Keonjhar**

international

of the day quote

They worked productively with envoys of President (Donald) Trump and several draft documents have now been prepared. In particular, these include documents on security guarantees for Ukraine, on recovery, and on a basic framework for ending this war

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYI | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

We need Greenland for national security, not for minerals ... If you take a look at Greenland, you look up and down the coast, you have Russian and Chinese ships all over the place. We need it for national security. We have to have it

DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT, USA

Lessons of history and present realities make it clear that unilateral efforts by either of the warring parties are not sustainable and will only prolong the war

MOHAMED ABUSHAHAB | UAE AMBASSADOR

SHORT TAKES

Italy fines Apple

Rome: Italy's antitrust authority fined Apple 98.6 million euros (\$116 million) Monday after determining that operating one of its privacy features restricted App Store competition. Apple said it would appeal the sanction. Apple abused its dominant position with its App Tracking Transparency (ATT) policy, which forces apps to obtain permission before collecting data to target users with personalised ads, the antitrust authority said in a statement. The company rolled out ATT starting in April 2021 as part of an update to the operating system powering the iPhone and iPad. While the feature was designed to tighten up privacy, it faced criticism from Big Tech rivals that it would make it harder for smaller apps to survive without charging consumers.

Japan nuclear restart after locals protest

Tokyo: The governor of Niigata Tuesday formally gave local consent to put two reactors at the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant in the north-central prefecture back online, clearing a last hurdle toward restarting the plant idled for more than a decade following the 2011 meltdowns at another plant managed by the same utility. Gov. Hideyo Hanazumi, in his meeting with Economy and Industry Minister Ryosei Akazawa, conveyed the prefecture's "endorsement" to restart the No. 6 and No. 7 reactors at the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant, accepting the government's pledge to ensure safety, emergency response and understanding of the residents. Restart preparations for No. 6 reactor have moved ahead, and utility company TEPCO is expected to apply for a final safety inspection by the Nuclear Safety Authority later this week, ahead of a possible resumption in January.

5 killed after Mexican Navy plane crashes

Galveston (US): A small Mexican Navy plane transporting a young medical patient and seven others crashed Monday near Galveston, killing at least five people and setting off a search in waters along the Texas coast, officials said. Four of the people aboard were Navy officers, and four were civilians, including a child, Mexico's Navy said in a statement to The Associated Press. Two of the passengers were from a nonprofit that provides aid to Mexican children with severe burns, including transports to a Galveston hospital.

New tranche of Epstein files released

REUTERS

Washington, Dec 23: The US Justice Department released a new trove of documents Tuesday from its investigation into the late financier and convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, including an email from a prosecutor indicating President Trump had traveled aboard his private jet "many more times than previously has been reported".

The latest release includes around 30,000 pages of documents, with many redactions, and dozens of video clips, including several purporting to be shot inside a federal detention center. Epstein was found dead in 2019 in a New York jail. His death was ruled a suicide.

PRIVATE JET

In one of those emails, dated January 7, 2020, an unidentified prosecutor in New York wrote that flight records showed Trump had flown on Epstein's private jet eight times during the 1990s, which was more than investigators then were aware of. Among those were "at least four flights" on which Ghislaine Maxwell was also aboard. Maxwell is serving a 20-year prison sentence for helping Jeffrey Epstein sexually abuse underage girls.

On one flight, the only three passengers were Epstein, Trump and a 20-year-old woman whose name was redacted. "On two other flights, two of the passengers, respectively, were

women who would be possible witnesses in a Maxwell case," the document stated.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the email regarding Trump's alleged flights with Epstein in the 1990s.

UNFOUNDED AND FALSE

In another email, an unidentified person wrote in 2021 that they had recently been looking through data the government obtained from Steve Bannon's cellphone and found an "image of Trump and Ghislaine Maxwell". The government redacted the photo.

The Department of Justice posted a statement on X saying: Some of these documents contain untrue and sensationalist claims made against President Trump that were submitted to the FBI right before the 2020 election. To be clear: the claims



We need a budget as fast as possible so that we can move on. The longer (the temporary budget) lasts, the more it costs

ROLAND LESCURE | FINANCE MINISTER, FRANCE

ITALY REMOVES EMPHATIC 'YES!' FROM NATIONAL ANTHEM

Italy has introduced a slight change to its national anthem, removing an emphatic "Si!" (Yes!) that followed a call to arms for the country. The Defence Staff issued official instructions about the tweak in recent weeks, in compliance with a presidential decree published on the official gazette in May that referred to the anthem's original version



India unveils \$450mn aid for cyclone-hit SL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, Dec 23: India announced a reconstruction package of \$ 450 million to Cyclone Dittwah-hit Sri Lanka, as External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met with the island nation's top leaders and assured Delhi's steadfast commitment to Colombo's rebuilding post-cyclone.

Jaishankar, who arrived here as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Special Envoy, said that it was natural for India to step forward at a time when Sri Lanka faced a crisis. The minister called President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and conveyed PM Modi's warm wishes and message of solidarity in the aftermath of Cyclone Dittwah.

"The Letter from Prime Minister Modi that I handed over builds on our First Responder role and commits a reconstruction package of \$ 450 million to Sri Lanka," Jaishankar said while addressing the press alongside Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath.

Jaishankar said he had a detailed discussion with the President on the damage caused by Cyclone Dittwah and their talks centred around how expeditiously India's assistance package can be delivered.

"The assistance package that we have proposed is worth \$ 450 million. It will include \$ 350 million in concessional Lines of Credit and \$ 100 million of



grants," he said.

He said that the assistance will cover sectors worst affected by the cyclone, including rehabilitation and restoration of road, railway and bridge connectivity; support for the construction of damaged houses, support for health and education systems, agriculture, and working towards better disaster response and preparedness.

"We are conscious that work towards mitigating the impact of Cyclone Dittwah on the people of Sri Lanka must be done in the quickest time possible. We are discussing an effective coordination mechanism for the earliest possible delivery," he said.

Jaishankar and his counterpart Herath jointly inaugurated a 120-foot dual carriageway Bailey Bridge in the Kilinochchi District of Northern Province, one of the areas severely affected by the cyclone, in the presence of President Dissanayake.

The 110-tonne bridge was air-lifted from India and installed as part of Operation Sagar Bandhu.

PRO-PALESTINIAN PROTEST

Greta Thunberg held in London



REUTERS

London, Dec 23: British police arrested Swedish activist Greta Thunberg in London Tuesday at a pro-Palestinian protest, UK-based campaign group Prisoners for Palestine said.

It said Thunberg was arrested under the Terrorism Act for holding a sign that said "I support the Palestine Action prisoners. I oppose genocide". The British government has proscribed Palestine Action as a terrorist group.

A City of London spokesperson said two other people had been arrested for throwing red

paint at a building.

The spokesperson said a 22-year-old woman later attended the scene and was arrested for displaying a placard in support of a proscribed organisation.

Prisoners for Palestine, which supports some detained activists who have gone on hunger strike, said the building had been targeted because it was used by an insurance firm which they said provided services to the British arm of Israeli defence firm Elbit Systems.

The insurance company did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Thunberg, 22, became prominent after staging weekly climate protests in front of the Swedish parliament in 2018.

Last year, she was cleared of a public order offence in Britain as a judge ruled police had no power to arrest her and others at a protest in London the year before.

She was detained along with 478 people and expelled by Israel in October after joining an activist convoy of vessels, the Global Sumud Flotilla, that attempted to reach Gaza with aid supplies. Israel has consistently denied genocide allegations.



Paddleboarders wearing Santa Claus costumes off the seafront of Thessaloniki, Greece

REUTERS

YEMEN AGREES TO RELEASE 2,900 DETAINEES

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cairo, Dec 23: Yemen's internationally recognised government and the Iran-backed Houthi rebels have reached an agreement to free 2,900 detainees held during the 11-year civil war, according to Saudi and Houthi officials.

Saudi Ambassador Mohamed AlJabir said in a statement on X that the agreement was signed under the supervision of the Office of the UN Special

Envoy for Yemen and the International Committee of the Red Cross, "which will enable all detainees to return to their families."

WAR'S LARGEST EXCHANGE

"I commend the efforts of the negotiation teams from both sides who succeeded in reaching an understanding and concluding this agreement, which addresses a humanitarian issue

and strengthens efforts to bring calm and build confidence in Yemen," said AlJabir.

The detainees would include Saudi and Sudanese nation-

Al-Murtada said on X that the deal includes freeing Yemenis along with seven Saudi and 23 Sudanese nationals.

Yemen has been torn by a civil war since 2014, when the Houthis captured Sanaa and most of the country's north, forcing out the government. The war, which has stalled over the past years, has killed more than 150,000 people, both fighters and civilians, and created one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters.

Oil loading in Venezuela slows, more ships make U-turns

REUTERS

Caracas, Dec 23: Tanker loading in Venezuela dwindled Monday, with most ships moving oil cargoes only between domestic ports following US action against two more ships and as state-run energy company PDVSA struggles to recover from a cyberattack, according to tracking data and sources.

The US Coast Guard this month seized a supertanker under sanctions carrying Venezuelan oil and tried to intercept two more Venezuela-related ships over the weekend, US authorities said. One of them is an empty ship under US sanctions, and the other is an unsanctioned, fully loaded tanker bound for China.

Washington has not provided updated information on the ships. However, US President

Donald Trump's announced blockade of all oil tankers under sanctions entering and leaving Venezuela has kept vessel owners on alert.

Later Monday, Trump said Washington would maybe keep or maybe sell the oil it had seized off the coast of Venezuela in recent weeks, adding the United States would also keep the seized ships.

Panama's Foreign Minister Javier Martinez-Acha said in a TV interview Monday that supertanker Centuries, which was flying Panama's flag when intercepted Saturday, did not respect the country's maritime rules and had altered its name and disconnected its transponder while carrying an oil cargo out of Venezuela.

A country that provides its flag to a vessel in its official registry can cancel the ship's

US SANCTIONS IMPACT



registration if an investigation determines it did not follow maritime rules.

Trump's pressure campaign on Venezuelan President Nico-

las Maduro has included a ramped-up military presence in the region and more than two dozen military strikes on vessels the US alleges are trans-

US tried to intercept two more ships over the weekend

China and Venezuela condemn US actions as violations of international law

Panama says vessel under its flag did not respect maritime rules

porting drugs in the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea near the South American nation. At least 100 people have been killed.

Trump was asked Monday, what his endgame with Maduro was.

"If he plays tough, it'll be the last time he's ever able to play tough," Trump said.

OIL PRICES RISE

The vessel interceptions have dealt the toughest blow to

PDVSA since the US Treasury Department in 2020 imposed sanctions on the company's former oil trading firms, two units of Russia's Rosneft, which forced output and export cuts.

Nvidia plans to build a giant new supercomputer for the US Department of Energy.

Brent crude futures rose 2.4% to \$61.94 a barrel Monday afternoon, while US WTI crude also climbed 2.4% to \$57.89 following the US actions and amid Russia's war against Ukraine, with both developments raising fears of supply disruptions.

As of Monday, PDVSA had delivered a 1.9 million-barrel cargo of heavy crude to the Aruba-flagged sanctioned vessel Azure Voyager at the Jose port, but no other supertanker bound for Asia was scheduled to load soon, internal company documents showed.

2ND WT20I

Shafali, spinners crush SL



Verma's unbeaten 69, spinning masterclass by trio Rana, Sharma and Charani help India beat Sri Lanka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Visakhapatnam, Dec 23: Shafali Verma hit a blistering unbeaten 69 as India made short work of a paltry target to outclass Sri Lanka by seven wickets in the second Women's T20 International here Tuesday.

India now lead the five-match series 2-0 after another one-sided victory, having restricted Sri Lanka to a modest 128 for 9 through a collective display of disciplined bowling from the spin trio of seasoned Sneha Rana, ably complemented by young spinners Vaishnavi Sharma and Shree Charani.

During the chase, vice-captain Smriti Mandhana (14) fell cheaply but Shafali, enjoying

new found confidence after a stellar show in the World Cup final, sent the bowlers on a leather-hunt during her 34-ball knock, winning it for her team in just 11.5 overs.

The hosts have now completed back-to-back successful chases within 15 overs which speaks volumes about the unit's sky-high confidence. Shafali's innings had 11 punchy boundaries apart from a maximum.

The floodgates opened when left-arm spinner Inoka Ranaweera bowled a few flighted deliveries and Shafali would step out everytime to hit her over extra cover. Her footwork against slow bowlers was immaculate whether stepping out to loft the ball or rocking back to punch or pull.

Seeing her confidence, the newly appointed Delhi Capitals skipper Jemimah Rodrigues (26 off 15 balls) also attacked as the duo added 58 runs in just 4.3 overs.

By the time Rodrigues was out

Cricket always teaches you things, it's important to accept weaknesses. That's the only way you can improve. My endeavour is to improve everyday and you will certainly see that in my game

SHAFALI VERMA

trying to hit one six too many, the match as a contest was over. Shafali completed her half-century off just 27 balls and completed the formalities in a jiffy.

Earlier, off-spinner Rana, who got a look-in after Deepti Sharma was ruled out due to fever, showed her utility keeping the Lankan batters under tight leash with figures of 1 for 11 in 4 overs, including a maiden which certainly is a rarity in



T20 cricket.

Charani, who made an impression during India's ODI World Cup triumph, took 2 for 23 in her quota of overs, while Vaishnavi after an impressive debut in the opening encounter, finished with 2 for 32, not letting the Islanders get easy runs in her second spell.

The last six wickets fell for just 24 runs, but what stood out during India's bowling effort was their superb ground fielding.

After a patchy show in the previous game, the improved sharpness in the field resulted in three run-outs.

Sri Lankan skipper Chamari Athapaththu (31 off 24 balls) looked in good nick as she deposited length deliveries from seamers Kranti Gaud and Arundhati Reddy over the ropes but it was Rana, who kept her quiet by repeatedly pitching on good length.

Unable to manoeuvre the strike and with the big hits suddenly drying up, Athapaththu chanced her arm at another delivery in which Rana had shortened the length slightly. Not having transferred the weight into the lofted shot, Athapaththu's hoick was pouched cleanly by Amanjot Kaur at long-off.

This was after Athapaththu's opening partner Vishmi Gunaratne (1) had offered a simple return catch to Gaud.

Hasini Perera (22 off 28 balls) and Harshitha Samarawickrama (33 off 32 balls) did stitch a stand of 44 but they could never set the tempo against the Indian spin troika. Once Hasini offered a tame return catch off a Charani full-toss, Sri Lankans never recovered and lost wickets in a heap towards the end.

Brief Score:

Sri Lanka 128 for 9 in 20 overs (Harshitha Samarawickrama 33, Chamari Athapaththu 31; Vaishnavi Sharma 2/31, Shree Charani 2/23).

India 129 for 3 in 11.5 overs (Shafali Verma 69 not out; Kawya Kavindi 1/32).

FIH WORLD RANKINGS

Dutch retain top spots, Blues suffer sharp drop

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lausanne (Switzerland), Dec 23: The Netherlands men and women teams maintained their top positions, winning trophies and titles to keep chasers at bay as the FIH World Rankings experienced many upheavals in a crucial year before the 2026 World Cups.

International hockey in 2025 delivered a relentless calendar of top-flight action — from the FIH Hockey Pro League battles to Nations Cup and Nations Cup 2 drama, along with Continental Championships across all continents—sparking notable shifts in the World Rankings, the sport's global governing body reported on its official website Tuesday.

As the year wound to a close, across both the men's and women's games, familiar powers consolidated their positions while emerging teams made meaningful gains.

In the women's rankings, the Netherlands (3809), who started the year in the top spot, maintained their stranglehold throughout the year with another stellar season where they added more trophies to their cabinet with championship runs at the Pro League and the EuroHockey Championships.

In contrast, Argentina (3326), Belgium (3109), and China (2977), with great continental championship and Pro League campaigns, continue in the sec-

ond, third, and fourth places respectively, where they started the year, the FIH report said.

Spain (2777) are amongst the biggest gainers of the year among the top-10 rankings, as they find themselves in the fifth spot, having started the year in eighth! Spain's climb comes at the expense of Australia (2758), Germany (2734) and England (2510), who have all dropped one place from where they started the year, ending it in sixth, seventh and eighth spots.

New Zealand (2319), who won the Women's FIH Hockey Nations Cup and the Oceania Cup in 2025, have climbed to ninth place above India (2315), who suffered Pro League relegation in 2025.

In the men's rankings, the Netherlands (3376) and Belgium (3225) continue to hold the top two spots, but there are plenty of shake-ups below compared to the start of the year. Germany (3116) are up one spot to third following a successful EuroHockey campaign, followed by Argentina (3022), who are up to fourth after starting the year in eighth spot.

Australia (3007) and Spain (2995) are up one spot each in fifth and sixth, followed by England (2864) and India (2845) in seventh and eighth, who suffered the biggest drops, having started the year in third and fifth spots respectively, as per the report.



Indonesia's Gede sets T20I record, gets five wickets in an over

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bali (Indonesia), Dec 23: Indonesia's right-arm pacer Gede Priandana Tuesday created the record of claiming five wickets inside one over of a T20 International contest, a feat registered during his team's 60-run win over Cambodia here.

In a solitary over bowled during the first T20I of the eight-match series, Priandana returned an astonishing 1-0-1-5 while coming out bowl as the seventh bowler for his side.

Priandana had earlier scored six while opening for Indonesia, who put on 167 for five in the first of the two T20Is.

In reply, Cambodia were bowled out for 107 in 16 overs here at the Udayana Cricket Ground.

Cambodia were afloat at 105 for six after 15 overs but the contest came to a swift end when the 28-year-old Priandana registered a hat-trick, dismissing Shah Abrar Hussain (37), Nirmaljit Singh (0) and Chanthoeun Rathanak (0) on the first three balls.

Beckham family feud goes online



AGENCIES

London, Dec 23: The family feud in the Beckhams is out in the open after Brooklyn — the eldest son of England football great David Beckham and Victoria — decided to block his parents and siblings on Instagram.

Brooklyn and his wife, Nicola Peltz, have refrained from attending family gatherings this year, including the 50th birthday of David Beckham. While the start of cracks in the family reportedly dates back to the wedding of Brooklyn and Nicola, it has now been reported that it was a simple 'like' from Victoria on an Instagram post that prompted her eldest son to take the drastic step of blocking his family members on social media.

According to reports from the

US Sun this weekend, a simple "like" from Victoria Beckham on a post by her 26-year-old son, Brooklyn, was the catalyst for a fresh family row.

The former Spice Girl's interaction reportedly triggered thousands of followers to flood Brooklyn's comments section, urging him to end the long-standing tensions and reconcile with his parents. Brooklyn saw this as an invasion of his space. Hence, he reacted by immediately blocking his mother.

The fallout quickly escalated, with Brooklyn also blocking his father, David, and his younger siblings within hours. The report claims that David and Victoria are "logically heartbroken" by Brooklyn's actions, particularly as it comes just days before the family was due to gather for Christmas.

Chinnaswamy matches shifted to BCCI CoE

The Vijay Hazare matches in Bangalore to be held behind closed doors, without spectators

INDO-ASIANS NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 23: All Vijay Hazare Trophy matches that were set to take place at Bangalore's M Chinnaswamy Stadium have been relocated to the BCCI Centre of Excellence, due to a directive from the Karnataka government citing security issues.

"All Vijay Hazare Trophy matches scheduled to be held at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium will now happen at the BCCI CoE. It's a decision which was taken earlier in the day due to security reasons, as said by the state government," a DCCA official told IANS Tuesday.

The official further said that both participating teams for the opening game had been notified, and their pre-match training session is now set to take place at the BCCI CoE. "The Delhi team has been told about it and their pre-match practice against Andhra will now happen at CoE," the official added.

Meanwhile, all the Vijay Hazare matches in Bangalore will be held without spectators. The Bangalore police have assured a strong security presence



around the Aerospace Park, where CoE is located.

Karnataka Police have refused permission for the Vijay Hazare Trophy match between Delhi and Andhra Pradesh at Chinnaswamy Stadium, citing serious safety and crowd-control concerns. The decision was taken after a thorough inspection by Bengaluru Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar, officials from the Greater Bengaluru Authority, and the Fire Department, who identified critical gaps in venue infrastructure and emergency preparedness.

Monday, a committee constituted by the Karnataka government, comprising officials from

the police, public works and fire safety departments, inspected the Chinnaswamy Stadium and submitted a report.

The Bangalore City Police Commissioner had already issued a 17-point advisory outlining mandatory safety measures. The committee verified whether these points had been complied with and submitted its findings to the government.

As per the report from the officers, permission has not been granted for the match on Wednesday at the Chinnaswamy Stadium. The committee has also given a detailed report," Commissioner Singh stated.

Neres brace leads Napoli to Super Cup glory



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Riyadh, Dec 23: David Neres scored twice as Napoli beat Bologna 2-0 to win the Italian Super Cup.

It is the third Super Cup title in the club's history, with Antonio Conte restoring the Scudetto-Super Cup double, following in the footsteps of the 1990 side Napoli under Alberto Bigon featuring Diego Maradona. Napoli broke the deadlock in the 39th minute when Neres controlled a throw-in outside the area and curled a shot into the top corner.

The Partenopei doubled their

lead around the hour mark as Neres won the ball inside Bologna's box and finished from a tight angle past the onrushing goalkeeper. After the 2-0 win over Milan in the semi-final, the Azzurri repeated the same scoreline in the showpiece event in Riyadh. The star of the night was David Neres, who broke the deadlock just after the half-hour mark with a curling left-footed strike into the top corner.

After the break, the Brazilian wrapped up the match, first stealing the ball from the Bologna defence and then finishing with a delightful chip as the goalkeeper rushed out.

F1 spotlight shines on India in 2025

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Dec 23: Formula 1 has experienced a remarkable rise in popularity across the subcontinent, with India's fanbase expanding to 78.8 million. This significant growth coincides with a season marked by outstanding performances, including Kush Maini's resilient win in Monaco and Arvid Lindblad's rapid ascent to the F1 grid.

The Drivers' Championship battle was intensely close, culminating in a final that kept everyone on the edge of their seats. As the world celebrates Lando Norris's dramatic victory in the most competitive season finale in 15 years, the Indian motorsport community looks forward with renewed optimism.

The 2025 campaign is set to be remembered as a modern classic; Lando Norris's first championship victory marked a year



Kush Maini played a key role in helping Invicta Racing win the Constructors' title in Formula 2, highlighted by a notable Sprint race victory at the renowned Monaco GP



Arvid Lindblad, a prodigy of the Red Bull Junior Team who proudly claims Indian roots, has been promoted to the Racing Bulls team

where resilience was vital for many, and McLaren's return to the summit ended a historic drought. The sport's popularity keeps rising, with a record 6.7 million fans attending races globally.

The Indian market's link to F1 is more robust than ever. Record-breaking viewership confirms India's vital role in the sport's worldwide strate-

gy. This growth is supported by extending FanCode's exclusive broadcast deal through 2028, allowing Indian fans to stay connected to the action as local drivers gear up for the 2026 world stage.

The 2025 season has not only provided exciting on-track moments but also set the stage for a renewed presence of Indian talent on the global grid in 2026. Despite facing mechani-

cal issues throughout the season, Kush Maini played a key role in helping Invicta Racing win the Constructors' title in Formula 2, highlighted by a notable Sprint race victory at the renowned Monaco GP. Following a strong showing during post-season testing for Alpine, Kush Maini is now eager to make a mark with his new team, ART Grand Prix, as he aims to reach the top of the sport.

Meanwhile, Arvid Lindblad, a prodigy of the Red Bull Junior Team who proudly claims Indian roots, has been promoted to the Racing Bulls team. His 2025 season showcased impressive speed and racecraft, attracting attention. His debut on the F1 grid in 2026 is a major milestone, offering Indian fans a new hero to support as he faces the top competitors under the innovative new rules.

Neymar gets operated, hopes to reach the WC

Sao Paulo: Neymar underwent minor surgery on his left knee, his club Santos said. The 33-year-old Neymar previously said he wanted to fix the pains that have sidelined him from several matches this year. The arthroscopy was performed by Rodrigo Lasmar, who also works with the Brazil squad. The procedure was minimally invasive and treated problems inside joints. Last weekend, the striker said during a music event in Sao Paulo he still hoped to play in the World Cup and score in the final. Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti, appointed in May, has yet to pick Neymar. "We will do the impossible to bring this cup to Brazil," Neymar said. "In July, you can remind us of it. Hi, Ancelotti, helps us out!" he added.