

of the day

quote

China-Russia relations had reached “their highest level in history” in terms of depth and mutual trust, and ties between the two countries would continue to develop in a steady and dynamic manner

IGOR MORGULOV | RUSSIA’S AMBASSADOR TO CHINA

As these old threats change form, new threats arise morning and evening. We do not seek confrontations, but our eyes are open to every possible danger

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU | PRIME MINISTER, ISRAEL

All the main parameters of the Russian side’s position are well known to our colleagues from the United States

DMITRY PESKOV | KREMLIN SPOKESMAN

SHORT TAKES

Thai, Cambodia militaries hold talks

Bangkok/Phnom Penh: Military officials from Thailand and Cambodia began talks Wednesday, both countries said, days after the neighbours agreed to discuss resumption of a ceasefire after 16 days of fierce border clashes that have killed at least 86 people. The talks come two days after a special meeting in Kuala Lumpur of Southeast Asian foreign ministers convened to try to salvage a truce first brokered by ASEAN chair Malaysia and US President Donald Trump after a previous round of clashes in July. Thai Defence Ministry spokesman Rear Admiral Surasant Kongsiri said Wednesday’s meeting of the General Border Committee would last three days and could pave the way for an agreement. The talks were held at a border checkpoint towards the southern end of their 817-km (508 mile) frontier.

Pak court extends bail of Khan, wife

Islamabad: A Pakistani court has extended the interim bail of former premier Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the May 9 cases and five other matters. The court also directed that the 73-year-old former premier should appear at the next hearing either in person or through video link. Additional District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka heard the pre-arrest bail applications Tuesday, where advocate Shamsa Kayani appeared on behalf of Khan and Bibi, Dawn reported. Consequently, the court extended the interim bail and adjourned the hearing till January 27, directing that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder’s appearance be ensured on the next date.

4 Indians held for casino fraud

Kathmandu: Nepal police have busted a fraud involving millions of rupees from a casino in Kathmandu, leading to the arrest of six people, including four Indians. The fraud was unravelled in the Waldom Casino situated in the tourist hub of Thamel. The arrests were made in connection with cheating of genuine players by using magnet-attached playing cards and eye lenses to secretly identify cards, in an attempt to manipulate the game, according to a spokesperson at the Kathmandu District Police. Seven people including two Nepalese involved in the scam are at large, said Circle Superintendent of Police Pawan Kumar Bhattarai.

China seeks gains from de-escalation along India LAC: US report

China probably seeks to capitalise on decreased tension along the LAC to stabilise bilateral relations and prevent the deepening of US-India ties; however, India probably remains sceptical of China’s actions and motive, says the report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York/Washington, Dec 24: China probably seeks to capitalise from deescalating tensions along the Line of Actual Control with India to stabilise bilateral relations and prevent the deepening of US-India ties, according to a report by the US Department of War.

In its annual report to Congress Tuesday on ‘Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2025’, the department said that in October 2024, Indi-

an leadership announced an agreement with China.

The agreement was to disengage from remaining standoff sites along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), two days before a meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit.

The Xi-Modi meeting marked the onset of monthly high-level engagements between the two countries, where parties discussed border management and next steps for the bilateral

Libya’s military chief, four others killed in plane crash



The Libyan delegation was in Ankara for high-level defence talks aimed at boosting military cooperation between the two countries

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ankara, Dec 24: A private jet carrying Libya’s military chief and four other officers and military staff crashed Tuesday after takeoff from Turkey’s capital, Ankara, killing everyone on board. Libyan officials said the cause of the crash was a technical malfunction on the plane.

The Libyan delegation was in Ankara for high-level defence talks aimed at boosting military cooperation between the two countries, Turkish officials said.

Libyan Prime Minister Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah confirmed the death of Gen Muhammad Ali Ahmad al-Haddad and the others, saying in a statement on Facebook that the “tragic accident” took place as the delegation was “returning from an official trip to Ankara.” He called it a “great loss” for Libya.

Al-Haddad was the top military commander in western Libya and played a crucial role in the ongoing, UN-brokered efforts to unify Libya’s military, which has split, much like Libya’s institutions.

The four others who died in the crash were Gen Al-Fitouri Ghraibil, the head of Libya’s ground forces, Brig Gen Mahmoud Al-Qatawi, who led the

military manufacturing authority, Mohammed Al-Asawi Diab, advisor to the chief of staff and Mohammed Omar Ahmed Mahjoub, a military photographer with the chief of staff’s office.

It was not immediately clear how many crew members were on board the plane when it crashed.

Turkey did not immediately confirm the deaths, only that wreckage of the Falcon 50-type business jet had been found near the village of Kesikkavak, in Haymana, a district some 70 kilometres (about 43.5 miles) south of Ankara.

Earlier Tuesday evening, Turkey’s air traffic controllers said they lost contact with the plane, which was en route back to Libya, after takeoff from Ankara’s Esenboga airport.

Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said in a social media post that the plane took off at 8:30 pm and that contact was lost 40 minutes later. The plane issued an emergency landing signal near Haymana before all communication ceased, Yerlikaya said.

Security camera footage aired on local television stations showed the night sky over Haymana suddenly lit up by what appeared to be an explosion.

While in Ankara, al-Haddad had met with Turkish Defence Minister Yasar Guler and other officials.

The airport in Ankara was temporarily closed, and several flights were diverted to other locations. Turkey’s Justice Ministry said four prosecutors have been assigned to investigate the crash, as is common in such incidents.

Myanmar junta’s shift from battlefield to ballots faces long odds

REUTERS

Naypyitaw, Dec 24: From inside a military base last week, Myanmar’s junta chief Min Aung Hlaing announced who he wanted voters to pick in Sunday’s general election, nearly five years after seizing power in a coup.

“He suggested that during the upcoming election period, voters should choose candidates who can cooperate with the Tatmadaw,” state-run media reported, referring to Myanmar’s powerful armed forces.

The comments underline the junta’s attempts to hold on to power as it uses ballots to do what it couldn’t on the battlefield - cement its control over the country in the face of fierce armed resistance that has emerged since the coup, while gaining some international le-

gitimacy for its rule.

But analysts and diplomats say the aim of establishing a stable administration in the Southeast Asian nation is far-fetched since the civil war is still raging, and a military-controlled government with a civilian veneer is unlikely to win many backers overseas.

“A new iteration of indirect military rule will do nothing to resolve the armed conflict or civil resistance, and Myanmar will remain mired in crisis,” said Richard Horsey, Senior Myanmar Adviser at Crisis Group.

Voting will be held in two phases, Sunday and Jan 11, in only 202 of Myanmar’s 330 townships where the military has varying degrees of control.

Dates for a potential third phase, counting or results have not been announced.



relationship, including direct flights, visa facilitation, and the exchange of academics and journalists, it said.

“China probably seeks to capitalise on decreased tension along the LAC to stabilise bilateral relations and prevent the deepening of US-India ties; however, India probably

remains sceptical of China’s actions and motives. Continued mutual distrust and other irritants almost certainly limit the bilateral relationship,” the report said.

In the last few months, India and China have initiated a series of measures to normalise their relations after ending the

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Zelensky seeks meeting with Trump

REUTERS

Kyiv, Dec 24: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called for a meeting with Donald Trump to hammer out the most sensitive issues in a future peace deal with Russia, such as control of territory, following the latest round of US-Ukrainian talks.

In remarks to reporters released by his office Wednesday, Zelenskyy said Ukrainian and US delegations had inched closer to finalising a 20-point plan at the talks over the weekend in Miami.

“This is a document referred to as a framework – a foundational document on ending the war, a political document between us, America, Europe, and the Russians,” Zelenskyy said.

“We are ready for a meeting with the United States at the leaders’ level to address sensitive issues. Matters such as territorial questions must be discussed at the leaders’ level.”

US President Trump has long said he wants to end Europe’s deadliest war since World War Two, but has so far failed to win substantial concessions from the warring sides.

EVOLUTION OF EARLIER PROPOSALS

Zelenskyy said that the latest 20-point framework draft was a considerable evolution com-



pared with the 28-point plan discussed earlier by the United States and Russia.

Ukraine would keep its army at its current strength of 800,000, and additional documents agreed with the United States and European allies would provide robust guarantees of its security.

“...We will be able to see a strong Ukraine – supported by the Coalition of the Willing, with a mechanism to monitor compliance with peace and with specifics on how to respond to any potential renewal of aggression by Russia,” Zelenskyy said. Ukrainian and US officials also worked on several documents related to post-war reconstruction and investment, Zelenskyy said.

TERRITORIAL ISSUES UNRESOLVED

However, despite the progress, Ukraine and the United States still have not found common

30 Indian nationals held by US border agents for illegal stay

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, Dec 24: US border patrol agents have arrested 30 Indian nationals, living illegally in America, operating semitrucks with commercial driver’s licenses.

Border Patrol agents in the El Centro Sector in California arrested 49 illegal immigrants with commercial driver’s licenses during vehicle stops at immigration checkpoints and in interagency operations, US

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) said in a statement last week.

Between November 23 and December 12, agents apprehended 42 illegal individuals operating semitrucks with commercial driver’s licenses while travelling on interstate or traversing immigration checkpoints.

Of those arrested, 30 were from India, two were from El Salvador, and the remainder were from China, Eritrea, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Russia,



FUTURE OF MIN AUNG HLAING

The battle-hardened Tatmadaw has long dominated politics in Myanmar, which won independence from Britain in 1948, with a string of military chiefs running the country with an

iron grip. Min Aung Hlaing joined their ranks in February 2021, when he ousted a civilian government led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi on the unproven allegation of electoral fraud by her party, which had

UAE PREZ TO VISIT PAK

President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, will arrive in Pakistan Friday with an aim to strengthen bilateral ties, the Foreign Office said. Sheikh Al Nahyan, who is also the ruler of Abu Dhabi, is expected to discuss bilateral relations and exchange views on regional and international issues of mutual interest with Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif



1 killed in crude bomb explosion in Bangladesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Dec 24: One person was killed in a crude bomb explosion in the Bangladeshi capital Wednesday, police said.

Witnesses said unidentified men hurled the bomb from a flyover in front of Bangladesh Muktioddha Sangsad, the central office of 1971 Liberation War veterans, in Dhaka’s Moghbazar area.

A crude bomb, hurled by unidentified men from the flyover, struck a person who died on the



spot, Inspector (Operations) of Hatirjheel Police Station Md Mo-hiuddin was quoted as saying by The Daily Star newspaper.

Police said the deceased was a private shop employee who was having a cup of tea at a roadside stall under the flyover. An investigation has been launched into the incident.

The incident comes a day before the arrival of Bangladesh Nationalist Party’s Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman, the heir to the influential Zia family, who is set to return home Thursday, ending his nearly 17 years in exile in London.

Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Md Jahangir Alam Chowdhury earlier said that law enforcement agencies have been instructed to maintain maximum vigilance and adopt top-tier security measures.

Authorities have deployed a “double-layer” security cordon combining state and party measures across Dhaka ahead of Rahman’s arrival.

Rahman, the 60-year-old son of ailing former premier Khaleda Zia, has emerged as a leading contender for prime minister in the upcoming February general elections.

He will depart London’s Heathrow Airport on a Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight with his wife, Dr Zubaida Rahman, and daughter Zaima Rahman, according to the Dhaka Tribune newspaper.

He is expected to arrive at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport here Thursday at 11:55 am local time. Rahman will travel by road from the airport.

2 police officers killed by bomb in Moscow

Moscow: Three people were killed by a bomb in Moscow Wednesday after two police officers approached a man acting suspiciously near the site where a senior general was killed two days ago by a car bomb that Russia said was planted by Ukrainian intelligence. A string of Russian military figures and high-profile supporters of the war in Ukraine have been assassinated during the nearly four-year-old conflict. Ukrainian military intelligence has said it was responsible for a number of the attacks. Russia’s State Investigative Committee said that when two police officers approached a man who was acting strangely, they were killed by an explosive device, adding that a third person was also killed. It did not specify who the third person was. It said it opened criminal cases under clauses dealing with the murder of law enforcement officers and the illegal trafficking of bombs. The blast took place very close to where Lieutenant General Fani Sarvarov, head of the Russian General Staff’s army operational training directorate, was killed Monday. Russia said it suspected Ukraine was behind the killing.

ground on territorial issues.

Zelenskyy said that Kyiv’s proposal was “to remain where we are”, halting fighting at current battle lines. Moscow, whose forces have been slowly advancing, wants Kyiv to withdraw troops from all of the eastern Donetsk region, around a quarter of which is still under Ukrainian control.



Somalia, Turkey, and Ukraine. California issued 31 of the commercial driver’s licenses; eight licenses were issued by Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jer-

- Military took power in 2021 coup, triggering civil war
- Upcoming polls will be not be nationwide, amid ongoing fighting
- Vote engineered to keep the generals in charge, critics say
- Junta chief urges voters to back candidates who can work with military

won the preceding years’ polls by a landslide.

“The military is incapable of anything but cosmetic change that will not threaten their core interests of central control,” said David Mathieson, an independent Myanmar analyst.

Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy, which won the last two general elections in 2020 and 2015, remains dissolved by

the election commission, and many other anti-junta political outfits are not in the running.

Six parties are competing nationwide, including the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party that has the largest slate of candidates and is tipped to win the polls, creating conditions for the junta chief to take a civilian role.

“The USDP already has established political leaders within its ranks,” said political analyst Sai Kyi Zin Soe, suggesting that Min Aung Hlaing’s route to presidency may not be straightforward, although the general is expected to remain tremendously powerful.

“While it is likely that a national leader will emerge from the military-aligned USDP, we have to wait and see if that leader will be Min Aung Hlaing,” he said.

business

of the day quote

India's office market continues to scale up and set new highs every passing year

ARPIT MEHROTRA | MD, OFFICE SERVICES, COLLIER'S

India's robust macroeconomic environment continues to provide a strong foundation for the industry's growth

KB KACHRU | PRESIDENT, HOTEL ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

Achieving India's 500 GW non-fossil target will require a cohesive national and state-level regulatory framework that gives investors long-term confidence

ASHISH MITTAL | DIRECTOR, ENERGY & COM-MODITIES, CRISIL

SHORT TAKES

RIL gets one-month US concession

New Delhi: India's Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) continues to receive oil cargoes supplied by Rosneft after obtaining a one-month concession from Washington, which had imposed sanctions on the Russian producer, two sources familiar with the matter said. The special permission for Reliance has not been reported previously. In October, the US imposed sanctions on Rosneft and Lukoil, giving companies until November 21 to wind down transactions with the two energy firms. Reliance has a long-term deal with Rosneft to buy 500,000 barrels per day of Russian oil for its 1.4 million bpd refining complex, the world's largest. Separately, the EU has said that from January 21, it will not take fuel produced at refineries that received or processed Russian oil 60 days prior to the bill-of-lading date.

Bharti, Warburg buy 49% stake in Haier

New Delhi: Bharti Enterprises and Warburg Pincus Wednesday agreed to buy 49 per cent stake in washing machine and refrigerator maker Haier India, at around \$2 billion (around Rs 17,955.5 crore). The two companies said in a statement they are making a strategic investment in Haier India whose management control will continue to remain with the current Chinese owner. It, however, did not disclose the acquisition price. Industry sources said the deal value can be \$2 billion. Post the transaction, Bharti and Warburg Pincus will collectively own a 49 per cent stake in Haier Appliances India Ltd, whose product portfolio spans categories such as air conditioners, refrigerators, televisions, washing machines, and kitchen appliances.

Adani Power commits Rs 2 lakh crore capex

New Delhi: Adani Power Ltd has raised its long-term installed capacity target to 41.87 gigawatt (GW) by FY32 and committed capital expenditure of about Rs 2 lakh crore, signalling one of the most aggressive private-sector expansion plans in India's thermal power industry. Sources said the company has lined up an aggressive expansion plan to help India meet a multi-decade rise in electricity demand. The revised target marks a sharp step-up from the company's earlier plan of 30.67 GW by FY30, they said. Adani Power operates 18.15 GW of generation capacity, implying an additional pipeline of 23.72 GW, which the company said is fully secured with land in possession and key equipment orders already placed.



“Artificial intelligence is clearly a double-edged sword. It opens up unprecedented opportunities - from more efficient healthcare systems to sustainable business models - while also accelerating misinformation and contributing to an erosion of public trust

ANDRE HOFFMANN | INTERIM CO-CHAIR, WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

RBI DELAYS FASTER CHEQUE CLEARANCE

The Reserve Bank Wednesday postponed implementation of the second phase of the faster cheque clearance mechanism to provide more time to banks to streamline their operations. The second phase of the 'Continuous Clearing and Settlement on Realisation in Cheque Truncation System' was to be implemented by banks from January 3



Post IndiGo chaos, Indian skies get 3 new airlines

Currently, there are nine scheduled domestic airlines in the country, which is one of the world's fastest growing civil aviation markets

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 24: Three new airlines -- Al Hind Air, FlyExpress and Uttar Pradesh-based Shankh Air -- are set to take to the skies in 2026, with the carriers receiving their No Objection Certificates (NOCs) from the Civil Aviation Ministry. Al Hind Air is being promoted by Kerala-based alhind Group.

The ministry is keen to have more airline operators in the country, which is one of the world's fastest growing domestic civil aviation markets. Currently, there are nine operational scheduled domestic carriers in the country. Fly Big, a regional airline, suspended scheduled flights in October. IndiGo and Air India Group -- Air India and Air India Express -- together have over 90 per cent of the domestic market share. Concerns about apparent duopoly in the fast-growing domestic airlines' industry got amplified this month in the wake of the massive operational disruptions at IndiGo, which has a market share of more than 65 per cent.



“Over the last one week, pleased to have met teams from new airlines aspiring to take wings in Indian skies- Shankh Air, Al Hind Air and FlyExpress. While Shankh Air has already got the NOC from the Ministry, Al Hind Air and

FlyExpress have received their NOCs this week,” Civil Aviation Minister K Rammo-han Naidu said in a post on X Tuesday. According to him, it has been the endeavour of the ministry to encourage more airlines

Benchmarks end flat in thin yr-end trade



REUTERS

Mumbai, Dec 24: India's equity benchmarks closed little changed Wednesday in a subdued session marked by thin year-end volumes, with losses in information technology stocks weighing on sentiment. The Nifty 50 fell 0.13% to 26,142.1, while the BSE Sensex shed 0.14% to 85,408.7. Fifteen of the 16 major sectors declined. Small-caps rose 0.3%, while mid-caps fell 0.6%. Analysts said thin year-end trading kept volatility in check, with global volumes typically light ahead of the Christmas and New Year holidays. Indian markets will be closed Thursday for Christmas. Investors are awaiting further cues, including a potential India-US trade deal and October-December earnings, for a directional trade in the market. Motilal Oswal Financial Services said the earnings revision trends in the past four months have beaten its expectations. "The backdrop for earnings

has improved vs last year, engineered by a series of stimulative fiscal and monetary measures," the brokerage firm said. IT stocks fell 0.5% on the day after US Department of Homeland Security amended regulations governing H-1B work visa, opens new tab selection process to prioritize the allocation to higher-skilled and higher-paid workers instead of a lottery system. Among stocks, Vikran Engineering soared 11.2% after getting an order worth Rs 20.35 billion for development of 600 MW solar power projects in Maharashtra. Ajanta Pharma gained 2.5% after a pact with Biocon for marketing weight-loss drug semaglutide. Kajaria Ceramics fell 4.1%, extending losses to a seventh session. The company Friday reported fraud to the tune of Rs 200 million at its unit, with financial impact of unrecovered amount to be recognised as an exceptional item in the current financial year.

GOLD & SILVER



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 24: Silver prices surged Rs 9,750 to hit a new record of Rs 2,27,000 per kilogram in the national capital Wednesday, even as the white metal breached the \$72 per ounce-mark in overseas markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. On Tuesday, the metal had settled at Rs 2,17,250 per kg. "Spot silver crossed the USD 72 level as the bullion prices hit record highs in the international markets," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. During the calendar year, the white metal has risen by Rs 1,37,300, or 153.06 per cent, from Rs 89,700 per kilogram recorded December 31, 2024. Gandhi further stated that a weak US dollar, expectations of dovish monetary policy from the US Federal Reserve, and

BULLISH PEAKS

Silver surges to record ₹2.27/kg in Delhi; breaches \$72/ounce-mark in global markets

During the calendar year, the white metal has risen by ₹1,37,300, or 153.06 per cent, from ₹89,700 per kilogram recorded December 31, 2024

Gold hits record ₹1.38 lakh/10g in futures trade; tops \$4,500/ounce in int'l markets

So far this year, the metal has added \$1,920.19, or 73.7 per cent, from \$2,605.77 per ounce recorded December 31, 2024

ongoing geopolitical tensions continue to act as tailwinds for the precious metal. Meanwhile, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity retreated from a record high in the local bullion market by a tad and traded lower by Rs 50 at Rs 1,40,800 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) against the

BoM opens 61st branch of Bhubaneswar Zone

BHUBANESWAR: Bank of Maharashtra, one of the premier public sector banks has opened a new branch at Tangi in Cuttack district. With this addition, the bank has now seven branches in Cuttack and 61 branches in the state. The bank also announced its plans to further strengthen its presence and customer reach in Odisha. The new branch was inaugurated by NN Rajalaxmi Ojha, BDO, Tangi- Choudwar in presence of Zonal Manager, Bhubaneswar Zone Dilip Kumar Rauro and Branch Manager of Tangi Branch Rakesh Kumar Nayak. Ojha appreciated the service rendered by the Public Sector Banks and stated that the people of Tangi should come forward to avail themselves of the services and benefits offered by the bank. Commenting on the recent branch expansion, Dilip Kumar Rauro, Zonal Manager, Bank of Maharashtra, Bhubaneswar Zone said, "We are happy to inaugurate one more branch in Cuttack, a rapidly growing and strategically important destination in the state. This would be a step ahead to support our commitment to provide banking services to customers through a fast-expanding network of branches and other channels. This will facilitate smooth and timely delivery of customer service, improve credit delivery and reduced turnaround time for Retail, Agri and MSME sectors in the area and will further enhance customer satisfaction."



FROM FUNDING WINTER TO LIQUIDITY SURGE

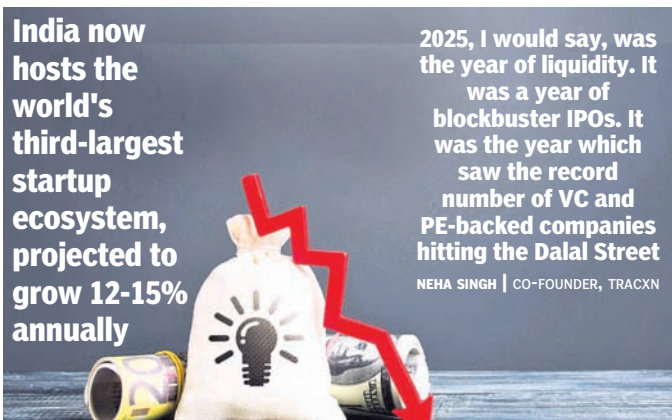
If 2023 was defined by a "funding winter" and 2024 by cautious optimism, this year will be remembered for a historic rise in exits, particularly through the public markets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 24: After a prolonged funding slowdown, 2025 emerged as the year of liquidity for Indian startups, marked by a revival in public listings, improved deal quality and a decisive shift toward dis-

ciplined growth. While overall funding volumes declined, the average median deal size nearly doubled to about \$1.4 million in 2025, from roughly \$700,000 in 2024, signalling greater investor selectivity and maturity. India's technology startups raised \$10.5 billion in 2025, down 17 per cent from \$12.7 billion in 2024 and 4 per cent from \$11 billion in 2023, according to Tracxn. The number of \$100 million-plus funding rounds fell to 14, compared with 19 in 2024, though large deals included Erisha E Mobility (\$1 billion), Zep-to (\$450 million) and GreenLine (\$275 million).

2025 marks turning point for Indian startups



Despite lower funding, liquidity events surged, led by a rebound in startup IPOs. As

many as 18 startups, including Lenskart, Groww, Meesho and PhysicsWallah, listed on Indian

exchanges, collectively raising over Rs 41,000 crore (around \$4.5 billion), compared with Rs 29,000 crore (around \$3.2 billion) in 2024. Some listings delivered strong gains, with Urban Company debuting at a 58.26 per cent premium and Meesho at 53 per cent, while others, including Lenskart and BlueStone, saw more muted market responses, underscoring stricter public-market discipline. Retail, fintech, transportation, logistics and quick commerce emerged as the strongest-performing sectors in a year marked by global tariff disruptions and geopolitical

tensions. Enterprise applications (USD 2.6 billion), retail (USD 2.4 billion) and fintech (USD 2.2 billion) continued to anchor funding, while new unicorns included Netradyne, Porter and Drooms. "India's startup story is one of remarkable domestic growth. With around 200,000 DPIIT-recognised startups, 44,000 added this year alone, 11 new unicorns, and 18 public listings raising over Rs 41,000 crore, India is now the world's third-largest startup ecosystem after the US and China," Prashant Singhal, Markets and Telecommunications Leader at EY India, said.

VIJAY HAZARE TROPHY

Suryavanshi's carnage

The young prodigy breaks multiple records en route his 190 off 84 balls as Bihar set a new team 'world record' for the highest total in a single List A match, with 574/6

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, Dec 24: Bihar's batters went on a record-breaking spree with teen sensation Vaidhav Suryavanshi and skipper Sakibul Gani leading the carnage with the quickest hundreds to power them to a world record team total of 574/6 in a Vijay Hazare Trophy match here Wednesday.

Bearing the brunt of the sustained onslaught in the plate group match was minnows Arunachal Pradesh, as Gani (128 off 40 balls) raced to his hundred in just 32 balls, the fastest by Indian in List A cricket.

This was after Suryavanshi went berserk en route to a blistering 84-ball 190, including hitting 15 sixes, while reaching the three-figure mark in just 36 balls.

Wicketkeeper Ayush Loharuka too joined the party with a 116 off 56 balls but, at a venue that has already witnessed 49 fours and 38 sixes, his whirlwind knock was somewhat put to shade by the unreal batting of Suryavanshi and Gani.

With his brutal onslaught against an attack that was pedestrian in terms of quality, 14-year-old opener Suryavanshi lit up the start of the 50-over domestic tournament before his senior colleagues took over to take their team to a world record total in this form of the game.

Thanks to the hundreds by the troika of Suryavanshi, Gani and Loharuka, Bihar comfortably shattered the previous record held by Tamil Nadu (506/2 also vs Arunachal Pradesh in 2022-23 season).

A dejected Arunachal just didn't stand a chance as they were bowled out for 177 to lose by a massive margin of 397 runs.

Suryavanshi departed the crease as the second-fastest hundred by an Indian in List A cricket, and then, Gani surpassed the record held by Punjab's Anmolpreet Singh, who struck a 35-ball hundred against the same opposition in 2024.

Besides his 15 maximums,

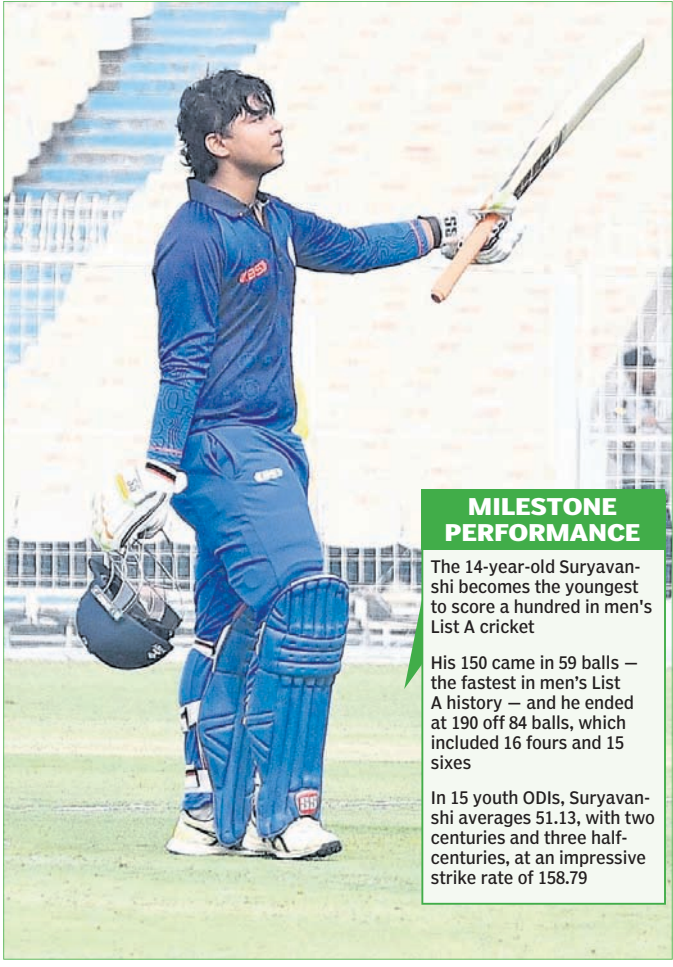
SHORT TAKES

Archer out of final two Ashes tests

Melbourne: Bowler Jofra Archer will not play in the remaining two Ashes tests due to a left side strain, a team official said Wednesday, adding to England's problems both on and off the field that include accusations of drunken behavior by opener Ben Duckett. The 30-year-old Archer spent four years battling a variety of fitness issues, including stress fractures of the back and right elbow, but has been in strong form since making a long-awaited red-ball return against India. The fourth test begins Friday at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and the fifth January 4 in Sydney. Australia has a winning 3-0 lead in the five-test series and has retained the Ashes. Archer joined the squad at training Wednesday at the MCG, but played no part in practice and a spokesperson later confirmed he was out for the remainder of the tour. He had bowled a total of 80 overs in the games at Perth, Brisbane and Adelaide, taking nine wickets at 27.11 and maintaining the lowest strike-rate among England bowlers.

Hall of Famer Masashi 'Jumbo' Ozaki departs

Tokyo: Masashi "Jumbo" Ozaki, whose 113 worldwide victories were the most of any player from Japan, died Wednesday in his home country after a battle with colon cancer, the Japan Golf Tour said. He was 78. Ozaki was revered in Japan, a big hitter with a sense of style who won 94 times over 29 years on the Japan Golf Tour, the last one coming at the 2002 ANA Open when he was 55. He rose to No 5 in the world ranking in 1996 at age 49. Ozaki often got overlooked for never winning outside Japan except for the New Zealand PGA Championship. He was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 2011. "He is an indispensable, one-of-a-kind figure in discussing men's golf, both now and in the future," the tour said in a social media post. Ozaki competed in 49 majors, his best finish coming in the 1989 U.S. Open at Oak Hill when he finished three shots behind Curtis Strange. He played the Masters for the 19th and final time in 2000 when he was 53 and tied for 28th.



MILESTONE PERFORMANCE

The 14-year-old Suryavanshi becomes the youngest to score a hundred in men's List A cricket

His 150 came in 59 balls — the fastest in men's List A history — and he ended at 190 off 84 balls, which included 16 fours and 15 sixes

In 15 youth ODIs, Suryavanshi averages 51.13, with two centuries and three half-centuries, at an impressive strike rate of 158.79



Swastik first Odisha batter to score 200

Star Odisha opener Swastik Samal Wednesday became the first batter from his state to score a double hundred in List A cricket, as he and captain Biplab Samantray led their team to a whopping 345/6 batting first, during their Vijay Hazare Trophy match against Saurashtra. Samal's 212 now stands as the joint-fourth highest individual score in Vijay Hazare Trophy history, equaling Sanju Samson's unbeaten 212 for Kerala against Goa in 2019. Apart from him, captain Biplab Samantray also notched up a hundred during the course of the innings. However, their efforts went in vain as Saurashtra chased down the target by five wickets and more than one over to spare.

Fastest 16000 List A runs: Kohli goes past Tendulkar

India batting star Virat Kohli Wednesday went past the iconic Sachin Tendulkar as the fastest to reach 16,000 runs in List A cricket, achieving the milestone in his 330th innings in the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy. Tendulkar had achieved the landmark in 391 innings. The 37-year-old Kohli touched the mark when he scored his 58th List A hundred during Delhi's opening game against Andhra Pradesh. Delhi chased down the target of 299 in 37.4 overs, with Kohli top-scoring on his return to domestic cricket. Kohli now holds the record for being the fastest to each block of 1000 List A runs from 10,000 runs onwards. He is playing the Vijay Hazare Trophy after a gap of 15 years, but the former India skipper has a stellar record in the tournament. In the premier domestic one-day competition, he has made 819 runs from 13 matches at an average of 68.25 and a strike-rate of 106 with four centuries and three fifties. Retired from the Test and T20 International formats, Kohli's next India assignment is expected to be the home ODI series against New Zealand beginning January 11.



'Hitman' smashes hundred to set up Mumbai's win

Rohit Sharma made a mockery of an inexperienced Sikkim bowling attack with a 94-ball-155 on his return to List A cricket, as Mumbai cruised to an eight-wicket victory in their opening Group C match of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here Wednesday. A near capacity crowd of 20,000-odd fans celebrated the Christmas eve witnessing the 'HitMan' carnage, which included 18 fours and nine sixes with Mumbai chasing down a target of 237 in just 30.3 overs. It started with a trademark pull-shot over mid-wicket off Kranthi for a boundary, followed by a swivel pull shot off his hips.



Suryavanshi also smashed 16 fours during his stay in the middle, only three days after his failure in the final of the U19 Asia Cup against Pakistan

in the UAE.

The list of the quickest hundred in this form of the game is topped by Jake Fraser-McGurk (29 balls) for South Aus-

tralia against Tasmania in the 2023-24 season and the great AB de Villiers (31 balls) for South Africa against West Indies in Johannesburg.

Odisha breeze past Telangana

POST NEWS NETWORK

Narainpur (Chhattisgarh), Dec 24: Team Odisha played its second match of the 79th National Football Championship for Santosh Trophy 2025-26 against Telangana and registered a 1-0 victory in the second group-stage match held here Wednesday.

In a tightly contested 90 minute game, Odisha captain and forward, Kartik Hantal led the team and landed the only strike to take a 1-0 lead with only three minutes remaining for halftime.

Telangana struggled to convert possession into end prod-

SANTOSH TROPHY



uct. Despite attacking options like Imran Ali and Syed Imtiyaz Ahmed, their forward movement was repeatedly halted by Odisha's disciplined defensive line.

The booking of Shashank Kanoujia (87') and late stoppage-time pressure reflected

Tokyo and 2024 Paris Olympic Games medal-clinching teams. This year, he was a part of India's Asia Cup gold-winning side.

In a first, a Yogasan athlete, Aarti Pal, has been recommended for the Arjuna award, five years after it was formally recognised by the Sports Ministry, a well-placed source told PTI.

Aarti is the reigning national and Asian champion in the discipline that would be a demonstration sport at the 2026 Asian Games.

Twenty one other names have been finalised for the Arjuna by the awards selection panel after a meeting here Wednesday. The panel features, among others, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) Vice President Gagan Narang, former badminton player Aparna Popat and former hock-

Pyari's hat-trick powers Nita FA to win vs Sesa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Dec 24: Powered by a Pyari Xaxa hat-trick, Nita Football Academy got their first win of the Indian Women's League 2025-26 campaign, demolishing Sesa Football Academy 6-1 at the National Centre of Excellence here Wednesday.

Xaxa (1', 71', 74') was in hot form, as she completed her hat-trick to help her side to a big win on Christmas eve. Nita FA's Togolese forward Amiratou NDjambara (25', 60') scored two, while midfielder Bhumika Devi (6') netted one.

Sesa's Ghanaian forward Diana Antwi (90+3') pulled one back at the end.

Nita FA climbed to four points from their two matches, and are provisionally at the top of the IWL table, while Sesa are yet to open their account.

The Odisha side got hold of the proceedings right from the start, and took the lead in the first minute itself, without Sesa getting even a touch of the ball. Nita FA mounted a patient build-up right from kick-off that saw the ball passed 15 times before Pyari finished it off with a tap-in at the far post.

Five minutes later, Bhumika doubled the lead when Sesa goalkeeper Alika spilled the ball into the former's path. The Nita FA midfielder's initial shot was blocked, but she soon got on the rebound and slotted it in.

Bhumika turned provider in the 25th minute, when she shrugged off her marker at the edge of the box and threaded



it through to Amiratou, who calmly slid it past the goalkeeper.

The change of ends did not bring about any change in fortunes for Sesa, though Nita FA did take some time to get going in the second half. However, Amiratou made it four in the second half, when Pyari played her through on the hour mark, before she blasted it into the top corner.

Pyari scored her second just 10 minutes later, when she burst into the box and finished it off at the near post. The India international completed her hat-trick with a scorching strike from the edge of the box, after being played through by Bhumika.

Diana Antwi scored Sesa's only goal of the match in injury time, but the damage had already been done by then.

HIL 2026

Kalinga Lancers begin pre-season camp



The team will face Ranchi Royals in their first game January 4, 2026

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, Dec 24: With the Hockey India League 2026 just around the corner, Kalinga Lancers have begun their pre-season training camp with Indian players reporting at the Kalinga Stadium here Tuesday.

The first day of the camp saw the players undergo a strategy meeting under the supervision of the team's Technical & Strategy Coach, Pascal Kina, as the franchise began laying a foundation for the new season.

The Indian players currently attending the camp include Captain Sanjay, goalkeeper Krishan B Pathak and defenders Partap Lakra, Rohit Kullu, Telangana were left to rue missed opportunities in a low-scoring but competitive encounter.

mar Toppo in midfield and forwards Angab Bir Singh, Deepak Pradhan, Gursahibjit Singh, and Boby Singh Dhami.

Pascal Kina, who joins Vedanta Kalinga Lancers with over 15 years of experience in international hockey, has worked extensively across Europe and with teams in New Zealand, Australia, Canada, China, and Korea however, the Hero HIL will be his first tournament in India.

Reflecting on his arrival and early impressions, Kina said, "This is my first time in India and I am really happy to be here. I've been involved in international hockey for many years but India was one place I had never been to until now. I'm proud to represent Vedanta Kalinga Lancers and it has already been an exciting start."

The foreign players, along with head coach Jay Stacy, are set to join the squad after Christmas as Vedanta Kalinga Lancers step up preparations for the upcoming Hero HIL 2026 season.

Shuttlers start strong in Senior Nationals

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Vijayawada, Dec 24: Women's top seed Unnati Hooda, world junior championships silver medallists Tanvi Sharma, the experienced Aakarshi Kashyap, and upcoming junior Rounak Chauhan registered convincing wins to advance in the 87th Senior National Badminton Championships Wednesday.

Unnati, who had a bye in the first round, hammered wildcard entrant Akanksha Matte 21-8, 21-18, while Tanvi began her campaign with a 21-10, 21-14 victory over the Asian U-15 girls singles gold medallist Shaina Manimuthu.

Also advancing to the next round were the experienced Aakarshi, who defeated Asian U-17 championships silver medallist Lakshya Rajesh 21-7, 21-9, while Ashmita Chaliha got the better of Kavya Marvaniya 21-7, 21-11.

16th seed Purva Barve was the only seeded player to bite the dust as she went down 21-19, 17-21, 18-21 against M Meghana Reddy in the Round of 64. In the men's singles event, the 11th-seeded Chauhan defeated Ranveer Singh 21-9, 21-13, while 12th 12th-seeded D. S. Saneeth beat Ankit Mondal 21-7, 21-11 to book their spots in the next round.

The 16th seed and Guwahati Masters Super 100 champions, Sanskar Saraswat, also began his campaign in style with a 21-11, 21-13 win over Shikhar Rallan.

NATIONAL SPORTS AWARDS RECOMMENDATIONS

Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna: Hardik Singh (Hockey)

Arjuna Awards: Tejaswin Shankar (Athletics), Priyanka (Athletics), Narender (Boxing), Vidit Gujrathi (Chess), Divya Deshmukh (Chess), Dhanush Srikanth (Deaf Shooting), Pranati Nayak (Gymnastics), Rajkumar Pal (Hockey), Surjeet (Kabaddi), Nirmala Bhati (Kho Kho), Rudransh Khandelwal (Para-Shooting), Ekta Bhyani (Para-athletics), Padmanabh Singh (Polo), Arvind Singh (Rowing), Akhil Sheoran (Shooting), Mehuli Ghosh (Shooting), Sutirtha Mukherjee (Table Tennis), Sonam Malik (Wrestling), Aarti (Yoga), Treesa Jolly (Badminton), Gayatri Gopichand (Badminton), Lalremisiami (Hockey), Mohammed Afsal (Athletics), Pooja (Kabaddi).

ton combo of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand are also among the recommendations for the Arjuna.

Gayatri is the daughter of national badminton coach and former All England champion Pullela Gopichand.

The list, however, does not feature any cricketer. Pacer Mohammed Shami was the last cricketer to receive the honour, in 2023. The Khel Ratna, which

is the country's highest sporting honour, comes with a medalion, a citation and a cash prize of Rs 25 lakh, while the Arjuna award makes the winner richer by Rs 15 lakh.

Last year, the Khel Ratna was bestowed on four athletes - world champion chess player D Gukesh, men's hockey captain Harmanpreet Singh, para-athlete Praveen Kumar and shooter Manu Bhaker.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, you need to access every bit of your mental agility. Quick and spontaneous decisions are the need of the hour. But a word of caution from Ganesha: take advice, as these decisions could have long-term implications, especially if they involve money.

TAURUS
Hoist the sails and prepare to leave port. Your sugar-coated words will seal business deals with ease, predicts Ganesha. The activity and action may slow down as the day progresses. Resist the urge to get sentimental as it could lead to conflicts that will haunt you in the days to come, warns Ganesha.

GEMINI
You will be seized by a desire to go on a trip with friends and family. This trip may have been some time in the planning as well. The day will be filled with fun and frolic and entertainment. Marital life will be blissful as well, says Ganesha.

CANCER
Though you work with dedication, you will be dejected as higher-ups do not fully appreciate your devotion. Don't take it to heart, says Ganesha, and suggests not to be sad. In the end, you will succeed with your firmness and boldness. By evening, you may have tense moments.

LEO
Your competitors will try to malign your reputation today. They will try to spoil your image and impression in front of others. You need to be courageous and nip their efforts in the bud. You need to delegate decision-making activities to others today. Your wrong decisions need to be buried by you, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Ganesha says a turning point in life is important if you wish to understand it in a better way. You will excel in whatever you do today. Financial matters and relationships are on top of the priority list, but perhaps not in the same order. You will spend a lot of time praying to God.

LIBRA
Ganesha says that you will be a different person today, full of vigor and enthusiasm. You will be able to showcase your creative skills in your personal life and at the same time you will be able to go ahead in your chosen field and gain prestige too. You will have to make a decision about studying further in the field of higher education abroad.

SCORPIO
Elegance personified, you are loaded with compliments today. This may encourage you to do better work and have good equations with people. However, make sure your success does not go to your head and affect your work, warns Ganesha. Watch your words while communicating.

SAGITTARIUS
Conversation and interaction with like-minded people is going to make your day, says Ganesha. Shooting ideas, brainstorming and casual discussions may enlighten you today. Those around you will enjoy your company.

CAPRICORN
It is always easy to lose mental balance when going gets tough, but Ganesha advises you to hold on to your patience as it will help you reach your destination. Don't enter into war of words with anyone at work as the conflicts may harm you very badly. On personal front, you will open up to your partner, and make him/her feel how important he/she is for you.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will decide to clean up the pile of files on the desk at work. Also, you will do everything that it requires to lighten the burden. Ganesha advises you to plan out your career wisely and set targets for the future.

PISCES
You are not too much of a money-minded person. Planning your finances for the future may not really be your cup of tea. You take every day as it comes. However, you will have an epiphany of sorts today and decide to become more serious towards life. You will finally realize the value of planning for your finances. Do not disregard this, says Ganesha.



WICKS DOESN'T WORK OUT ON CHRISTMAS DAY

Fitness coach Joe Wicks has admitted that he 'never' does any exercise on Christmas Day. The 40-year-old star is arguably Britain's most famous PE coach but revealed that he allows his exercise regime to slip when Santa Claus comes to town.

SWIFT'S \$1 MN DONATION FOR FEEDING AMERICA

Pop mega star Taylor Swift has donated \$1 million to the charity Feeding America - a non-profit network of 200 food banks that is striving to end hunger in the United States. "We're grateful to @taylorswift for standing with families facing hunger," the charity revealed.



Chitrangda's desire

MUMBAI: As more women take on roles as producers and directors, the conversation around the female gaze in storytelling has grown louder. While this shift has opened up more authentic narratives, actor-producer Chitrangda Singh believes that compelling cinema goes beyond gender.

"Women understand women's emotions really well. Having said that, I'm not stuck on that idea. For me, more than being a man or a woman, it has to be a good mind. Sometimes, a man's perspective on a woman can be more interesting," says the actress, who produced Soorma starring Taapsee Pannu and Diljit Dosanjh.

When asked whether she'd be keen to direct a female-led film featuring a strong ensemble cast, Chitrangda said, "Why not? I love Kareena Kapoor — she's brilliant as an

actor. I think Kiara Advani is lovely, and of course, Alia Bhatt. And maybe I'd like to be the fourth girl."

Pitching a quirky storyline, she shared, "The story should be about us being con women, stuck in LA. We've run out of money and are trying to hustle our way back home. So, we decide to split up for five days, each of us responsible for making a certain amount of money. What happens to each of us in those five days — that's the story. And the title? I think it should be Last Four Shots."

AGENCIES



Samriddhi Tripathy crowned KIIT NanhiPari Little Miss India

Pranjal Sharma of Madhya Pradesh and P Prardhini of Telangana were adjudged 1st and 2nd runners up

BHUBANESWAR: The grand finale of the Silver Jubilee edition of KIIT NanhiPari Little Miss India 2025 concluded Wednesday on a dazzling note here at the KIIT University campus with Samriddhi Tripathy of Karnataka winning the title.

The glittering event was held in the presence of Femina Miss India World 2024 Nikita Porwal, 1st runner-up Rekha Pandey, and Nandini Gupta, Femina Miss India World 2023.

Samriddhi stood out among contestants for her style, talent, intelligence, elegance, and compassion as she took the centre stage in competition.

Pranjal Sharma of Madhya Pradesh and P Prardhini of Telangana were adjudged 1st and 2nd second runners up.

Dr. Achyuta Samanta, Chief Patron of KIIT Nanhipari and Founder of KIIT and KISS; Malay Mohapatra, Patron along with the other guests, crowned the winners.

The title offers scholarships worth a total of Rs 56 lakh to the winners. The winner this year received a scholarships worth Rs 28 lakh, including a cash prize of Rs 10 lakh along



AT THE TOP: Title winner Samriddhi Tripathy (C) from Karnataka with other runners-up Pranjal Sharma (R) and P Prardhini

with a 100 per cent academic fee waiver for pursuing any discipline at KIIT University. The first runner-up was awarded scholarships worth Rs 14 lakh, comprising a Rs 5 lakh cash prize and a 50 per cent academic fee waiver. The second runner-Up received a scholarship worth Rs 12 lakh, including a Rs 3 lakh cash prize along with a 50 per cent academic fee waiver.

Several contestants were also recognised with special category awards for their exceptional talent and personality. Miss Photogenic was awarded to Pranjal Sharma (MP), while Sudeshna Gurung (Sikkim) won the Miss Selfie title. Miss Rapunzel went to Trisha Jain (Rajasthan) and Miss Monalisa was claimed by Khushali Gurjar (Rajas-

than). Samrudhi Tripathy (Karnataka) was adjudged Miss Urvashi, and Swarnika Kholia (Odisha) received the Miss Fashion award. Miss Cinderella was conferred on Sharmistha Saikia (Assam), while Jiya Nebhani (Rajasthan) won Miss Personality. The Miss Whiz Kid title was secured by Aahana Singh Chauhan (Delhi), and Yashashree Sagarika (Odisha)

MUMBAI: Conman Sukesch Chandrasekhar has gifted a new home to Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez for Christmas.

On Wednesday, Sukesch wrote a letter for the actress, and spoke about the new house, as he expressed his love for the actress.

He wrote, "Baby on this gracious, glorious day I present you, 'The Love Nest' your new, our new home in Beverly Hills. Yes, my love the same house which I made for you, for us, which you thought would not be completed. Baby I am proud to say I completed it for you and gifting it to you today on this Christmas day. But Baby it's bigger and better, than how it was previously planned by us, that is a pri-

Conman Sukesch's Christmas gift for Jacqueline

vate, our own '19' Hole golf course around our house".

He further mentioned, "Baby one more thing, on this Christmas day I wanna surprise is, one more dream of yours, I am working on which is owning an IPL team, I have placed my bids for RCB, god willingly we should be able to get a piece of action".

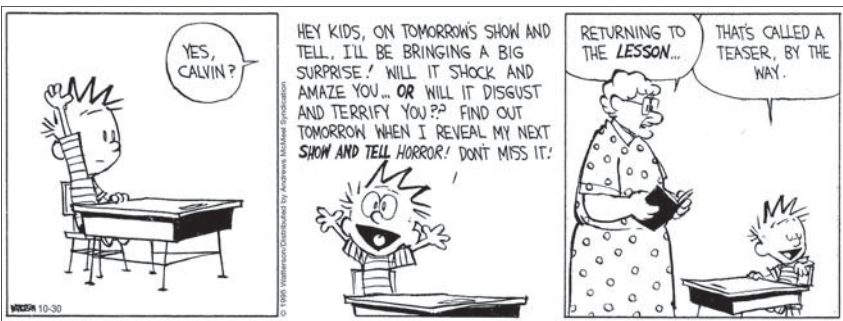
Sukesch and Jacqueline became widely linked in public discourse following investigations into a high-profile financial fraud case. Sukesch is an alleged conman accused of orchestrating multi-crore extortion and money laundering schemes while lodged in jail, using impersonation and influence to target prominent individuals.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

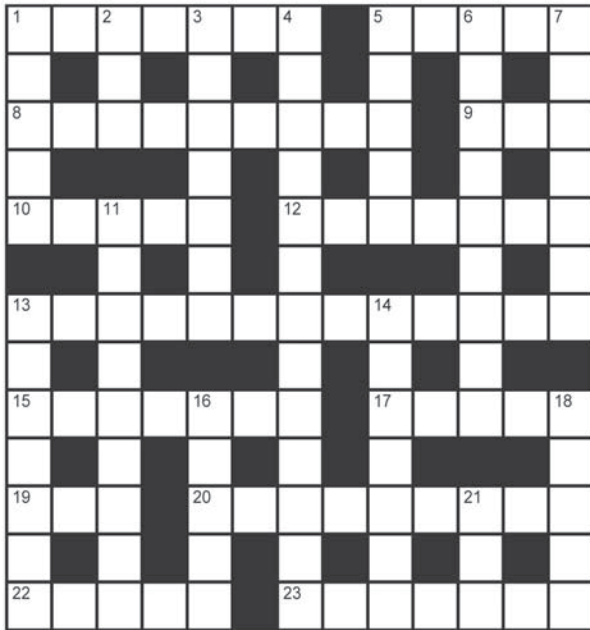


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

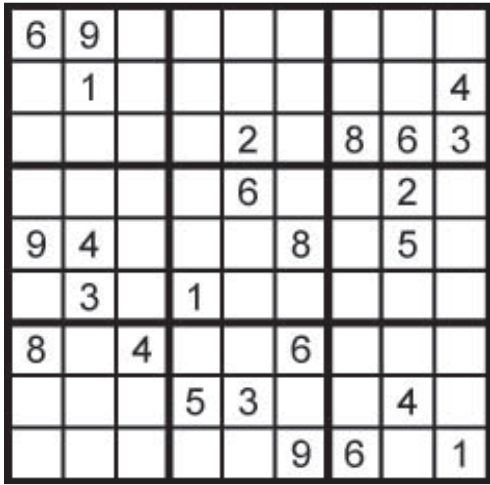
- Supper club
- Lay to rest
- Fencing, e.g.
- Silent assent
- Part of a TV feed
- Black gold gusher (3,4)
- Being the ham
- Flying Dutchman, for one
- Swamp plants
- Cuckoo bird

Down

- Spain's ___ del Sol
- Life story, in brief
- California sequoia
- Gossip target (4,2,3,4)
- Bucolic composition
- Immunise
- Book parts
- Razzed

- Mandarin orange type
- Danger sign (3-4)
- Earsplitting
- London illumination, once (3,4)
- Take under one's wing
- Gemini the ___
- Go on a buying spree
- Cobbler's tool

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

CHRISTMAS: FESTIVAL OF LIGHT, MEMORY & QUIET MIRACLES

Prez greets citizens

President Droupadi Murmu Wednesday extended her Christmas Eve greetings to the people and urged them to follow the path shown by Jesus Christ and build a society that promotes kindness and mutual harmony. “Christmas, the festival of joy and enthusiasm, conveys the message of love and compassion. It reminds us of the sacrifice made by Lord Jesus Christ for the welfare of humanity,” Murmu said. “This sacred occasion inspires us to further strengthen the values of peace, harmony, equality, and service in society. Let us resolve to follow the path shown by Jesus Christ and work towards building a society that promotes kindness and mutual harmony,” she said.



Christmas arrives each year like a familiar melody—soft at first, then steadily growing until it fills streets, homes, and hearts. It is more than a date on the calendar or a religious observance; Christmas is a season shaped by light, memory, and small acts of kindness that often go unnoticed but linger long after the decorations are taken down.

At its heart, Christmas celebrates hope. The story of the birth of Jesus in a humble manger is a reminder that the most transformative moments in history can begin quietly, far from power and grandeur. This message has resonated across centuries, inspiring people to look beyond status and wealth and find value in compassion, humility, and love. Even for those who do not follow the religious tradition, the symbolism of new beginnings and renewed faith in humanity remains powerful.

One of the most striking features of Christmas is light. From glowing stars atop trees to flickering candles in churches and



homes, light becomes a language of its own. In the darkest days of winter, it reassures people that warmth and joy can exist even in difficult times. Cities sparkle with decorations, marketplaces buzz with laughter, and ordinary streets seem transformed into places of wonder. These lights do more than decorate; they create a shared atmosphere, drawing

strangers into a moment of collective celebration.

Christmas is also deeply tied to memory. The aroma of baked cakes, the sound of old carols, or the ritual of decorating a tree can transport people instantly to childhood. For many, Christmas is a bridge between generations—grandparents retelling familiar stories, parents recre-

ating traditions, and children experiencing them for the first time. These rituals, repeated year after year, offer a sense of continuity in a fast-changing world.

Food plays its own quiet role in the season. Every culture adds its flavor to Christmas—roasted meats, spiced sweets, special breads, or

festive desserts prepared only once a year. Meals become occasions not just to eat, but to gather, forgive, and reconnect. Around the table, differences soften, conversations flow, and the simple act of sharing food becomes an expression of care.

Perhaps the most meaningful aspect of Christmas lies in generosity. Gifts are exchanged, but the true spirit of giving often extends beyond wrapping paper. Acts of charity, visits to those who are lonely, and moments of empathy reflect

the deeper message of the season. Christmas gently reminds people that kindness does not need an occasion—but it benefits from one.

As the season fades and everyday life resumes, Christmas leaves behind something intangible yet lasting: a reminder that light can be chosen, traditions can be cherished, and hope can be renewed. In that sense, Christmas is not just a day—it is an invitation to carry its spirit forward, one quiet miracle at a time.

RESHMI YADAV, OP



Around the world

Christmas is celebrated across continents, but the way it is observed varies greatly, shaped by culture, history, and local traditions. While some countries embrace grand festivities, others mark the day quietly, giving Christmas a uniquely global character.

In Europe, Christmas is deeply traditional. Germany is famous for its Weihnachtsmärkte (Christmas markets), where mulled wine and handcrafted gifts fill town squares. In Spain, children eagerly await Los Reyes Magos (the Three Kings), who bring gifts on January 6 rather than Christmas

Day. Scandinavian countries celebrate St. Lucia's Day, symbolizing light during the long winter darkness.

Across Latin America, Christmas blends faith with festivity. In Mexico, Las Posadas reenacts Mary and Joseph's search for shelter through neighborhood processions. Midnight Mass, fireworks, and extended family feasts define the season.

In Asia, Christmas often takes on a cultural rather than religious tone. In Japan, it is a romantic holiday, with couples exchanging gifts and enjoy-

ing festive meals. In India, churches glow with stars and oil lamps, while regional foods add local flavour to the celebrations.

Christmas in Israel, however, stands apart. As the birthplace of Jesus, it holds immense spiritual significance, yet it is celebrated by a small Christian minority. Cities like Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Jerusalem become global focal points during Christmas. Pilgrims from around the world gather at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, believed to be Jesus's birthplace. Midnight Mass, led by church patriarchs, is a deeply solemn and symbolic event.

In Jerusalem, Christmas is observed three times—by Catholic, Orthodox, and Armenian Christians—on different dates, reflecting diverse Christian calendars. Streets in Christian quarters are modestly decorated, and celebrations remain peaceful and prayer-centered rather than commercial.

Together, these global traditions show that Christmas is not a single celebration, but many—ranging from vibrant public festivals to quiet moments of faith. In Israel especially, Christmas serves as a bridge between history, spirituality, and the shared heritage of humanity.

BHUBANESWAR GLOWS WITH CHEER

Bhubaneswar embraced the magic of Christmas as the City turned into a vibrant tapestry of lights, prayers, celebrations and acts of kindness. From the quiet devotion inside churches to the lively buzz of markets, hotels, clubs and public spaces, the Capital celebrates the festival in a spirit of joy, unity and togetherness.

At the heart of the celebrations were the City's churches, where special prayers and midnight masses were held at prominent centres such as St. Vincent's Pro Cathedral Church and the Unit-IV Church. Hymns and carols filled the night air as worshippers gathered to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. Messages of peace, compassion and hope resonated deeply, drawing not only the Christian community but

also people from other faiths who joined in the festive spirit.

Outside the churches, Bhubaneswar glowed in festive colours. Streets, homes and commercial hubs were adorned with stars, fairy lights and Christmas trees, while markets buzzed with activity as shoppers thronged stalls for cakes, gifts, decorations and Santa caps. Bakeries across the City reported brisk sales of plum cakes and other festive delicacies,

adding a rich flavour to the celebrations.

The cheer spilled over into hotels, clubs and public venues, which hosted Christmas Eve dinners, brunches, carnivals and parties. Vivanta Bhubaneswar marked the occasion with a special sundowner winter edition, while To-Escalate hosted festive nights, dances and mances.

At the pNotch Club and Club & Lounge, Santa appeared live, DJ Santa performed, and Raasta Bhubaneswar brought an international music touch, making the city's nightlife sparkle with Christmas cheer.



Lesser-known facts

Christmas is one of the world's most celebrated festivals, yet many fascinating facts about it remain surprisingly unknown. Beneath the familiar carols, trees, and gifts lies a history shaped by ancient traditions, unexpected origins, and curious customs.

One little-known fact is that December 25 was not originally believed to be Jesus Christ's actual birthday. Early Christians chose the date centuries later, possibly to coincide with existing Roman winter festivals like Saturnalia and Sol Invictus, making it easier to spread Christianity among pagan communities.

The Christmas tree tradition has roots in pre-Christian Europe. Long before Christianity, evergreen trees symbolized life and renewal during winter. It wasn't until 16th-century Ger-

many that decorated trees became associated with Christmas celebrations as we know them today.

Another surprising detail is the origin of Santa Claus. He is loosely based on St. Nicholas, a 4th-century Greek bishop from present-day Turkey, known for secretly giving gifts to the poor. The modern image of

Santa in a red suit was popularized much later, especially through 19th-century illustrations and 20th-century advertising.

The popular song "Jingle Bells" was not written for Christmas at all. It was originally composed for Thanksgiving in 1857 and only later became linked to Christmas because of its winter theme.

In many countries, Christmas is used

to be illegal. In 17th-century England and parts of colonial America, Puritans banned Christmas celebrations, viewing them as unbiblical and excessively indulgent. People were fined for decorating homes or feasting December 25.

Another lesser-known fact is that gift-giving was once discouraged by churches, which felt it distracted from the religious significance of the day. Over time, however, the practice became central to modern celebrations.

Finally, in several cultures, Christmas brings unexpected figures. In parts of Europe, children fear Krampus or Belsnickel—folklore characters who punish misbehaving children, reminding them that Christmas traditions are not always gentle or joyful.

These lesser-known facts reveal that Christmas is not just a festival of joy, but a rich blend of history, culture, and evolving traditions.



ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଏକାଡେମୀ ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତା

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ଆସନ୍ତୁ,
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ପୁରସ୍କାର ବାଣୀ

ଭିଡ଼ିଓ-ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତା ବିଜେତାଙ୍କୁ
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ପୁରସ୍କାର ବାଣୀ

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₹ 2,000/- ପ୍ରତି ଫଟୋ
(ଶେଷ୍ଟ ଗୋଟି ଫଟୋ ତଦନୁ କରାଯିବ)

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FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

WHAT POLLUTES INDIA?



Acknowledging the true impact and sources of our pollution crisis is the first step towards meaningful action

Indian Ocean from October to February.

Their findings were unequivocal. This haze was largely caused by the burning of biomass in homes and fields, and fossil fuels (especially coal) in industry and power plants. Pollution travelled thousands of kms, altered rainfall patterns, reduced agricultural productivity, and caused widespread respiratory and cardiovascular disease.

When UNEP published the findings in 2002, some prominent Indian scientists questioned the terminology and intent. The phenomenon was dismissed as “atmospheric brown clouds” — a semantic quibble. The warnings were largely ignored by governments.

A quarter century later, air pollution has become a national crisis. Cities such as Mumbai, Bangalore, and Hyderabad, which once had relatively clean air, now routinely fail to meet national air quality standards. This deterioration is not accidental. It is the direct result of our persistent failure to address the primary sources of pollution identified decades ago.

What pollutes India? Over the last five years, Indian scientific institutions have produced a growing body of research that policymakers have largely ignored. A 2024 study involving researchers from prominent institutions, including earth sciences, found that about 50% of PM10 and PM2.5 in Delhi during

the peak pollution season comes from biomass burning sources. Another study from IIT-Kanpur, published in 2023, showed that biomass burning (especially residential heating) is the main driver of intense and frequent night-time haze in Delhi during January and February.

Similar findings have emerged from other parts of the country. Together, they point to a clear conclusion: open burning of biomass (whether for cooking or heating in homes, in small industrial and commercial establishments, or in agricultural fields) is the single largest source of air pollution in India. Without sharply reducing biomass burning, we simply cannot clean the country’s air.

The second major source of pollution is coal use in industries and power plants. A 2023 study by my colleagues estimated that around 37% of India’s PM2.5 emissions come from industry and power generation. Vehicular pollution is the third largest source, especially in cities.

Basically, India’s air pollution crisis is driven by what we burn the most. India burns around 200 crore tonnes of fuel and waste every year. About 85% of this is coal and biomass. Add dust from roads, construction sites, and barren land, and the picture becomes even clearer.

Solving India’s air pollution crisis requires a clean energy transition and an “all-of-the-

above” approach.

Biggest gains will come from the residential sector. Transitioning households to LPG, biogas or electricity for cooking and heating would eliminate a large share of PM2.5 emissions and prevent nearly 800,000 premature deaths each year from indoor air pollution. This is difficult, but achievable through targeted policies such as strengthening the PM Ujjwala programme that provides adequate incentives for low-income households to abandon biomass completely.

Industry must be the next priority. Encouraging MSMEs to adopt cleaner fuels and technologies, such as electric boilers and furnaces, combined with strict monitoring, can substantially reduce emissions. For large industries and power plants, enforcement of strict emission standards must be non-negotiable.

Eliminating stubble burning remains essential to reducing severe pollution episodes in Oct and Nov. In just 45 days, stubble burning emits as much PM2.5 as all vehicles in India in an entire year. The solutions — technology, market access, incentives, penalties — are well-known and proven. Scaling up electric vehicles and public transport will steadily reduce urban pollution, but this requires sustained policy direction, robust financing, and ambitious targets, not slogans. Finally, local sources (dust, construction, garbage burning, congestion) must be tackled by empowered and accountable urban local bodies.

Real progress on the above action plan will only begin when we stop bickering over science. So, acknowledging the true impact and sources of our pollution crisis is the first step towards meaningful action.

The writer is an environmentalist and CEO, iFOREST.



Chandra Bhushan

BASICALLY, INDIA’S AIR POLLUTION CRISIS IS DRIVEN BY WHAT WE BURN THE MOST

Every winter, Delhi’s air pollution debate follows a familiar script. We look for villains, argue over blame, ignore science and solutions. This year has been no different — except that it has bordered on the absurd.

Pollution season opened with the Supreme Court allowing “green crackers,” followed by Delhi govt’s failed cloud-seeding attempt. Soon after came official data claiming a 90% reduction in stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana. Overnight, stubble burning was declared “not a problem.” Even though scientific evidence told a very different story.

A paper from ISRO and an independent analysis by my colleagues showed that stubble burning continued across Punjab, Haryana, UP, and MP, significantly contributing to pollution in Delhi-NCR. Real issue was not the absence of fires, but the failure of monitoring. Satellite passes over India in the early afternoon. As farmers simply shift the burning to late afternoon and evening, a large proportion of farm fires is no longer being detected.

Instead of fixing the monitoring system, we wasted weeks in the “tu quoque” debate — where stubble burning in Delhi’s local sources were to blame. Incentives for farmers to not burn stubble were never implemented. Committees were formed, reports were written, and once again, we forgot to demand real solutions from all institutions accountable.

All this is particularly frustrating because the core causes of India’s air pollution crisis have been known for at least 25 years. In 1999, more than 200 scientists from across the world participated in the Indian Ocean Experiment, led by the renowned atmospheric scientist V. Ramanathan. This study identified massive clouds of “Asian Brown Clouds” stretching over the Indian subcontinent and the

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

Inequality by design

Economic inequality has long stood at the centre of debates on how societies are organised and how prosperity is shared. While disparities have always existed, by 2025 inequality has reached levels that demand urgent moral, political, and economic attention. The gains of globalisation and economic growth have accrued overwhelmingly to a narrow elite, while vast sections of humanity continue to struggle for secure livelihoods, social protection, and basic dignity. These divides are neither accidental nor inevitable; they are the direct outcomes of political choices, institutional arrangements, and entrenched asymmetries of power.

The World Inequality Report 2026 (WIR 2026), produced by the World Inequality Lab under the leadership of Lucas Chancel, Ricardo Gómez-Carrera, Rowaida Moshrif, and Thomas Piketty, provides one of the most comprehensive and rigorously documented analyses of inequality in the twenty-first century. The third in the series after the 2018 and 2022 editions, the report draws on contributions from over 200 scholars worldwide and is prefaced by Joseph Stiglitz and Jayati Ghosh. Its conclusion is explicit: Global inequality remains at historically extreme levels and is deeply multidimensional, spanning income, wealth,

gender, climate vulnerability, and access to basic human capabilities.

A central insight of the report is that inequality does not emerge from the natural functioning of markets alone. Rather, it reflects deliberate policy choices, entrenched institutional structures, and unequal distributions of economic and political power. Markets are embedded within social and political systems, and when these systems systematically favour capital over labour, wealth over work, and elites over citizens, inequality becomes persistent and self-reinforcing. Crucially, because inequality is shaped by policy, it can also be reshaped by policy.

According to the World Inequality Report 2026, using 2025 purchasing power parity estimates, the world’s richest 0.001% — around 60,000 individuals — own three times more wealth than the poorest 50% of humanity. Globally, the top 1% capture 23% of total income and own 38% of total wealth. The top 10% command 53% of income and a staggering 75% of wealth. In contrast, the middle 40% receive 38% of global income but own only 23% of wealth, while the bottom half of the world’s population survives on just 8% of income and owns a mere 2% of global wealth.

While South Africa ranks highest in income inequality, followed

by Colombia, Chile, Brazil, and Mexico, India ranks sixth. India’s top 1% hold 22.6% of national income and own 40% of national wealth. The top 10% account for 57.7% of income and 65% of wealth. The middle 40% earn 27.3% of income and own 28.6% of wealth, while the bottom 50% — half the population — receive only 15% of income and own just 6.4% of the country’s wealth.

As Stiglitz and Ghosh emphasise, inequality in India is not confined to income and wealth alone but is interwoven with gender, caste, region, and access to public services. Extreme inequality is economically inefficient, socially corrosive, and ecologically unsustainable. It weakens democracies, fragments social cohesion, erodes political consensus, and intensifies climate vulnerability — burdens borne disproportionately by those least responsible.

Stiglitz and Ghosh advocate the creation of an international panel on inequality — akin to the IPCC for climate change — to systematically monitor trends and guide evidence-based policymaking. The report also stresses the need to reform the global financial system, which remains structurally biased in favour of wealthy nations.

Advanced economies can borrow cheaply and invest abroad

at higher returns, effectively functioning as financial rentiers. As a result, around 1% of global GDP flows annually from poorer to richer countries through unequal income transfers — nearly three times the volume of global development aid. Coordinated global taxation, corrective levies on excessive surpluses, and stronger international financial governance could substantially reduce these imbalances.

At the national level, regressive tax structures further exacerbate inequality. The absence of inheritance and net wealth taxes, combined with cuts in corporate tax rates, has sharply reduced tax progressivity even as the fortunes of the ultra-rich have expanded rapidly. In many countries including India, elites pay proportionally less tax than lower- and middle-income households, depriving states of resources needed for education, healthcare, social protection, and climate action.

Progressive taxation is essential to ensure that those with the greatest means contribute their fair share. Greater transparency, stronger redistribution, and coordinated global action on taxation and capital regulation are therefore indispensable.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist.



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

BECAUSE INEQUALITY IS SHAPED BY POLICY, IT CAN ALSO BE RESHAPED BY POLICY

As private actors, subnational governments, academic institutions, and professional networks continue to gain influence, diplomacy is no longer the exclusive domain of foreign ministries. Global governance, in turn, is becoming increasingly decentralised, especially in critical areas like cybersecurity.

To avert a global catastrophe, today’s institutional vacuum must be filled by flexible, workable arrangements: less formal, less universal, and less binding, yet still capable of facilitating cooperation among countries and key actors. These include public-private partnerships, interregional agreements such as the EU-Mercosur trade deal, and “co-alitions of the willing” like the Just Energy Transition Partnerships.

Admittedly, this approach involves higher transaction costs and cannot guarantee certainty or uniformity. But the task facing international policymakers is not to design the perfect model — it is to identify the one that is most viable in a rapidly changing world teetering on the edge of systemic collapse.

Meanwhile, Russia and China have been eager to undermine a system they view as detrimental to their interests. Russia’s 2008 invasion of Georgia and invasions of Ukraine in 2014 and 2022 openly defied international law, bringing large-scale war back to Europe. Likewise, China’s “Made in China 2025” industrial strategy violates WTO rules, and its aggressive actions in the South China Sea show complete disregard for the 2016 arbitral ruling that rejected its expansive maritime claims.

The consequences are now widely evident: on the issues that matter most, multilateral institutions no longer drive global decision-making. Paralysed by cross-vetoes among its permanent members, the UN Security Council has been largely inactive, with the notable exception of its recent endorsement of Trump’s Gaza peace plan. At the same time, the WTO — whose establishment in 1995 was multilateralism’s last meaningful achievement — can no longer enforce its own rules since the US rendered its appellate inoperative in 2019.

This institutional paralysis is part of a broader trend. No major multilateral institution has been created in decades, while informal arrangements — lacking binding rules and often involving non-state actors — have proliferated, offering more agile and adaptable forms of coordination better suited to an increasingly fragmented world. Today, multilateral institutions account for only one-quarter of the global governance ecosystem.

In this environment, preventing the disintegration of the international order is a daunting task. What is needed are intermediate mechanisms that do not depend on universal participation or the adoption of comprehensive, binding rules. While achieving global consensus is virtually impossible, informal alliances, public-private platforms, and flexible coordination mechanisms can help mitigate geopolitical risks.

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance — which has immunised over one billion children since 2000 — offers a useful model, as do the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, with its globally accepted technical standards (including Wi-Fi), and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Although lacking legal authority, these bodies have achieved technical legitimacy and broad voluntary compliance. Once secondary to multilateral institutions, they may now emerge as pillars of global coordination.

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Javier Solana is a former secretary-general of NATO. Angel Saz-Carranza is Professor of Strategy and Policy at Esade.

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WISDOM CORNER

Joy can only be real if people look upon their life as a service and have a definite object in life outside themselves and their personal happiness.

LEO TOLSTOY

Discontent, blaming, complaining, self-pity cannot serve as a foundation for a good future, no matter how much effort you make.

ECKHART TOLLE

So long as you have food in your mouth, you have solved all questions for the time being.

FRANZ KAFKA

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

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Participatory governance

Sir, Transparency and accountability are the cornerstones of a good government. The importance of participatory governance and inclusiveness cannot be overstressed. Good governance has to be responsive and equitable, apart from complying with the rules and regulations of the land, and it should always aim at the welfare of the society though the final outcome may not exactly match its initial intention. The people responsible for a noble governance should be wedded to integrity and commitment. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was an exemplary statesman who was not only an able administrator but was also a visionary leader and captivating orator who believed in democratic principles. To honour him, “Good Governance Day” is observed from 2014 on December 25, his birthday.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Space milestone

Sir, India’s launch of its heaviest satellite, weighing over six tonnes, aboard the LVM3 heavy-lift launch vehicle marks a significant technological, economic and strategic achievement. The three-stage LVM3, powered by twin S200 solid boosters, the L110 liquid core and the indigenous CE-20 cryogenic upper stage, enables precise placement of heavy payloads into GTO and low-Earth orbits at globally competitive costs. This capability has encouraged even developed nations to rely on India for affordable and reliable launches. Economically, it brings valuable foreign exchange, boosts the Indian Space Research Organisation’s (ISRO) commercial arm and fuels growth in private space enterprises, manufacturing and advanced technologies. Strategically, it reinforces India’s image as a self-reliant and technologically advanced power. For the younger generation, a growing space ecosystem offers vast opportunities in high-skill employment, innovation, start-ups and research, while elevating India’s global standing and long-term economic strength.

RS Narula, PATIALA

11 investment proposals worth ₹1,333cr get nod

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 24: The state government Wednesday approved 11 investment proposals worth ₹1,332.80 crore, paving way for creation of 7,474 jobs across the state. The approvals were granted at 143rd meeting of the State Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA) chaired by Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja.

Guided by the vision of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, the latest clearances highlight the state's steady transition from

policy intent to on-ground action, strengthening its position as an emerging investment hub in eastern India, the meeting said. The projects span a broad spectrum of sectors, including metal ancillary and downstream industries, food and seafood processing, textiles and apparel, chemicals, green hydrogen and green ammonia, tourism, logistics, coal beneficiation, and IT & Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM).

The projects will come up in seven districts—Angul, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Ganjam, Jagatsinghpur, Khurda and Ma-

yurbhanj—ensuring balanced regional development and wider employment opportunities.

In the metal and downstream segment, Kalinga Copper Private Limited will establish a copper foil manufacturing unit in Dhenkanal with an investment of ₹150 crore, creating 200 jobs. MM Castings Private Limited will invest ₹65 crore in Ganjam to manufacture high manganese steel crusher parts, generating employment for 330 people.

In a major boost to food processing and textile sectors, Pasupati Agrovet Pvt Ltd will set

up a ₹200-crore shrimp processing unit in Khurda which is expected to generate 700 jobs. Sree Lakshmi Apparels Pvt Ltd will invest ₹60 crore in a readymade garments manufacturing unit in Cuttack, creating 1,250 jobs.

Universal Industries will establish an agrochemical unit in Jagatsinghpur with an investment of ₹220 crore and 215 jobs. Sara Green Energy Pvt Ltd will invest ₹250 crore in a 20,000 tonne green ammonia project in Ganjam, generating 47 jobs. Tourism and logistics projects include a ₹50.85 crore four-star luxury resort

by Khimji Retail Venture Pvt Ltd in Mayurbhanj, creating 177 jobs. In coal, IT and ESDM sectors, Sapient Coal Beneficiation Private Limited will set up a coal beneficiation plant in Angul with an investment of ₹58.20 crore, creating 300 jobs. Quarks Technosoft Pvt Ltd will invest ₹68 crore in a software development facility in Khurda, generating 2,500 jobs, while Sourcing Brains Lab Pvt Ltd will establish an ESDM unit for telematics devices and smart meters in Khurda with an investment of ₹51 crore, creating 1,500 jobs.

3 ring roads as part of economic region

Bhubaneswar: The state government is planning three ring roads, cumulatively 645 km long, as part of the Bhubaneswar-Cuttack-Puri-Paradip Economic Region, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi announced Wednesday at a high-level meeting. A 432-km ring road will be constructed from Paradip to Puri via Tangi, Saptasajya and Rameswar. It will be built in coordination with the Centre's proposed 111-km Capital Region Ring Road, a statement said. Another 148-km ring road will be built from Cuttack to Khorda via Balipatna, Pipili and Jatni. Also, a 65-km inner ring road will be constructed in Tamando in Khurda district via Chandaka, Pahal and Dhauli, it said. Apart from this, there is also a proposal for a 32-km railway line from Puri to Konark and a 70-km line from Konark to Bhubaneswar via Nimapada, it added. According to the statement issued by the CMO, the roads will ensure huge industrial growth in the region. The CM suggested that officers prepare special plans to develop the cities in this region as 'growth hubs'. He also directed them to remain in regular contact with NITI Aayog and expedite work on this project. He asked officers to pay special attention to the development of tourism in this region. The meeting was attended by Housing and Urban Development Minister KC Mohapatra, Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja and Development Commissioner Anu Garg.

Fake ivory racket: 6 more arrested



Nilagiri: Forest officials have arrested six more people in a racket involved in manufacturing of fake ivory from the bones of dead elephants, taking the total number of arrests to 22 in Balasore district. Acting on intelligence inputs, a team from Kuldiha Forest Division carried out a series of raids in and around Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary area under Nilagiri subdivision for violations of the Wildlife (Protection) Act. Officials said the accused would exhume the buried remains of elephants after death, grind the bones and use them to make imitation tusks, which were then sold at high prices. The operation was conducted under the direction of DFO Prafulla Kumar Mallik. ACF Shobhan Diganta Chand of Balasore and Subrat Kumar Behera, ACF (in-charge) of Kuldiha led coordinated raids at multiple locations. Forest officials said 16 other accused were arrested earlier in cases related to wildlife poaching and illegal trafficking of animal body parts. The latest arrests were made during a pre-dawn raid Wednesday in Nilagiri subdivision. The team seized 146 pangolin scales, porcupine sticks, axes, rods, explosive materials and a country-made gun from the accused persons. All six accused were produced before a court and remanded to judicial custody. Further investigation is underway to identify other persons linked to the racket, forest department sources said. The case came to light December 14, when forest personnel intercepted three poachers in the Panchalingeshwar section while they were carrying carcasses of a barking deer and a porcupine.

Minor critical as bomb explodes

Chhendipada: A 15-year-old girl sustained severe injuries after a crude bomb allegedly planted by poachers to kill



wild animals exploded in a forest area near Gohirapashi under Chhendipada forest range in Angul district Wednesday, police said. The injured has been identified as Manasi Behera of nearby Bahalsahi village. She was initially admitted to Chhendipada community health centre (CHC) but was later shifted to the Angul district headquarters hospital (DHH) as her condition deteriorated. According to sources, Manasi, along with her friends, had gone to a nearby forest close to Gohirapashi village for a picnic. While collecting firewood for cooking, a bomb reportedly planted by poachers detonated when her hand accidentally hit it. The explosion caused severe injuries to her right hand. Forest and police officials are probing the use of crude bombs for illegal animal hunting in the area.

Royal family robbed by fake Vig officials

Daringbadi: Miscreants in the garb of Vigilance sleuths allegedly looted cash and gold ornaments from the royal family of Simadri Deo at Gadapur Bazaar under Brahmanigaon police limits in Kandhamal district, police said Wednesday. According to the complaint, the accused arrived at the house Monday claiming to be Vigilance officers and told the family that their son was involved in corruption and that the house would be searched. They allegedly handcuffed the head of the family and kept other members under close watch before fleeing with cash and gold ornaments. The miscreants allegedly took away the hard disk of the CCTV camera installed at the house, apparently to destroy evidence, police said. The incident has triggered panic and widespread discussion in the area. Sanjeeb Kumar Deo of the family lodged a complaint at the Brahmanigaon police station. Police have registered a case and launched an investigation Wednesday. The family includes Simadri Deo, his son Sanjeeb, daughter-in-law Mamata and their two children. The incident occurred when Sanjeeb had gone out on work around noon when five men arrived at the house on three motorcycles, police said.

Bargarh Dhanu Jatra kicks off

Mathura Nagari: The world-famous open-air theatre, Bargarh Dhanu Jatra, went off to a colourful start at Raj Darbar stage in Hatpada here Wednesday evening. Bargarh MP Pradeep Kumar Purohit and MLA Ashwini Kumar Sarangi inaugurated the festival around 7:30pm. Among others, Padampur MLA Barsha Singh Bariha, Attabira MLA Nihar Ranjan Mahanand, Bhatli MLA Irasish Acharya, Bargarh Municipality chairperson Kalpana Majhi, District Collector Aditya Goyal, Superintendent of Police PS Meena and members of Dhanu Jatra Mahotsav Committee also attended the mega event. The inaugural programme was coordinated by Dhanu Jatra Mahotsav Committee convener Sureshwar Satpathy. With the inauguration, Bargarh town has transformed into Mathura Nagari and Ambapali into Gopapura for the next 11 days, while the Jira River flowing between the two has symbolically become the Yamuna River. Scenes from the epic were enacted, beginning with the marriage of Devaki and Vasudeva at the local Ramji Temple in the presence of Maharaja Ugrasena. The prophecy foretelling the death of Kansa at the hands of Devaki's eighth child left Kansa disturbed. Subsequently, Kansa dethroned Ugrasena and seized control of Mathura.



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by

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In the august presence of

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Yogi Adityanath
Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

Rajnath Singh
Raksha Mantri, Government of India

Keshav Prasad Maurya
Deputy Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

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Dr. Lalji Prasad Nirmal
MLC

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MAJOR MISHAPS

Yamuna expressway pile-up: A tragic pile-up on the Yamuna Expressway December 16 one of the deadliest fog-related accidents of the year, resulted in the deaths of 13 people near Mathura. The crash, involving 7 buses and 3 cars, led to a devastating explosion, possibly triggered by a CNG tank. Many of the victims were asleep when the fire rapidly spread through the vehicles.

Kurnool bus inferno: A private luxury sleeper bus October 24 traveling from Hyderabad to Bangalore collided with a motorcycle in Andhra Pradesh. The impact caused the bike to get stuck under the bus, igniting a fire that tragically claimed the lives of 25 passengers.

Rajasthan sleeper bus fire: An overloaded AC sleeper bus traveling from Jaisalmer to Jodhpur October 14 caught fire near Thaiyat village, likely due to a short circuit. The blaze resulted in the deaths of 20 people, while 16 others suffered severe injuries.

Arunachal Pradesh bus mishap: A tragic road accident occurred in the remote Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh December 8, resulting in the deaths of 20 labourers from Assam. The accident involved a mini-truck, often referred to as a dumper, which fell nearly 200 meters (about 1,000 feet) into a deep gorge near the India-China border. The incident went unreported for almost two days due to the region's isolation and lack of mobile connectivity.

Goa night club fire: A fire killed 25 people and injured 50 December 6 at the Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub in Arpora, Goa. It has since become one of the deadliest nightlife disasters in the state's history, sparking a widespread criminal investigation and an international manhunt. At the heart of the disaster are the Lutthra brothers, Saurabh (40) and Gaureav (44), whose actions before, during, and after the fire have been described by investigators as a shocking display of corporate negligence and ruthless evasion of responsibility.

IN MEMORIAM

Shivraj Patil
The veteran statesman and Congress stalwart Shivraj Patil passed away December 12, at the age of 90. A towering figure in Indian politics for over five decades, Patil was widely respected for his dignified conduct and deep commitment to parliamentary excellence.

L. Ganesan
L. Ganesan, the serving Governor of Nagaland and a prominent figure in Indian politics, passed away August 15, at the age of 80. His death followed complications from head injuries sustained during a recent fall.

Satya Pal Malik
Veteran statesman Satya Pal Malik passed away at age 79 August 5, following a prolonged illness. In a notable historical coincidence, his death occurred on the sixth anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370—the landmark event he oversaw as the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir.

Vijay Rupani
The veteran leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and 16th Chief Minister of Gujarat and passed away June 12 at the age of 68. He was among the victims of the tragic Air India Flight 171 crash in Ahmedabad. Over 25,000 devotees gathered, exceeding capacity.

Shibu Soren
The "Dokom Gun" (World Teacher) and the architect of the Jharkhand statehood movement, passed away August 4 at the age of 81. He died at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in New Delhi after a prolonged battle with kidney-related ailments.

Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa
A towering statesman of Punjab and a veteran of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa passed away May 28, at the age of 89.

Shalini Patil
A veteran Congress leader and former Maharashtra Minister Dr Shalini Patil passed away December 20 at the age of 94. She breathed her last at her residence in Mahim, Mumbai, following a period of age-related illness.

India faced multiple environmental disasters, including cyclones Shakhti, Montha, and Ditwah, extreme heatwaves, severe pollution in Delhi, and major landslides. Prolonged heatwaves led to health emergencies, water shortages, and crop losses, while cyclones caused flooding, coastal damage, and infrastructure destruction. Intense rainfall triggered landslides in Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal, isolating communities and causing fatalities. Himachal Pradesh experienced one of its worst disasters, with over 145 landslides, 98 flash floods, and 46 cloudbursts, claiming 448 lives and causing economic losses of over ₹4,840 crore

CLIMATE FURY

Locals assist in moving flood affected people to a safer place as floodwater enters villages in Ainala. Punjab suffered its worst flooding in nearly 40 years, peaking in August and September. The official death toll was between 50 and 55.

Heavy rains in Himachal Pradesh wreaked with claiming a total of 105 lives between June 20 and July 14 according to the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA). Out of 105 deaths, 61 deaths were directly caused by rain-related calamities, including landslides, flash floods, cloudbursts, drowning, fire incidents, and electrocution, as per the official cumulative report released by the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) under the Department of Revenue.

Young women cover their heads for protection from the scorching sun on a summer day, in Gurugram May 19.

An anti-smog gun sprays water droplets to curb air pollution as air quality deteriorates across northern India, at North Campus, in New Delhi October 31

Students walk along a road amid heavy rain in the wake of Cyclone Ditwah, in Chennai December 1.

View of the damage amid heavy rains in this image taken in Dharali, Uttarakhand, August 6.

SHOCKING CRIMES

Blue drum case
A man, identified as Saurabh Rajput, was allegedly killed by his wife, Muskan Rastogi, along with her lover, Sahil Shukla, March 4. Chilling details of the case sent shockwaves across the country after it was revealed that Rajput's body was chopped into 15 pieces and put inside a sealed, cement-filled blue drum at his house in Meerut's Brahmputri locality March 19.

Tennis player Radhika murder
Radhika Yadav, a 25-year-old state and national-level tennis player, was murdered by her father, Deepak Yadav, July 10 in Gurugram, Haryana, India. The primary motive for the killing was a dispute over her running a tennis academy and the father's resentment over social taunts that he was living off his daughter's income.

Killer wife
A woman named Shivani from Binjor, Uttar Pradesh, was arrested in April for allegedly killing her husband, Deepak Kumar, with the aim of securing his government job on compassionate grounds and continuing a relationship with her boyfriend.

Honeymoon killing
In a shocking case that gripped the nation, Sonam Raghuvanshi allegedly murdered her husband, Raja Raghuvanshi, during their honeymoon in Meghalaya. The couple went missing after their marriage May 11. Raja's decomposed body was found June 2 in a gorge near a waterfall in Aso, East Khasi Hills. The case turned into a murder investigation when Sonam later surrendered at Nandgaon Police Station in Uttar Pradesh. Police allege she hired killers to carry out the murder. Authorities have arrested all involved, and the case is under active investigation.

Nikki Bhatti dowry death
A 26-year-old woman was allegedly burnt alive by her husband and in-laws over dowry demands in August, which sparked national outrage over the continuing issue of dowry violence.

Soldier killed & dismembered
A retired Army soldier, Devendra Kumar, was allegedly killed by his wife and her lover, who then chopped his body into six pieces and disposed of them. The wife had initially filed a false missing person report.

Zubeen death mystery
Zubeen Garg's sudden death September 19 in Singapore during the North East Asia Festival has shocked India, prompting a joint investigation by Singaporean authorities and Assam's SIT. The probe, still ongoing, is focused on uncovering the circumstances of his death, with potential foul play under scrutiny. Many questions remain unanswered.

K'taka CM tussle
Speculation about a power struggle between Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has been a hot topic. Political circles have been abuzz with rumors of a potential power-sharing deal, where Siddaramaiah would serve as Chief Minister for 2.5 years before passing on the baton to Shivakumar. However, neither leader has officially confirmed such an arrangement.

SIR draft roll
The Election Commission of India (ECI) launched a massive, nationwide "Special Intensive Revision" of the electoral rolls. This is a comprehensive door-to-door verification process intended to ensure voter lists are accurate before upcoming elections. The exercise emerged as a major political flashpoint, triggering widespread Opposition protests.

Free Trade Agreement
During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Muscat December 19, India signed a landmark trade agreement with Oman, marking its second major Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in the Gulf region, after the UAE deal. Just three days later, India concluded a similar pact with New Zealand. With a focus on zero-duty market access and professional mobility, the deals strengthen India's economic ties with both the Gulf and Oceania regions.

In retrospect

The year 2025 proved to be a significant and eventful period for India, especially in the political and social spheres. The country witnessed important political developments such as the Bihar elections, which reflected changing public opinions and democratic participation. Alongside politics, India faced serious challenges including natural calamities, stampedes, and rising cases of crime, testing the strength of governance and disaster management systems. Incidents like terrorist attacks, anti-terror operations and blast in Delhi raised concerns about national safety and internal security. At the same time, large religious gatherings such as the Maha Kumbh highlighted both India's cultural unity and the need for effective crowd management. Amid these challenges, moments of national pride emerged as India achieved remarkable success in sports. OrissaPOST presents a roundup of the major ups and downs that made the year memorable

Pahalgam attack & Op Sindoor
Terror struck Jammu and Kashmir once again April 22, when Pakistan-backed militants carried out a brutal attack in Pahalgam. The assailants reportedly asked civilians their religion before killing 26 innocent people, making the attack a deliberate attempt to provoke communal violence. This marked a troubling shift in terrorist strategy—from cross-border attacks to efforts aimed at creating internal divisions within India. In response, India launched Operation Sindoor, a targeted military campaign to neutralise terrorist infrastructure responsible for the attack. India emphasised that its actions were precise, measured and non-escalatory. In its first press briefing May 7, the government clarified that no Pakistani military installations were targeted, while warning that any attack on Indian military assets would invite strong retaliation. Under Operation Sindoor, India conducted surgical air and missile strikes against terrorist camps and launchpads in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, targeting groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad, and Hizbul Mujahideen. Reports suggested that over 100 terrorists were eliminated. These strikes demonstrated India's enhanced military capability and resolve, bypassing Pakistan's air defenses. The crisis escalated with cross-border shelling and drone incursions. Pakistan claimed civilian casualties and alleged it had downed Indian aircraft, while India accused Pakistan of continued ceasefire violations through UAV and drone attacks. Despite these violations, both sides agreed to a ceasefire May 10, after Pakistan's DGMO contacted his Indian counterpart. Beyond military action, India applied diplomatic and economic pressure by suspending the Indus Waters Treaty, revoking visas, deporting Pakistani nationals, and isolating Pakistan internationally. In July, Operation Mahadev neutralised the three main perpetrators of the Pahalgam attack. Overall, India's strategy combined military force, diplomatic isolation, and economic leverage to deter terrorism and compel Pakistan to alter its conduct.

Trump's mediation claims
A major military conflict broke out between India and Pakistan, with former US President Donald Trump claiming to have played a pivotal role in preventing a nuclear escalation. Trump has repeatedly asserted that he "settled" the war, publicly stating over 60 times (as of December) that his intervention halted what he described as a "potential nuclear war." However, the Indian government has consistently rejected these claims.

Red Fort blast
A car bomb exploded November 10 near the Red Fort in Delhi, killing at least 15 people and injuring more than 20 others. The Indian government officially designated the blast as a terrorist attack carried out by "anti-national forces." Subsequent investigations linked the incident to a terrorist module that allegedly included medical professionals from Kashmir. Authorities also reported the seizure of large quantities of explosives from Faridabad. Hours before the blast, the Jammu and Kashmir police recovered nearly 3,000 kg of explosives and weapons from two residential buildings in Faridabad linked to two other doctors, Dr Muzammil Shaheer and Dr Adil Rather. This massive haul is believed to have triggered Dr Umar to act in haste. The NIA has made several arrests in the case, including a ninth accused, Yasir Ahmad Dar, a resident of Shopian in Kashmir, who was arrested in Delhi December 18. According to the NIA, Dar had an active role in the conspiracy and had taken an oath for "self-sacrificial operations."

MANDATE 2025
The Bihar election results were also among the most googled political events of 2025 as voters awaited clarity on the leadership of the state. In the election, the National Alliance (NDA) secured a landslide victory and won 202 out of 243 seats. The results, declared November 14 paved the way for Nithi Kumar to return as Chief Minister for a record tenth time.

New Vice President
Shri CP Radhakrishnan has been appointed as the new Vice President of India. Sworn in September 12, Radhakrishnan assumes office as the 15th Vice President, following the term resignation of his predecessor, Jagdeep Dhanikar in July.

By-elections
By-elections were held across 12 states and Union Territories for the State Legislative Assemblies, marking a significant political event. The elections took place in Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir (UT), Jharkhand, Kerala, Mizoram, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

Saffron sunrise in Delhi
The Delhi Assembly Election of 2025 marked a major turning point in the political dynamics of India's national capital. After nearly 30 years of absence from power in Delhi, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) clinched a resounding victory, ending the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) 10-year rule. Rekha Gupta was sworn in as Delhi's first BJP Chief Minister in almost three decades, succeeding the AAP government. The elections took place February 5 with the results officially announced February 8.

DHWAJA AROHAN
Prime Minister Narendra Modi November 25, conducted the "Dhwaja Arohan" (flag-hoisting) ceremony at the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. During the ceremony, a 22-foot saffron Dharma Dhwaj was raised, symbolizing the completion of the temple's construction and the victory of dharma. Additionally, a 42-foot bronze flagpole was installed, marking the temple as a spiritually active site.

RANA EXTRADITION
Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a key suspect in the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, was extradited from the United States to India in April 2025. The supplementary chargesheet filed in July 2025, includes documents related to Rana's extradition and additional evidence gathered by the NIA during its probe. Additionally, in compliance with the court's order dated June 6, 2025, the NIA has submitted a comprehensive report under Section 207 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPc) regarding the supply of documents related to the earlier chargesheet filed in 2011.

Chenab & Anji bridges
World's highest railway arch bridge (Chenab) and India's first cable-stayed rail bridge (Anji) were officially inaugurated June 6, completing the vital Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL).

Cough syrup ban
"Coldrif", a brand of cough syrup, has been banned in several Indian states and globally. Flagged as substandard by the World Health Organization (WHO) due to contamination with toxic chemicals. The contaminated syrup is linked to the deaths of at least 22 children from kidney failure in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan in late 2025.

SAVE ARAVALLI
The Supreme Court November 20 approved the recommendations made by a committee under the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change regarding the definition of the Aravalli Hills and Ranges. According to the new definition, an "Aravalli Hill" refers to any landform within designated Aravalli districts that stands at least 100 meters above the local relief. However, this decision has sparked concern among environmentalists. In response, the government banned new mining leases December 24, following the Supreme Court's freeze on new leases until a sustainable mining plan is created. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has also directed the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) to identify additional areas and zones in the entire Aravallis where mining should be prohibited over and above the areas already prohibited for mining by the Centre.

VOTE CHORI ROW
Allegations of election irregularities in India are not new. This year, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accused the Election Commission of colluding with the ruling BJP to manipulate votes. He presented evidence of voter fraud in several constituencies, including the 2024 Haryana Assembly elections. One of his more striking allegations involved a Brazilian model's photograph being used 22 times across 10 polling booths in the Rai constituency.

Naxalism on the brink
The year 2025 marked a decisive phase in India's fight against left-wing extremism, as the government accelerated its mission to eradicate Naxalism by March 31, 2026. The number of Naxal-most-affected districts declined sharply from 36 in 2014 to just 3 by 2025. In a major milestone, Madhya Pradesh announced itself Naxalism-free in December 2025, following a series of surrenders that dismantled remaining Maoist networks in the state. During 2025 alone, 317 Naxals were neutralised, 862 arrested, and 1,973 surrendered, underscoring the scale of operational success nationwide. Union Home Minister Amit Shah reiterated that there would be no ceasefire with Maoists, stating that surrender and integration into mainstream society remain the only option. The government continues to back this stance with rehabilitation packages, financial assistance, and skill training, reinforcing its final push to end Naxalism. A roadside improvised explosive device (IED) attack January 9 killed eight security personnel and their driver, highlighting the continued threat posed by Maoist groups. Later, May 22, a major confrontation took place in the resulting force in the death of soldier and 27 Maoist insurgents.

SADHVI ACQUITTED
Special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court July 31 in Mumbai delivered a historic verdict, acquitting all seven accused, including former BJP MP Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur and Lt. Col. Prasad Shirkanth Purohit, in the 2008 Malegaon blast case. This ruling marked the conclusion of a high-profile legal battle that lasted almost 17 years, leaving a significant impact on Indian political discourses.

Fatal crowd crush
A stampede at the Kashibugga Venkateswara Temple November 1 in Srikakulam killed nine people and injured 15. The crush was caused by an overwhelming crowd of 20,000 devotees—ten times the temple's usual capacity of 2,000—who gathered for Ekadashi darshan. The small facility's infrastructure failed under the pressure, leading to a fatal surge in the narrow corridors.

New Delhi railway station: A tragic stampede 15 February at the New Delhi Railway Station resulted in at least 18 deaths and more than a dozen injuries. The disaster occurred as a massive swell of passengers gathered on the platforms, desperate to board trains bound for Prayagraj.

Karur: A stampede at a TVK political rally September 27 in Karur, Tamil Nadu, killed 41 people and injured over 100. The disaster was triggered when the arrival of actor-turned-politician Vijay—delayed by several hours—prompted an uncontrollable surge. As his convoy entered, thousands of supporters rushed forward for a glimpse, causing a fatal crush that overwhelmed security barricades and emergency services.

Bangalore: Victory celebrations for Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) June 4 turned into a tragedy when a massive stampede at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium left 11 people dead and over 50 injured. The tragedy was caused by an overwhelming crowd of 2.5 lakh fans—nearly eight times the stadium's 32,000-person capacity.

KEY BILLS
G RAM G
The Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Aatmanirbhar Mission (Gramin), designed to replace the UPA-era MGNREGS, aims to offer 125 days of guaranteed wage employment to rural workers. The government has stated that the new scheme aligns with the national vision of "Viksit Bharat" and seeks to establish a comprehensive rural development framework.
SHANTI
The SHANTI Bill, officially called the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India, Bill, represents a significant policy shift. For the first time, it permits private sector participation in the nuclear energy industry, with a target of achieving 1000W of capacity by 2047. Additionally, the Bill grants statutory status to the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB).

ONLINE GAMING
The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025, passed by the Parliament of India, creates a central regulatory authority to oversee the online gaming sector, including esports and educational games. However, the legislation also explicitly bans all forms of online money games.

IMMIGRATION & FOREIGNERS BILL
The Immigration & Foreigners Bill consolidates and modernises laws governing the entry, stay, and exit of foreigners in India. It introduces digital tracking systems and simplifies visa categories to enhance efficiency and security.

SC CORNER
Justice Surya Kant was sworn in as the 53rd Chief Justice of India (CJI) November 24, succeeding Justice BR Gavai. He will have a tenure February until 2027.

FIRECRACKER BAN
Temporarily relaxed the ban in Delhi-NCR, allowing the sale of "Green Crackers" approved by NEEI for a limited window during Diwali.

PROTECTION AGAINST BULLDOZER JUSTICE
The top court took a historic stand against "Bulldozer Justice" the practice of state authorities summarily demolishing the homes of people accused of crimes.

WOMEN IN LAW
Mandated 30% representation for women in State Bar Councils where elections are pending to improve gender diversity in legal leadership.

SEX EDUCATION
The government has been directed to incorporate comprehensive sex education into the school curriculum at an earlier stage, instead of starting only from Class IX.

Beyond the sky

Key missions & launches

NISAR Launch: The NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) satellite, a joint Earth observation mission, was successfully launched July 30, by ISRO's GSLV-F16 rocket. This satellite provides high-resolution, all-weather data to monitor Earth's ecosystems, ice sheets, and natural hazards.

"Brahmab" rocket launched
ISRO's heaviest rocket, LVM3-M6, successfully placed a heavy US communication satellite into orbit December 24, a feat described by the space agency chief as a season's gift to the country. The 6,100 kg BlueBird Block-2 satellite is part of a constellation of global Low Earth Orbit (LEO) missions to provide direct-to-mobile connectivity.

Space Docking Experiment (SpaDEX): India successfully performed its first on-orbit satellite docking January 16 a critical technology demonstration for future in-space servicing and the development of the planned Bharatiya Antariksh Station.

Gaganyaan preparations: Progress continued for India's first human spaceflight mission. Key tests included the first Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-01) of the crew module's parachute-based deceleration system in August 2025, and the first uncrewed orbital flight (G1 mission) was planned for later in the year.

Naxalism on the brink

The year 2025 marked a decisive phase in India's fight against left-wing extremism, as the government accelerated its mission to eradicate Naxalism by March 31, 2026. The number of Naxal-most-affected districts declined sharply from 36 in 2014 to just 3 by 2025. In a major milestone, Madhya Pradesh announced itself Naxalism-free in December 2025, following a series of surrenders that dismantled remaining Maoist networks in the state. During 2025 alone, 317 Naxals were neutralised, 862 arrested, and 1,973 surrendered, underscoring the scale of operational success nationwide. Union Home Minister Amit Shah reiterated that there would be no ceasefire with Maoists, stating that surrender and integration into mainstream society remain the only option. The government continues to back this stance with rehabilitation packages, financial assistance, and skill training, reinforcing its final push to end Naxalism. A roadside improvised explosive device (IED) attack January 9 killed eight security personnel and their driver, highlighting the continued threat posed by Maoist groups. Later, May 22, a major confrontation took place in the resulting force in the death of soldier and 27 Maoist insurgents.

AQI IMPROVES TO 'POOR' ON BACK OF STRONG WINDS

Delhi breathes easier after 13 days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 24: After nearly a fortnight of hazardous smog, Delhi's air quality improved to 'poor' at 271 Wednesday on the back of stronger winds, though the conditions are forecast to worsen again.

Delhi's 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) stood at 271, in the 'poor' category, Wednesday, a sharp improvement from the 'severe' AQI of 412 recorded at 4 pm Tuesday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data.

The last time the city's air quality was recorded in the poor category was December 10, after which it remained in the 'very poor' and 'severe' zones for several days before improving again Wednesday.

Favourable meteorological conditions, particularly surface wind speeds of 15-25 kmph during the day, helped improve air quality.

The predominant surface wind was from the northwest, with speeds reaching up to 20 kmph during afternoon hours.

However, the wind speeds are expected to decrease to below 10 kmph from the west direction during the evening and night, according to the Air Quality Early Warning System.

Out of the 40 functional air quality monitoring stations in the city, four recorded 'moderate' AQI levels below 200 -- Lodhi Road, IIT Delhi, IGI Airport and Aya Nagar -- while 33 were in the poor category.

Only two stations -- Nehru Nagar and Dwarka -- recorded 'very poor' AQI above 300, according to the CPCB's SA-MEER app.

The CPCB classifies an AQI between 0 and 50 as 'good', 51



and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor' and 401 and 500 'severe'.

Data from the Decision Support System (DSS) for Air Quality Management showed that vehicular emissions were the largest contributor to Delhi's pollution load on Wednesday, accounting for 17.5 per cent.

This was followed by industries in Delhi and adjoining areas (8.6 per cent), construction activities (2.4 per cent) and waste burning (1.3 per cent).

Among the NCR districts, Jhajjar in Haryana contributed the highest share to pollution at 12 per cent, followed by Soni-

pat (6.5 per cent) and Rohtak (5.4 per cent) in Haryana and Ghaziabad (2.7 per cent) in Uttar Pradesh, the data showed.

However, the Air Quality Early Warning System said that Delhi's air quality is likely to slip back into the 'very poor' zone over the next six days.

On the weather front, Delhi Wednesday recorded a maximum temperature of 22.7 degrees Celsius, two notches above normal, and a minimum of 10.2 degrees Celsius, 2.7 degrees above normal, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

The relative humidity stood at 100 per cent at 8.30 am and 78

per cent at 5.30 pm.

The IMD has forecast a minimum temperature of 6 degrees Celsius and a maximum of 22 degrees Celsius for Christmas Day Thursday, with mainly clear sky after shallow to moderate fog at many places during morning hours.

The predominant surface winds are likely to be from the west at up to 10 kmph in the morning, increasing to around 12 kmph from the northwest in the afternoon before weakening to below 5 kmph from the north during the evening and night, according to the Air Quality Early Warning System.

HOME GROWN SATELLITE INTERNET

Chennai students win NASA award

The project, 'Photonics Odyssey' or AakashNet, aims to bridge the digital divide in India by delivering high-speed, low-cost internet to the country's most remote villages

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Chennai, Dec 24: A team of Chennai-based engineering students has beaten over 18,000 projects worldwide to win the "Most Inspirational" award at the NASA International Space Apps Challenge 2025.

Their project, "Photonics Odyssey" or AakashNet, aims to bridge the digital divide in India by delivering high-speed, low-cost internet to the country's most remote villages.

"AakashNet conceptually adopts the working philosophy long demonstrated by ISRO," Prasanth Gopalakrishnan, a second year electronics and communication engineering student of SRM Easwari Engineering College, told PTI.

At the NASA International Space Apps Challenge, one of the world's largest annual global hackathons, the team's submission made it to the top 10 projects, winning the 'Most Inspirational' award.

Launched in 2012, the challenge hopes to foster innovation using NASA's free and open data from satellites, telescopes and missions and create solutions for Earth and space.

Now that the team's proposal has the "NASA stamp", Gopalakrishnan is confident of "institutional support" to develop this as a public digital utility.

"Most global satellite internet systems follow a strong-

ly commercial model. Their hardware is manufactured abroad using imported materials and technologies, and when these systems are brought into India, the final cost often becomes too high for large sections of the population," said Gopalakrishnan.

Gopalakrishnan said this is where ISRO's working philosophy -- which has consistently delivered highly reliable space technology at globally unmatched cost efficiency without compromising performance or safety -- served as an inspiration to the team. "Using publicly available information and real-world system constraints, our project explores how a similar India-first, efficiency-driven approach could be applied to satellite broadband infrastructure," he said.

His winning team comprised Rajalingam N, Rashi Menon and Sakthi Sanjeev Kumar from electronics and communication engineering department as well as Deeraj Kumar and Manish Varma D from computer science engineering department, specialising in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.

Gopalakrishnan said they learned about the NASA Space Apps Challenge in June through their college Space Club, Odssey Space Club.

The team of six was selected based on individual strengths. While electronics engineering students focused on the hardware and communication-design system, computer science engineering students handled software and simulation aspects, he added.

"Over a period of two to three months, we worked continuously on refining the concept. We explored different problem statements from NASA and zeroed in on 'commercialising LEO'. We realised that this directly matched both our technical direction and social-impact goals," said Gopalakrishnan.

AakashNet differentiates itself from foreign satellite internet providers by prioritising public impact over profit, using indigenous manufacturing and public-sector support to slash costs for underserved communities, he added. "As providing internet access to rural and remote communities is our primary goal, affordability is equally critical." Gopalakrishnan also pointed out how his college -- SRM Easwari Engineering College in Ramapuram -- provided mentors, scholars, labs, and innovation clubs, fostering interdisciplinary work.

"AakashNet is not just a student idea -- it is a reflection of the academic ecosystem that nurtured it," he said.

Delhi restaurants, clubs intensify safety measures



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 24: Restaurants and clubs across Delhi are set to step up fire and crowd safety measures, including deploying additional staff and conducting regular mock drills, following a citywide inspection drive launched after a recent nightclub fire tragedy in Goa.

Manpreet Singh, treasurer of the National Restaurant Association of India, said an advisory has been issued to all member establishments to tighten safety protocols.

"We have advised our members to take all necessary precautions. This includes checking all equipment, ensuring that the exit doors are clear and functional, and deploying additional staff to manage crowds during peak hours," Singh

told PTI. Echoing similar measures, Joy Singh, founder of Raasta and Yeti clubs in the capital, said strict internal safety practices are already in place at their venues.

"We always maintain proper safety drills and ensure that there is no overcrowding. The number of seats and guests is kept aligned, and the clubs remain selective to help manage crowds better. We also conduct weekly, monthly and bi-monthly safety drills," he said.

Bharatesh from the Slique club said all security norms are being strictly followed for the upcoming "party season".

"We have conducted multiple safety drills, checked all equipment and ensured that all exit doors remain accessible. These drills will be repeated regularly and we will

continue to maintain strict security protocols throughout the party season, including New Year's Eve," he said. The heightened vigilance comes after the Delhi Fire Services launched a comprehensive fire safety inspection drive covering restaurants, hotels and clubs across the city, particularly in view of the upcoming Christmas and New Year celebrations.

Officials said the inspections focus on checking the functionality of fire-fighting equipment, accessibility of emergency exits and compliance with building by-laws. The exercise followed after the Goa nightclub fire that claimed 25 lives.

Separately, the excise department of the Delhi government has directed all hotel, club and restaurant licence holders to strictly comply with fire safety norms, warning that violations will invite strict action, including suspension or cancellation of licences. The department has also prohibited the use of all firecrackers, including electric firecrackers, within licensed premises during the festive period.

Referring to a circular issued May 30, 2024, the department reminded establishments with a gross floor area of 90 square metres or more to renew their fire no-objection certificates before expiry and adhere to the prescribed safety norms. Smaller eateries have also been instructed to maintain adequate fire prevention arrangements.




People light candles on the eve of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birth anniversary, at the Delhi BJP office, in New Delhi, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

TN CM, Palaniswami pay tributes to Periyar

Chennai: Social reformer and Dravidian ideologue E V Ramasamy, fondly known as 'Periyar', was remembered across Tamil Nadu Wednesday on his death anniversary. Chief Minister M K Stalin and AIADMK chief Edappadi K Palaniswami lead the tributes, hailing him as the one who enabled "bent backs to straighten up and protect self-respect" and the "great light that incinerated all forms of domination", while pledging to continue the journey on the path of social justice. Stalin said Tamils upholding rational thought, equality and refusing to bow to domination is true gratitude to Periyar, urging unity in "one front" to defeat foes unable to "steal, swallow or digest" his enduring legacy.



GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
BHANJANAGAR (R&B) DIVISION, BHANJANAGAR
 (Phone/Fax: (06821) 241133 | E-mail: eernbngr@yahoo.in)

Ltr. No.: 12234
 No. B-864:


INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)
E-Procurement Bid Identification No. S.E. - BNJ-R&B-20/2025-26

1. Name of Work : Construction of 02 Nos. of E-type Quarters for Revenue Staff of Bhanjanagar Sub-Collector Office at Bhanjanagar, Dist.: Ganjam.
2. No. of Works : 01 No. Building Work
3. No. of Covers : Double Cover
4. Estimated Cost : Rs.66.76 Lakhs
5. Period of Completion : Six Calendar Months
6. Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal : From 12.00 Noon of dated 26.12.2025 to 5.00 P.M. of dated 04.01.2026
7. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal : Upto 5.00 P.M. of dated 04.01.2026
8. Date of opening of bid documents : At 11.00 A.M. of dated 05.01.2026
9. Class of Contractor : 'B' Class Contractor
10. Name and address of Officer : Superintending Engineer, Bhanjanagar (R&B) Division, Bhanjanagar

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal www.tendersodisha.gov.in. The Addendum/Corrigendum if any will be hosted in the website only.

Sd./ Superintending Engineer
Bhanjanagar (R&B), Division

OIPR-34015/11/0037/2526



GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
PHULBANI (R&B) CIRCLE, PHULBANI
 Email: sernbphulbani@gmail.com

Letter No. 2146
 Dated: 24.12.2025

2nd Corrigendum to EOI Identification No. CCEPLBC-01/2025-26
Expression of Interest

No. B-898: The following changes are made to EOI Identification No. CCEPLBC-01/2025-26 vide No. 2037 Dt. 10.12.2025.

1. 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 13.01.2026 to 4.00 P.M. of 09.02.2026. Further details with any addendum, corrigendum and cancellation can be seen from www.tendersodisha.gov.in.
2. Expression of Interest (EOI) shall be received only "Online" latest by 4.00 P.M. on 09.02.2026.
3. Proposals received "Online" shall be opened at 11.00 A.M. on 10.02.2026 in the office of the Chief Construction Engineer, Phulbani (R&B) Circle, Phulbani - 762001 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.
4. 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
Phulbani (R&B) Circle, Phulbani

OIPR-34129/11/0035/2526



OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, KARANJIA, DIST.: MAYURBHANJ
 Email ID: karanjian.hud@ori.nic.in

No. 1802/NAC
 Dated: 22.12.2025

"e" Procurement Notice
BID Identification No. NAC-KJA-05/2025-26

No. C-1882: Bid documents consisting of Work, Estimated Cost, Cost of Tender Paper, EMD and time of completion, class of contractor and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt. website i.e. www.tendersorissa.gov.in.

1. Name of the Work : Civil construction works as mentioned in website
2. No. of Works : As per DTCN
3. Estimated Cost : As per DTCN
4. Class of Contractor : As per DTCN
5. Period of Completion : As per DTCN
6. Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal : Dt.24.12.2025 to 05.01.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.
7. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal : Dt.05.01.2026 at 5.00 P.M.
8. Submission of Bid documents (Tender Paper Cost, EMD, Affidavit & other documents as per DTCN dropping on the Officer Tender Box otherwise tender will be rejected
9. Date & time of opening of bids : Dt.07.01.2026 at 11.00 A.M.
10. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Officer, Karanja N.A.C.

If the rate quoted by the bidder is less than 15% of the tender amount then such a bid shall be rejected. The authority reserves right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Further details can be seen from the procurement portal i.e. www.tendersorissa.gov.in.

OIPR-13119/11/0020/2526 **Sd./ Executive Officer, Karanja N.A.C.**



OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL
PURUSHOTTAMPUR, (GANJAM), PIN - 761018
 Email ID: eo-nacpurushottampur@gov.in / purushottampurnac@gmail.com
 Ph. No.: 06811-295222

Letter No. 2280/NAC
 Dated: 22.12.2025

E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
BID REFERENCE NO. PPUR-NAC-03/2025-26

No. C-1869: The Executive Officer, NAC, Purushottampur invites Percentage Rate Bids for the work mentioned below through e-Procurement in conformity with the terms and conditions of the Detailed Tender Call Notice (DTCN) in Two Bid System from intending bidders fulfilling the eligibility criteria mentioned in the DTCN. Each bid should be submitted online through the govt. website <https://tendersodisha.gov.in/> by eligible bidders. Bid documents containing details of the work, estimated cost of tender paper, EMD, time of completion, class of contractor, terms and conditions of the contract and other necessary information are available on the Government website tendersodisha.gov.in/.

1. Name of the Work : Works as mentioned in DTCN
2. No. of Works : 06 (Six) Nos.
3. Estimated Cost : Rs.04.99 Lakhs to Rs.16.76 Lakhs
4. Period of Completion : 60 Days
5. Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal : From 16.00 P.M. of Dtd.24.12.2025 to Dtd.06.01.2026 upto 17.00 P.M.
6. Last date & time of submission of bids in the portal : 06.01.2026 upto 17.00 P.M.
7. Date of opening of tender : 07.01.2026 at 11.00 A.M.
8. Tender document in original should be dropped in tender box at NAC Purushottampur Office : 06.01.2026 at 17.00 P.M.
9. Name & address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Officer, NAC, Purushottampur

Sd./ Executive Officer
NAC, Purushottampur

OIPR-13187/11/0016/2526

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Domti Abinash Dora, S/o. Alekh Chandra Dora, resident of Police Camp, Sunabeda, P.S.: Sunabeda, Dist.: Koraput, PIN - 763003, Odisha declare by this affidavit No. 2275, dated 27.11.2025 that now onwards I shall be known as **D Abinash Dora** for all future purposes.

DMK-led alliance holds protest against Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Dec 24: Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK and its allies Wednesday staged state-wide protests condemning the BJP-led Centre for replacing MGNREGA with VB-G Ram G Act and for dropping Mahatma Gandhi's name in the

VB-G RAM G ACT

new legislation. The protests also condemned the BJP's key ally in Tamil Nadu, the AIADMK, for "supporting" the union government on the matter. They demanded that the new law be revoked and the previous rural jobs Act named after Gandhi be restored.

Chief Minister MK Stalin said poor agricultural labourers gathered in as

many as 389 venues across the state and took part in the demonstrations to "retrieve MGNREGA," and to protect their livelihoods.

"The BJP-led Union government, which acts with hatred towards Gandhiji must realise that this is the resounding voice from Tamil Nadu for the sake of all

the Indian farmers! They must ensure the livelihoods of the poor," the chief minister said in a social media post and used the hashtags "Save MGNREGA," and "Revoke VB-G RAM-G." In Chennai, leaders of DMK's alliance parties, including VCK chief Thol Thirumavalavan and MDMK general secretary Vaiko took part in the protest.

national

of the day uote

The BJP is denying one-third of the constitutionally mandated 27 per cent reservation for OBCs and showing its real 'anti-Constitution, anti-reservation' face. Now the newly appointed BJP state president should come forward and save OBC reservation from being usurped

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

The Congress will form a government in the state with two-thirds majority in 2029. This is my challenge. Face it if you can. I will see what your politics is. As long as I am in politics, I will not let the KCR family, which is like a poison to come to power. This is my vow. I am taking this vow as a son of Kodangal from this land

A REVANTH REDDY | TELANGANA CM

The spirit of Christmas fosters goodwill, harmony, and shared joy, guiding people to live in accordance with the divine purpose of love and peace

K T PARNAIK | ARUNACHAL GOVERNOR

POST OF THE DAY

Rapist & former BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar: Raped a 17-year-old minor girl. Police did not act against him.

Girl attempted self-immolation. Case was later taken up by CBI. Killed victim's father. A court convicted him of rape. Sentenced to life imprisonment. A truck of his associates deliberately rammed into the victim's car two aunts of victim died on the spot. Victim & her lawyer got critically injured. Delhi HC suspended his life sentence. Delhi High Court also granted him bail. Police detained the protesting family & victim at India Gate. Now, the lives of other family members are also under threat. Law & order and judicial system of new India.

@mohitlaw

Unnao rape survivor to move SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Unnao/Ballia (UP), Dec 24: The 2017 Unnao rape survivor Wednesday termed the Delhi High Court's decision to suspend the jail term of the accused, expelled

BJP leader Kuldeep Singh Sengar, "kaal" (death) for her family and said she would move the Supreme Court against it.

Women's rights activist Yogita Bhayana, who staged a protest with the rape survivor's mother at India Gate Tuesday night, shared a video on X, in which the rape survivor was purportedly heard saying that she had left home in the morning to meet her lawyer but Central Reserve Police force (CRPF) personnel tried to send



Activist Yogita Bhayana stages a dharna with the family of the Unnao gang rape victim

PTI PHOTO

her back home.

"I was shouting that I need to visit my lawyer. I was shouting in the vehicle as well and then an order came from the top to take me (to meet my lawyer),"

Centre cracks down on Aravalli mining



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 24: The Centre Wednesday issued directions to states for a complete ban on granting new mining leases in the Aravallis, officials said.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has also directed the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) to identify additional areas and zones in the entire Aravallis where mining should be prohibited over and above the areas already prohibited for mining by the Centre.

"This prohibition applies uniformly across the entire Aravalli landscape and is intended to preserve the integrity of the range. The directions are aimed at safeguarding the Aravallis as a continuous geological ridge extending from

Gujarat to NCR and at stopping all unregulated mining activities," a senior official said.

"The ministry has also directed the ICFRE to identify additional areas and zones in the entire Aravallis, where mining should be prohibited, over and above the areas already prohibited for mining by the Centre, based on ecological, geological and landscape-level considerations," the official added. The ICFRE has been directed to undertake this exercise while preparing a comprehensive, science-based Management Plan for Sustainable Mining (MPSM) for the entire Aravalli region. The plan, which will be placed in the public domain for wide stakeholder consultation, will assess the cumulative environmental impact

and ecological carrying capacity, identify ecologically sensitive and conservation-critical areas, and lay down measures for restoration and rehabilitation.

Ongoing mining activities are to be regulated stringently, with additional restrictions, to ensure environmental protection and adherence to sustainable mining practices.

"The government stands fully committed towards long-term protection of the Aravalli ecosystem, recognising its critical role in preventing desertification, conserving biodiversity, recharging aquifers and providing environmental services for the region," the official said.

In November 2025, the Supreme Court accepted a uniform legal definition of what constitutes the Aravalli Hills and Aravalli Range on the recommendation of a committee led by the Environment Ministry.

Atal Ji elevated Indian politics for six decades, blending it with values and ideals

YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CM

PROTESTS ERUPT AT BENGAL

Members of a pro-Hindu organisation held demonstrations at several land ports along the India-Bangladesh border in West Bengal Wednesday over the killing of a man belonging to the minority community in the neighbouring country



Mumbai (UBT), MNS announce alliance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 24: Ending a 20-year political feud, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and MNS president Raj Thackeray forged an alliance Wednesday for the elections to the cash-rich Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation to be held January 15.

The cousins addressed a 16-minute joint press conference at a hotel in Worli, a symbolic venue located within the constituency of Uddhav's son Aaditya Thackeray. The reunion, which the two described

as a "duty toward Maharashtra," laid special emphasis on consolidating the 'Marathi mannoos' (sons of the soil) vote bank to counter the ruling Mahayut coalition. "Mumbai's mayor will be Marathi, and he will be ours," announced Raj Thackeray. This is seen as a signal of a joint push by both the factions to reclaim the civic body which has been ruled by the undivided Sena for 25 years. Uddhav said the parties have finalised their seat sharing for the Nashik Municipal Corporation where elections are due January 15, along with the 227-member BMC and 27 other municipal corporations in Maharashtra.



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CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED

Corporate Office : "CHOLA CREST", C54 & 55, Super B-4, Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032

Branch Office : 3rd Floor, Sreemaa Construction Building, Naya Chowk, Madhupatna, Cuttack, Odisha - 753010

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

Contact No. Mr. B. Harikrishna, Mob. 9937490975, Pinaki Dutta, Mob. 9437479421, Suman Kalyan Satapathy, Mob. 07978744193

E-auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower / Co-Borrower / Mortgagor (s) that the below-described immovable properties mortgaged to the Secured Creditor, the **Symbolic Possession** of which has been taken by the **Authorised Officer of Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited** the same shall be referred hereinafter as **Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited**. The Secured Assets will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis through E-Auction.

It is hereby informed to the General public that we are going to conduct a public E-Auction through the website <https://bankauctions.in/>.

Account No. and Name of the Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagor	1. Date of Demand Notice : 12.05.2025	Description of the Secured Assets (Immovable Property)	Reserve Price : Rs. 1,54,000.00
Loan A/c. No. HE01CUK00000037174 Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagor : 1. Suryamani Sahoo (Co-Applicant), S/o. Sankarsan Sahoo, Village - Jaraka, Post - Jaraka P. S. - Dharamsala, District - Jajpur, Odisha - 755050 2. Shree Krishna Mobile Sales And Service (Co-Applicant), 140, Ground Floor, Collage Road, Village - Jaraka, Post - Jaraka, P. S. - Dharamsala District - Jajpur, Odisha - 755050. 3. Shree Krishna Jeweller (Co-Applicant) 140, Ground Floor, Collage Road, Village - Jaraka, Post - Jaraka, P. S. - Dharamsala District - Jajpur, Odisha - 755050. 4. Santosh Kumar Sahoo (Co-Applicant), S/o. Sankarsan Sahoo, Village - Jaraka, Post - Jaraka, P. S. - Dharamsala District - Jajpur, Odisha - 755050. 5. Binapani Sahoo (Co-Applicant), W/o. Suryamani Sahoo, Village - Jaraka, Post - Jaraka, P. S. - Dharamsala District - Jajpur, Odisha - 755050. 6. Chandramani Sahoo (Co-Applicant), S/o. Sankarsan Sahoo, Village - Jaraka, Post - Jaraka, P. S. - Dharamsala District - Jajpur, Odisha - 755050. 7. Jayanti Sahoo (Co-Applicant), Village - Jaraka, Post - Jaraka, P. S. - Dharamsala District - Jajpur, Odisha - 755050. 8. Priyadarshini Jena (Co-Applicant) Village - Jaraka, Post - Jaraka, P. S. - Dharamsala District - Jajpur, Odisha - 755050.	2. Demand Notice Amount : Rs. 52,29,560/- as on 12-05-2025. 3. Total Loan Outstanding : Rs. 51,29,787/- as on 18-12-2025 together with further interest, penal interest, costs and charges thereon till the date of payment. 4. Possession Date : 07-08-2025 (Symbolic Possession)	Property - 1 : All that part and parcel of the Property Bearing Plot No. 269, Khata No. 477/203, Area - A0.040 Decimals, Status - Stithiban, Kisam - Gharbari, Mauza & Village - Jaraka, P. S. - Dharamsala, Tahasil - Dharamsala, District - Jajpur, (Odisha). Property - 2 : All that part and parcel of the Property Bearing Plot No. 259/1257, Khata No. 477/199, Area - A0.040 Decimals, Status - Stithiban, Kisam - Gharbari, Mauza & Village - Jaraka, P. S. - Dharamsala, Tahsil - Dharamsala, District - Jajpur, (Odisha). Property - 3 : All that part and parcel of the Property Bearing Plot No. 269/1259, Khata No. 477/201, Area - A0.040 Decimals, Status - Stithiban, Kisam - Gharbari, Mauza & Village - Jaraka, P. S. - Dharamsala, Tahasil - Dharamsala, District - Jajpur, (Odisha).	Earnest Money Deposit : Rs. 15,40,000.00 Bid Increment Amount (In Rs.) Rs. 1,00,000/- E-Auction Date and Time : 30-01-2026 11.00 AM to 1.00 PM (with unlimited extension of 3 min each), EMD Submission Last Date : 29-01-2026 (Upto 5.30 P.M.) Inspection Date : 14-01-2026 and 15-01-2026 (10.00 A.M to 1:00. P.M.)

1. All Interested participants / bidders are requested to visit the website <https://bankauctions.in> & www.cholamandalam.com/news/auction-notice For details, help, procedure and online training on e-auction, prospective bidders may Contact : **Mr. Muhammed Rahees** – Ph. No. 8124000030 / 6374845616, **Ms.4 Closure**; Rekha, Ph. No. 8142000062, Email : CholaAuctionLAP@chola.murugappa.com.

2. For further details on terms and conditions please visit:- <https://bankauctions.in> & www.cholamandalam.com/news/auction-notice to take part in e-auction.

THIS IS ALSO A STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002

Date : 25.12.2025
Place : Cuttack (Odisha)

Authorised Officer
Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਿੰਧ ਬੈਂਕ ਨੂੰ ਭਰਤੀ

Punjab & Sind Bank
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ARB Branch
59B, Chowringhee Road, Kolkata - 700020
Phone : 89183 94063, E-mail : c0719@psb.co.in

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

(In terms of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act -2002)

Whereas the Authorized Officer of Punjab & Sind Bank under the SARFAESI Act 2002 in exercise of powers conferred u/s 13(12) read with the relevant rules of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 issued demand notice u/s 13(2) on the dates stated against the account, calling upon the borrower/s to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of notice. As the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) have failed to repay the amount mentioned in the respective notice. Notice is hereby given to the following borrower(s)/Guarantor(s) and the public in general that the Authorized Officer has taken possession of the property in exercise of powers conferred on Authorized Officer u/s 13(4) of the said Act read with relevant rules. Pursuant to the possession taken by the Authorized Officer under SARFAESI Act 2002 for recovery of the secured debts of Punjab & Sind Bank mentioned against borrower(s) detailed hereunder and interest thereon from date mentioned therein and with cost and charges. Offers are invited by the Authorized Officer in sealed cover for purchase of under noted property on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS", "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" AND "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS" AND "WITHOUT ANY RECOURSE BASIS" as per brief particulars given hereunder :

Date of E-auction : 29.01.2026, Time of E-auction : 02.00 PM - 4.00 PM
Last date of EMD : 28.01.2026, Time upto 04.00 PM
Place of Sale: <https://www.baanknet.com>

Sl. No.	a) Name of Branch b) Name of Borrower / Guarantor with Address	Description of the Immovable Properties Mortgaged / Owner's Name	QR Code for Property Image and Details	a) Date of 13(2) Notice b) Date of 13 (4) Notice c) Demand Notice Amount	a) Reserve Price b) EMD c) Bid Increase Amount
1.	a) ARB, Kolkata b) Borrowers : 1. M/s. Jagwani Projects Pvt. Ltd. 2. M/s. Laaj Led Lights Pvt. Ltd. 3. M/s. Transhimalayan Logistics Pvt. Ltd. Guarantors : 1. Mr. Gowardhan Das Jagwani 2. Mr. Anil Kumar Jagwani, 3. Mrs. Lajwanti Jagwani 4. Shri Sunil Kumar Jagwani, 5. Mrs. Savitri Jagwani 6. Mrs. Jyoti Jagwani	Equitable Mortgage of Flat No. 1C measuring 650 Sq. Ft. at first floor at Village - Sundara, Unit No. 13, Khata No. 145/87, Plot No. 339/947, KISSAM - Gharbari-II, Tahasil + P.S. + Sub Registrar - Barbil, District - Keonjhar. (Property under Symbolic Possession)		a) 30.06.2016 b) 05.10.2020 c) Rs. 14,39,11,008.51 as per 13(2) notice plus interest and other applicable charges thereon	a) Rs. 14.06 Lakh b) Rs. 1.41 Lakh c) Rs. 10,000.00

Date & Time of Inspection : 21.01.2026 to 22.01.2026 (between 10.00 A.M. to 04.00 P.M.)

1. **TERMS & CONDITIONS :** 1. The e-Auction is being held on "AS IS WHERE IS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS".

2. To the best of knowledge and information of the Authorized Officer, there is no encumbrance on any property except as mentioned above. However, the intending bidders should make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of property/ies put on auction and claims/right/dues/effecting the property prior to submitting their bid. The e-Auction advertisement does not constitute and will not be deemed to constitute any commitment or any representation of the bank. The property is being sold with all the existing and future encumbrances whether known or unknown to the bank. The Authorized Officer/Secured Creditor shall not be responsible in any way for any third party claims/right/dues.

3. It shall be the responsibility of the bidders to inspect and satisfy themselves about the asset and specification before submitting the bid.

4. Only Buyers holding user id/password and confirmed payment of EMD through NEFT/RTGS shall be eligible for participating in the e-auction process.

5. The Interested Bidders, who have submitted their EMD not below the 10% pf reserve price through online mode before 28.01.2026 for the auction held upto 04.00 pm shall be eligible for participating in the bidding process. The e-auction of the above properties would be conducted exactly on the scheduled date and time as mentioned against each property by way of inter-se bidding amongst the bidders. The bidder shall improve their offer in multiple of the amount mentioned under the column "Bid increase amount" against each property. In case bid is placed in the last 5 minutes of the closing time of the e-Auction. The closing time will automatically get extended for 5 minutes (Subject to maximum of unlimited extensions of 5 minutes each). The bidder who submits the highest bid amount (Not below the reserve price) on closure of e-auction shall be declared as successful bidder and a communication to that effect will be issued through electronic mode which shall be subject to approval by the Authorized Officer/Secured Creditor.

6. The Prospective qualified bidders may avail online training on e-Auction from <https://www.baanknet.com> prior to the date of e-Auction. Neither the Authorized Officer/Bank nor <https://www.baanknet.com> shall be liable for any internet Network Problem and the interested bidders to ensure that they are technically well equipped for participating in the e-Auction event.

7. The purchaser shall bear the applicable stamp duties/additional stamp duty /transfer charges, fee etc. and also all the Statutory/non-statutory dues, taxes rates assessment charge, fees etc. owing to anybody prior and future.

8. The Authorized Officer is not bound to accept the highest offer and the Authorized Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject any or all offer(s) or adjourn/cancel the e-Auction without assigning any reason thereof.

9. The bidders are advised to go through the detailed Terms & Conditions of e-Auction available on the Website: <https://www.baanknet.com> before submitting their bids and taking part in the e-Auction.

10. 25% of sale price is to be paid immediately i.e. on the same day or not later than next working day including earnest money already deposited from the acceptance of bid price by the Authorised Officer in case of default property shall the sold again.

11. Balance 75% of the said price is to be paid on or before 30 Day of the confirmation of sale of the movable/immovable property. In default of payment within the period mentioned above, the deposited shall be forfeited and property shall be resold and defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all claim to the property or to any part of the sum for which it may be subsequently sold.

Date : 25.12.2025
Place : Kolkata

Authorised Officer
Punjab & Sind Bank

For details visit our website: <http://www.punjabandsindbank.co.in>

भारत सरकार Government of India
भाभा परमाणु अनुसंधान केंद्र
Bhabha Atomic Research Centre
मानव संसाधन विकास प्रभाग
Human Resource Development Division

एचबीएनआई, एक मानद विद्याविषयक के तत्वावधान में जुलाई-2026 से आरंभ होने वाले परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग के डी.डी.एफ.एस. कार्यक्रम में प्रवेश कर, पी एच डी करने के लिए, इंजीनियरिंग स्नातकोत्तरों से आवेदन आमंत्रित किया जाता है।
Invites applications from Engineering Postgraduates for admission to DAE Doctoral Fellowship Scheme (DDFS) programme of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) for pursuing PHD, commencing from July-2026 under the aegis of HBNi, a Deemed to be University. चयन एक द्वि-चरण प्रक्रिया है: 1. ऑनलाइन कंप्यूटर आधारित परीक्षा (सीडीटी) और स्नातकोत्तर शैक्षणिक रिकॉर्ड के माध्यम से चयन साक्षात्कार के लिए स्वीकृति और 2. चयन साक्षात्कार में प्रवेश। अंतिम चयन केवल चयन साक्षात्कार में योग्यता के आधार पर किया जाएगा। भौतिकिक, केमिकल, मेटलर्जिकल/मेटिरियल, इलेक्ट्रिकल, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स, कंप्यूटर, इंस्ट्रुमेंटेशन और स्थित इंजीनियरिंग में एम.ई/एम.टेक/समकक्ष डिग्री वाले अभ्यर्थियों से केवल ऑनलाइन आवेदन स्वीकार किए जाएंगे। परीक्षा/आईटी डिग्री वाले अभ्यर्थी वार नहीं हैं। चयनित छात्रों को एचबीएनआई के पांच संघटक संस्थानों (सीआई): भायम केंद्र (बार्क) मुंबई, आई.सी.सी.ए.आर. कल्याणक, आईपीआर गांधीनगर, आर.आर.सी.एटी इंदौर एवं वीईसीसी कोलकाता: में से एक में प्रवेश दिया जाएगा। चयनित छात्रों को 80,000/- रुपये प्रति माह की अध्येतावृत्ति और 60,000/- रुपये का वार्षिक आकस्मिक अनुदान दिया जाएगा। डीडीएफएस अभ्यर्थियों (केवल शोध छात्रों) के लिए सीधेचरएस के तहत चिकित्सा लाभ भी उपलब्ध हैं। पीएचडी कार्यक्रम के दौरान छात्रावास में रहना अनिवार्य है।

Selection is a two-step process: 1. Screening in to selection interview through online Computer Based Test (CBT) & post-graduation academic record and 2. Performance in selection interview. **Final selection will be based on the merit of performance in the selection interview only.** Only online applications will be accepted from candidates with M.E./ M.Tech./ Equivalent Degree in Mechanical, Chemical, Metallurgical / Materials, Electrical, Electronics, Computer, Instrumentation & Civil Engineering. Candidates with degrees in IT or MCA are not eligible. The selected students will be admitted to one of the five Constituent Institutions (CIs) of HBNi: BARC Mumbai, IGCAR Kalpakkam, IPR Gandhinagar, RRCAT Indore and VECC Kolkata, based on the research proposals received from the various constituents. The selected students will be awarded Fellowships of ₹80,000/- per month and an annual contingency grant of ₹60,000/-. Medical benefits under CHSS are also available for DDFS fellow only. Hostel accommodation is mandatory during PHD programme.

अंतिम डिग्री: अभ्यर्थियों को भारत का नागरिक होना चाहिए और एम.ई.एस. टेक/समकक्ष डिग्री के साथ-साथ बी.ई./पी. टेक में न्यूनतम 60 प्रतिशत अंक प्रतिशत (या 10.0 वा समकक्ष के पैमाने पर न्यूनतम 6.0 सीजीपीए) होने चाहिए। एम.ई.एस. टेक के अंतिम सेमेस्टर के अभ्यर्थी भी आवेदन कर सकते हैं, लेकिन यदि ऐसे अभ्यर्थियों का चयन किया जात है, तो उन्हें 31 दिसंबर, 2026 तक अपनी मास्टर डिग्री के प्रमाण पत्र और अंक पत्र उपलब्ध करना होगा।

Qualifying Degree: Candidates must be an Indian citizen and have minimum 60% Marks (or minimum of 6.0 CGPA on the scale of 10.0 or equivalent) as per the ordinances of the respective university in M.E./M.Tech. / Equivalent Degree as well as B.E./B.Tech. Candidates in the final semester of M.E./M.Tech may also apply but such candidates, if selected, must provide certificates and mark sheets of their Master Degree, by December 31, 2026. The candidates who have acquired M. Tech. after obtaining the M. Sc. Degree are NOT eligible for DDFS programme.

आयु सीमा: 1. अगस्त, 2026 को आयु सीमा 28 वर्ष है अतः सामान्य श्रेणी के अभ्यर्थी का जन्म 1 अगस्त, 1998 को या उसके बाद हुआ होना चाहिए। आयु सीमा में ओपीसी-एनटीएस के लिए तीन वर्ष और परती/परती आंदोलन के लिए पांच वर्ष की छूट है। सभी श्रेणियों के दिव्यांग व्यक्ति (40 प्रतिशत या उससे अधिक दिव्यांग) के लिए 10 वर्ष की अतिरिक्त आयु छूट के लिए वार है।

Age limit: The age limit is 28 yrs. as on Aug. 1, 2026 and hence should have been born on or after Aug. 1, 1998 for general category. Age limit is relaxable by three years for OBC-NCL and by five years for SC/ST applicants. Persons with Disability (with 40% or more disability) of all categories are eligible for additional age relaxation of 10 years.

ऑनलाइन आवेदन करने के लिए, <https://www.barcocesexam.com> को देखते रहें।

To Apply Online, visit the website <https://www.barcocesexam.com>

• ऑनलाइन आवेदन पोर्टल आरंभ होने की तिथि: 22 दिसंबर, 2025
Launch of Online Application Portal: Dec. 22, 2025*
• स्क्रीनिंग परीक्षा (सीडीटी) : 14 एवं 15 मार्च 2026*
• Screening Examination (CBT): 14th & 15th March 2026*

• आवेदन की अंतिम तिथि: 21 जनवरी, 2026*
Last Date for Online Application: Jan. 21, 2026*
• चयन साक्षात्कार: जून 2026
• Selection Interviews: June 2026*

सभी तिथियां संभावित तिथियां हैं और अभ्यर्थियों को अपायन सूचना के लिए नियमित रूप से <https://www.barcocesexam.in> वेबसाइट को देखते रहें। All dates are tentative and candidates are required to regularly visit the website <https://www.barcocesexam.in> for updates.

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