



LEISURE | P2



INTERNATIONAL | P10



BUSINESS | P11



SPORTS | P12

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

He informed the farmers that all officers have been instructed that the entire paddy procurement process will be conducted transparently. If there is any negligence in this, the concerned officials will definitely bear the consequences, the CM warned.

C'mon! There's nobody to stop us. The PM is busy proving

DEGREE OF DEVIATION

The accused were arrested following the registration of a case at Sukher police station under



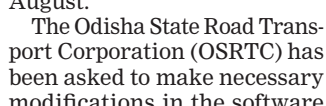
AP PHOTO

The Odisha government has announced free travel for school students on government-run buses under the Mukhyamantri Bus Seva (MBS), replacing the earlier 50 per cent fare concession. The move aims to improve access to education and curb dropouts caused by long travel distances. As per the provision of the scheme, students will receive zero-fare tickets through electronic ticketing machines upon showing a valid student ID or wearing a school uniform. The Transport department has asked the OSRTC to update software and revise bus routes and timings to cover more schools for the benefit of students.

PNN & AGENCIES

3 held for IT

According to the notification, a zero ticket will be generated in the electronic ticket issue



In May, the state government had decided to offer 50 per cent concession in bus fares for students along with women, transgenders, persons with disabilities and senior citizens under the MBS scheme.

DMM & AGENCIES

The Samoa Conservation Society's latest field survey, conducted from 17 October to 13 November, recorded at least

members were busy cooking, the two siblings went to the water body around noon to take a

the duo. They were taken to a local hospital, where doctors declared them dead, he said.

The Samoa Conservation Society's latest field survey, conducted from 17 October to 13 November, recorded at least

Wildlife experts say the rainforest valleys near Uafato village, where the sightings occurred, may be playing a role in protecting the bird and its

The dodo-like bird was known to exist in the Samoan rainforest but had

Efforts to spot and track the bird highlight the challenges in protecting wildlife species

"It seems very likely that feral cats are a major cause of decline. There has to be some kind of control programme"



leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES

You have your hands full today. There will be planning, meetings and a lot of work to do. You may feel tired and dejected due to insufficient inputs from others. However, Ganesha says things will become clear slowly as matters come to a conclusion.

TAURUS

You may feel let down as your folks may not extend the support you expected from them, says Ganesha. You should try to remain practical and not get swayed by emotions. It is highly likely that family feuds may erupt today. Ganesha advises you to avoid confrontations and keep smiling to emerge a winner.

GEMINI

Today, you will decide to become a bit more conscious about your health. You may or may not enrol yourself into a gym and measure your calories, but you will be concerned about your lifestyle and food habits today, predicts Ganesha. That's quite unlike a Piscean.

CANCER

Today, you are likely to be brimming with love and compassion. However, certain negative thoughts will spoil all your good work. But don't fret! Your efforts won't go wasted and you will get the desired results sooner or later, says Ganesha.

LEO

Working hard, or hardly working — there is a vast difference between the two. You would be wiser to be working hard today, especially if it is success that you desire, says Ganesha. Remember that there is no substitute for hard work, and the sooner you realise this, the better. So sweat it out today. Also, hard work always pays its dividends, so, after a long day at work, you can look forward to an enchanting evening with your love.

VIRGO

The bulb of ideas will burn bright today. A possible see-saw between your contractual obligation and current duties may baffle you. New contacts will stand you in good stead. Blood will prove thicker, and family and friends will consolidate their place in your life.

LIBRA

Your instincts are at their peak today. Generally, this means a lot of good, but for you, it may also mean having to put up with the trouble of small things bothering you in a big way. So, it becomes highly important for you to remain balanced and focused. Do so and you may produce wonderful results at work, and also look forward to raking in the money from various sources, says Ganesha.

SCORPIO

Ganesha predicts today will be a day full of focus and a clear thought process. The clarity of thought you have has been acquired over a period of time, says Ganesha, and that could make all the difference. A crisp application of thoughts to ideas and actions will bring much appreciation from bosses and peers.

SAGITTARIUS

Settling for a new, better employment will help you fast-track your career growth. A telephonic interview might ring in a new offer. A lucrative deal with an MNC would serve well. Your dedication and devotion to work will also peak today, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

You will find the day to be taxing, mostly because of the amount of work delegated to you, says Ganesha. But it will take trouble quite an effort to dampen your spirit. You will be in the fray in the latter part of the day, but will leave your rivals trailing behind in terms of business strategies. Success will be yours if you ensure to be mindful of your moves.

AQUARIUS

You may huff and puff, but today is not the day when you'll finish what you started. Don't lose heart, the future is promising. Take a break, says Ganesha, you've worked enough. The results are on the way.

PISCES

You are likely to be grinding yourself under at the workplace today. A turning point will arise in romantic liaisons, though if the evening awaiting you is anything to go by, it is something you should welcome wholeheartedly, says Ganesha.



JORDYN WOODS, ANTHONY TOWNS GET ENGAGED

American television personality Jordyn Woods shared a series of pictures Friday as she announced her engagement to basketball player Karl-Anthony Towns after 5 years of togetherness. Woods, who is best known for appearing in reality show *Life of Kylie*, uploaded pictures on her Instagram handle

DIDDY'S PLEA SEEKING IMMEDIATE RELEASE

American rapper Diddy has pleaded to be released from prison. The rapper reached out to an appeals court through his legal team. He is currently serving a 4 year sentence after being convicted on prostitution-related charges, reports *Mirror.co.uk*



Sam's year of gratitude

MUMBAI: As 2025 comes to a close, Samantha Ruth Prabhu has much to celebrate. The year marked significant personal and professional milestones, including launching her own production house and producing her first film, *Subham*. And as the year reached its finale, Samantha added the biggest chapter of all by getting married. She tied the knot with filmmaker Raj Nidimoru in December.

Samantha shared a series of reflective pictures on Instagram, capturing moments from the past year. Among them was an unseen wedding photo of her and Raj in their wedding attire, with Raj's playful expression bringing a smile to Samantha's face. The post also included a video of her gym training, a still from her cameo in *Subham*, and a shot of a beautifully decorated Christmas tree. Samantha dropped these pictures and wrote, "A year of gratitude".

Samantha also shared a glimpse from her mehendi ceremony, where her henna artist, Arulmozhi Ilavarasu, created a minimalist design. She revealed that Raj's name was hidden in the intricate henna on her right middle finger, in line with traditional customs. The couple tied the knot in an intimate ceremony at the Isha Yoga Center in Coimbatore, with Samantha wearing a red banarasi saree and Raj donning a beige kurta with a gold jacket.

AGENCIES

MUMBAI: Actress Shruti Haasan used social media to share the dilemma she faces during her visits to a dentist, something most of the netizens would be able to relate to. Shruti took to the Stories section of her Instagram handle and posted a picture of herself, hiding half of her face with her hands, expressing a cocktail of feelings after surviving a day at the dentist.

Sharing what it is like for her to be in that chair, the *Salaar* actress wrote on the photo-sharing app, "Not a fan of dental work but fan of nice smile...Not a fan of pain, fan of nice clean teeth. You get the idea (sic)." On another note, Shruti recently decided to take some time off her busy schedule and go on a long-overdue vacation.

Taking to her Insta

Stories, Shruti shared a selfie of herself on board a flight. She was visibly delighted in the photo captioned: "Vacay time after ages and ages."

However, Shruti did not reveal where she was off to or when she would be back.

Coming to her professional commitment, Shruti is gearing up for the much-awaited sequel, *Salaar Part 2: Shouryanga Parvam*. The expectations from the second instalment in the franchise are sky high, given the tremendous success of the original drama *Salaar: Part 1 – Ceasefire*, which was released in 2023.

IANIS

Shruti shares her bittersweet feeling



MUMBAI: Television actress Sumbul Touqeer, known for her role in the show *Imlie*, reflected on the challenges of the past year.

Opening up about 2025, the actress shared a heartfelt note acknowledging the pain, losses and difficult moments she faced. However, Sumbul also highlighted how the year served as a reminder to cherish life, loved ones and every precious moment. In an exclusive quote shared with this news agency, the actress shared, "I think 2025 taught me patience. I have learned to trust the process and not rush things. I now understand that everything happens at the right time. In the future, I want to carry this patience with me, both in my personal life and my career, and take every situation calmly."

Sumbul's heartbreak



Sumbul also admitted that 2025 was a year of heartbreaking incidents. She stated, "2025 has been a difficult year, with many losses and challenges, and I think it reminded us how unpredictable life is and how important it is to value every moment and every person we have. My thoughts are with all those who faced pain and loss this year."

Sumbul also expressed happiness with how 2025 unfolded for her, particularly as she worked on her much-anticipated Bollywood debut with the movie *Jhaad Phoonk*.

IANIS

FM 'comes alive' on Kesu Das song

BALASORE: Artificial Intelligence has been steadily permeating almost every sphere of human life. Recently, a striking and curiosity-arousing video has gone viral on social media in which an AI-generated Vyasakabi Fakir Mohan Senapati is seen singing a song. In the visual, the legend appears to sing a portion of the much-admired six-minute song *Kene Kisa Zillara Chhua Amere*, composed by noted artist Kesu Das.

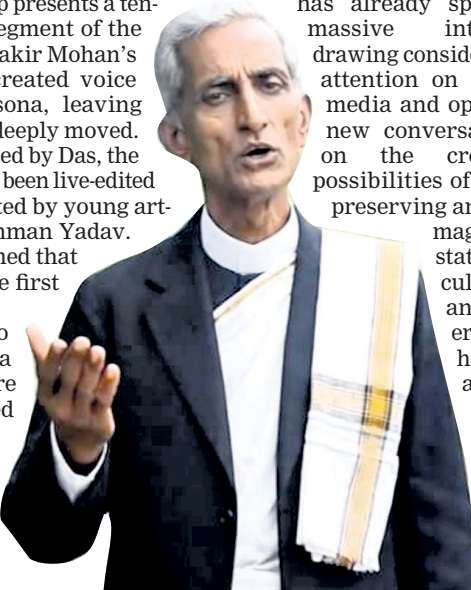
The clip presents a ten-second segment of the song in Fakir Mohan's (FM) recreated voice and persona, leaving viewers deeply moved.

Produced by Das, the video has been live-edited and created by young artist Ayushman Yadav. Das claimed that this is the first AI-generated video in Odisha to feature a departed literary legend in such a vivid and engaging form.

He further informed that the full six-minute version of *Kene Kisa Zillara Chhua Amere* will be released soon. The complete video will have several eminent personalities, such as commentator Shridhar Swami, poet Dinakrushna Das, legendary poet Kabibara Radhanath Ray, renowned author Manoj Das, historian Manmath Das, Shanti Das, Godabari Devi, among others.

The AI-generated video has already sparked massive interest, drawing considerable attention on social media and opening new conversations on the creative possibilities of AI in preserving and reimagining state's cultural and literary heritage.

PNN



An AI-imagined image of Fakir Mohan

25 poems, stories to see off 2025

BHUBANESWAR: While most citizens are rounding off the year with picnics and pub-hoppers, the city's wordsmiths chose a quieter, brighter farewell. On Thursday evening, at Asim Da' Khati—the tea kiosk named for the legendary artiste opposite Rabindra Mandap—they gathered for "Pachisira Pachisi," a live reading of 25 famous poems and stories, written in multiple languages - Odia, Hindi, English and Bengali.

The Asim Basu Foundation, fresh from its November art-based event "Chitra Charcha-

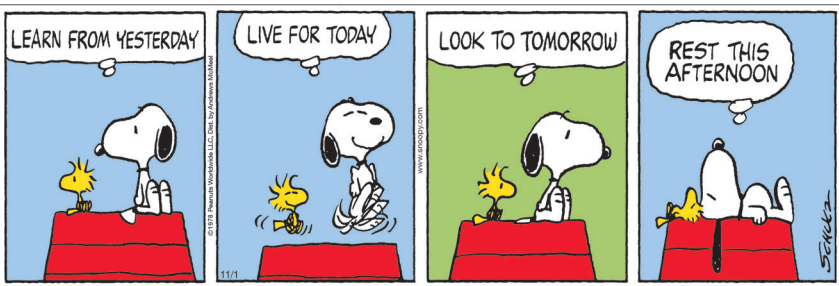
re Chitrakara," hosted the evening. Eminent painter Ramahari Jena struck the opening chord; culture scholar Asit Mohanty set the key in his keynote while poet-columnist Pabitrāmohan Kar tuned the sequence. Award-winning filmmaker Kapilas Bhuyan and actor-theatre director Debadutta Pati chipped in to make the event a success.

No fireworks, no DJ—just twenty-five pieces of freshly minted imagination, served hot with tea and local signature snacks.

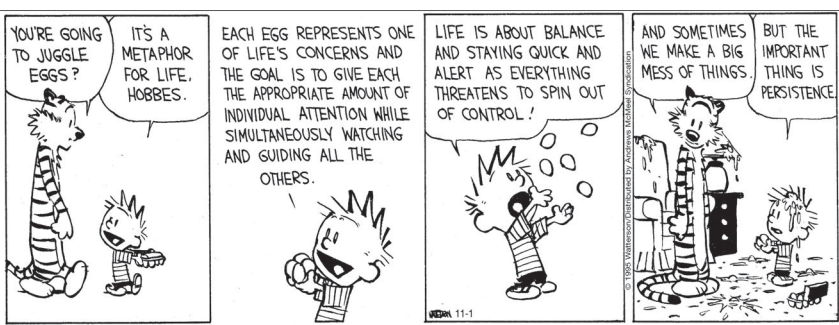
PNN



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

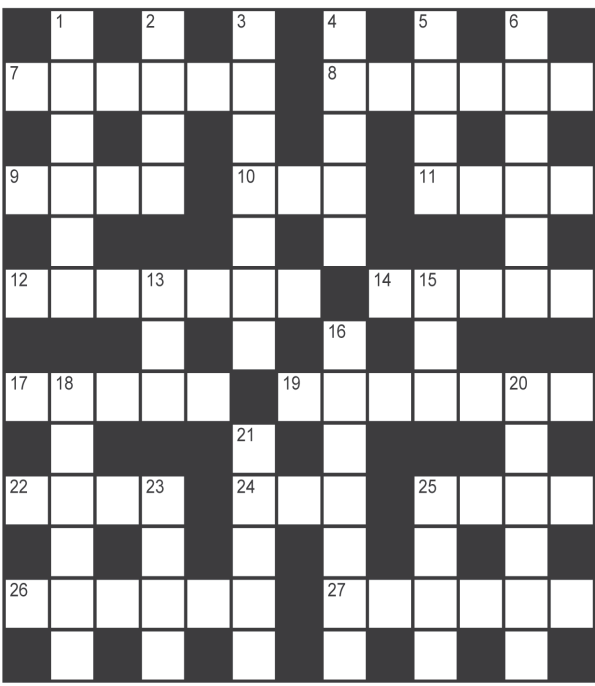


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

- 7 Feeble
- 8 Prompt the grey cells
- 9 Bubble over
- 10 Sty resident
- 11 Pace
- 12 Engraving
- 14 Encompassing
- 17 Bellyache
- 19 Fin

Down

- 21 Open up
- 2 Horizontal structure
- 3 Comical

- 4 Hunt like a cat
- 5 Self-satisfied
- 6 Heart condition
- 13 Jump
- 15 ___ music
- 16 Army unit
- 18 Snub
- 20 Breathe out
- 21 Guide
- 23 Lacerate
- 25 Wickedness

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| B | I | C | Y | C | L | E | | F | A | C | E |
| A | H | H | N | O | O | E | | | | | |
| S | H | A | K | E | A | L | E | G | N | E | T |
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| C | E | D | E | | S | O | Y | B | E | A | N |
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SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



■ **1958:** Rebel forces under Che Guevara routed a Cuban government garrison and captured an armored train filled with weapons and ammunition, helping to bring the Cuban Revolution to an end a few days later.



**BAD SELECTORS
AND BAD
INVESTORS
OVERREACT
TO RECENT
PERFORMANCE,
IGNORE
FUNDAMENTALS,
AND CHASE
POPULARITY**

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

*The writer is
Professor of Practice, NIIS
Group of Institutions*

Sir, The advisory asking MPs to refrain from using smart gadgets inside Parliament highlights a hard truth: technology has raced ahead of institutional discipline. Smartwatches, hidden cameras and recording spectacles may be innocuous elsewhere, but within the House they threaten privacy, security and parliamentary privilege. Earlier suspensions show that breaches are no longer hypothetical. Democracy thrives on transparency, not covert recording. Lawmakers, of all people, must respect the sanctity of procedures they are sworn to protect. Convenience cannot trump constitutional conduct. If restraint is essential for citizens, it is non-negotiable for legislators.

Sir, The latest train fare hike reflects a troubling pattern: passengers are repeatedly asked to pay more without seeing proportional improvements in basic facilities. Overcrowded coaches, unhygienic bogies, malfunctioning toilets, delayed trains, and poor customer service remain routine realities for millions. Calling this “fare rationalization” ignores the lived experience of ordinary commuters who depend on railways for affordable travel. Sustainability cannot come at the cost of dignity and safety. Before burdening passengers again, the Railways must first ensure clean coaches, punctual services, and humane travel conditions. Without accountability and visible upgrades, this hike appears less like reform and more like misplaced priorities.

Sir, After re-uniting for the cause of Marathi language, the estranged Thackeray cousins, Uddhav and Raj, have now come together for protecting the "Marathi manoo" in Maharashtra. The two also want to "save Mumbai and Maharashtra" whatever that means although it is not difficult to fathom that they are fighting a battle for survival. With the BMC polls round the corner, political exigency appears to have pushed the two to try their luck together at the polls. Shiv Sena(UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray is in the doldrums, and he is fighting to remain in circulation. Raj Thackeray, on the other hand, does not look politically ambitious and is satisfied by throwing punches at politicians through his mesmerising oratorical skills.

CHANDBALI SHAKEN BY 3 RAPE CASES IN 3 DAYS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chandbali, Dec 26: Three back-to-back rape cases reported within just three days have sent shockwaves across Chandbali subdivision in Bhadrak district, sparking public anger, prompting political slugfest and raising serious questions over law and order.

Police have registered three separate rape cases under Chandbali subdivision over the last 72 hours — two at Chandbali police station and one at Dhamra police station. The incidents have deeply shaken residents of the otherwise peaceful coastal belt, with protests mounting and demands growing for stricter policing and swift justice.

Odisha Crime Branch categorised the rape and murder of a differently-abled minor girl in Chandbali NAC's Baligaon area as a "red flag" case, highlighting its seriousness. Police arrested Babul Das of Rampalli village in connection with the case, following which angry locals ransacked his house.

Amid simmering tension over the Baligaon incident, another minor girl was allegedly raped by a 26-year-old man in her home in the area, following which she attempted suicide by consuming poison and is now hospitalised in a critical condition. According to an FIR registered at Dhamnagar police station, the minor was alone at home cooking in the



evening of December 17. The accused allegedly gagged the girl with her own scarf, and raped her. Before leaving, he warned the victim that her sisters too would face the same fate if she disclosed the matter.

Fearing social stigma and intimidation, the 17-year-old victim initially remained silent. However, she later wrote a detailed account of the incident before consuming poison December 20 in a suicide attempt.

She was initially taken to Dhamara Community Health Centre, then to Bhadrak District Headquarters Hospital and later shifted to a private nursing home in Cuttack, where her condition is stated to be serious.

The victim's widowed mother approached Dhamara police with the handwritten note and lodged a formal complaint, prompting police action.

Acting on the complaint, Dhamra police registered a case (56/25) and arrested Gyanaran-

jan Pati, a resident of the same village in connection with the incident.

Dhamra PS Officer In-Charge Shobhan Swain recorded the victim's statement Thursday night in Cuttack. After medical examination, the accused was produced before Chandbali court Friday. The accused's family denies the allegations, claiming he has been falsely implicated and defamed.

In the third incident, a youth allegedly pushed a minor girl into the Baitarani river after he established physical relationship with her on the promise of marrying her. The incident has further intensified public concern over rising crimes against women and children in the region.

The political atmosphere has also heated up, as BJP, BJD and Congress leaders have engaged in mudslinging in the wake of the heinous crimes. Opposition parties have alleged administrative failure and a collapse of law and order, claims rejected by the ruling dispensation.

Locals have also raised concerns over the alleged rise in illicit drug trade in the area, linking it to the surge in violent crimes and demanding immediate action to curb narcotics circulation.

The back-to-back cases have intensified calls for stronger policing, fast-track trials, and decisive government action to restore public confidence and safety in the Chandbali subdivision.

Man hacks bull with axe, held

CHHENDIPADA: Police arrested a man for allegedly hacking a bull with an axe in Kanloi village under Bagadia police station in Angul district Friday. The accused was identified as Padmalochan Palai, a resident of Kanloi village, police said. According to preliminary information, a bull had been roaming in the village for several days and reportedly entered Palai's courtyard, damaging and feeding on crops. Angered by the repeated intrusion, Palai struck the animal on its back with an axe, causing serious injuries to it. The injured bull collapsed near the village square, triggering outrage among villagers. Residents reported the incident to Bagadia police. Police arrested the accused and seized the axe used in the attack. An investigation is underway.

JE, forester under Vig lens

PNN & AGENCIES

Malkangiri/Koraput, Dec 26: The Vigilance department Friday launched simultaneous raids on the properties of a junior engineer (JE) of Malkangiri district and a forester of Koraput district.

On the allegation of possession of disproportionate assets (DA), Vigilance officers raided the properties of the two government officers at nine locations, an officer of the anti-corruption wing said.

The department has identified the officers as Nihar Ranjan Sarkar, JE of Malkangiri block and Niranjan Satapathy, forester, Koraput.

Till 1pm, the Vigilance offi-



On the allegation of possession of DA, Vigilance officers raided the properties of the two government officers at nine locations

cers had detected one palatial triple-storeyed building, eight valuable plots, including six in posh area of Malkangiri town, and ₹2.11 lakh cash from the

possession of the JE, he said.

Sarkar joined the government service in November 2015 on a contractual basis. He was regularised in August 2022. In December last year, he was posted as JE at the Malkangiri block.

Similarly, during the raids in connection to the forester, two triple-storeyed buildings in Bhubaneswar, another building in Koraput, seven high-value plots, including two in prime location of Bhubaneswar, 1 kg gold, ₹8.70 lakh cash, and one SUV were detected by the Vigilance officers.

Satapathy entered into government service in January 1988 as a forest guard under the Koraput forest division with a monthly initial salary of ₹625.

Wild elephants kill woman, injure two

POST NEWS NETWORK

Lathor, Dec 26: A woman was killed and two others seriously injured after a herd of wild elephants went on a rampage at Hatipada under Chakapada village in Bolangir district Thursday night.

The deceased has been identified as Phulmati Nag, 45, and the injured as Khud Hati, an elderly woman, and Gautam Nag, a young man. The injured were initially taken to the Khaprakhol Community Health Centre and later shifted to Patnagarh hospital after receiving first aid, doctors said.

According to forest officials, a herd of 29 elephants moved from the Turekela area earlier



this week and have been staying in the Bender forest under Lathor range. The elephants entered Hatipada village Thursday night, damaged houses and fed on paddy crops. While the animals were vandalising Khud Hati's house, they knocked down the wall, which collapsed on Khud Hati, her daughter Phulmati and son-in-law Gau-

tam. Phulmati died on the spot.

The body was sent to Khaprakhol Community Health Centre for post-mortem Friday morning and later handed over to the family.

As Dhanu Jatra festivities were underway in Lathor village, the Forest department blocked the forest road at night to prevent public movement through the elephant corridor.

Woman cheated of ₹80K by contractor

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Dec 26: A woman from the Soundaryanagar area of Berhampur was allegedly cheated of ₹80,000 by a contractor on the pretext of undertaking construction work at her house. Following registration of a complaint, Sadar police registered a case and launched an investigation.

According to police sources, the complainant, identified as Nibedita Bisoi, was constructing a house at Soundaryanagar. A contractor, Gobinda Behera of Ambagada Kadalibada Sahi, had agreed to carry out various construction works and took an advance payment of ₹80,000 from her.

However, despite receiving the money, the contractor allegedly delayed the work for nearly two months, citing personal engagements and commitments. Despite repeated reminders, he neither began the construction work nor returned the amount.

The complainant alleged that Behera and his family members repeatedly assured her that the amount would be refunded, but to no avail. When she continued to demand the money, she was allegedly threatened.

Left with no alternative, Bisoi approached the police and lodged a complaint. Further investigation is underway, police said.

Man sentenced to life for murder after 71-day trial

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bissamkatak, Dec 26: In one of the fastest murder trial disposals in Rayagada district, the Bissamkatak Additional District and Sessions Court Friday convicted a man and sentenced him to life imprisonment within 71 days since the crime was committed.

The court also slapped a fine on the accused, identified as Kuni Lohar, after finding him guilty of murder. The verdict is being described as the quickest

conviction in the district's judicial history.

According to case records, the murder took place October 14, 2025, under the jurisdiction of Bissamkatak police station. A case (153/25) was registered the following day. Police completed the investigation and filed the chargesheet within 20 days.

After a swift trial, the court pronounced its judgment convicting the accused Friday.

The investigation was led by



Bissamkatak police station Inspector In-Charge Suryachan-

dra Padhi. The prosecution was conducted by Additional Public Prosecutor Prashant Kumar Rath, while the overall proceedings were supervised by Sub-Divisional Public Prosecutor Ajit Pattnaik.

Speaking after the verdict, Rath said he had only performed his duty and credited the success of the case to the Rayagada SP, the Bissamkatak police team and the district prosecution machinery.

Ganjam officials to forgo New Year bouquets, gifts

CHHATRAPUR: Ganjam Collector V Keerthi Vasan has announced that government officials in the district will not receive flower bouquets or gifts of any kind as part of New Year greetings. The directive, issued to all district offices, takes effect immediately. The move aims to discourage a long-standing practice in which staff members greet their superiors with bouquets, sweets and other gifts. Officials said such items are often packaged using single-use plastic and thermocol, which contribute to environmental pollution. The Collector has launched the initiative under the theme "Pragati pain Pratigya 2026," a pledge to protect the environment and promote sustainability.

At 4.8°C, Koraput coldest place in state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Dec 26: Several parts of the state continue to reel under cold wave conditions with mercury plummeting to below 10 degrees Celsius mark at 11 places Friday.

Koraput town was the coldest place in the state for the day with 4.8 degrees Celsius, while the night temperature was 6.3 degrees Celsius at Semiliguda, according to a weather bulletin of the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Daringbadi town of Kandhamal district recorded a minimum temperature of 6.5 degrees Celsius. It was followed by Jharsuguda (7.2 degrees C), Phulbani (7.5 degrees C), G Udayagiri (7.8 degrees C),

Rourkela (8 degrees C), Kirei (8.3 degrees C), Nabarangpur (8.5 degrees C), Sundargarh (9 degrees C), and Bhawanipatna (9.8 degrees C).

The night temperature in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack was 14.6 degrees C and 12.8 degrees C, respectively, Thursday night. The cold condition is expected to continue in the state as there will be no large change in the night temperature during the next four days. After that the night temperature would rise gradually, said Manorama Mohanty, director of IMD's Bhubaneswar centre.

Shallow to moderate fog would occur during morning hours at isolated pockets in several districts during the next five days, she said.

Miscreants torch bus in Rourkela

ROURKELA: Unidentified miscreants set fire to a private bus late Thursday night near Bali Jodi Chhak under the Tangarpali police station limits in Rourkela, police said Friday. The bus was completely gutted, while another bus parked behind it suffered partial damage. No casualties were reported as there were no passengers inside the vehicles at the time. According to police, the bus owner, Anay Mallik, lodged a complaint at Tangarpali police station. A case has been registered against unknown persons, and an investigation is under way. Preliminary investigation suggests that miscreants took advantage of the darkness and poured a flammable substance on the parked bus, before setting it ablaze. The fire quickly engulfed the vehicle, reducing it to ashes. Due to the intensity of the flames, another bus parked close behind was also damaged. Firefighters rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control, though the first bus could not be saved.

Decades-old bat colony under threat as poachers strike



POST NEWS NETWORK

Khaira, Dec 26: A bat colony that has thrived for decades in Saradanga village under Khaira block of Balasore district is rapidly declining due to poaching, loss of habitat and alleged inaction by the Forest department, raising serious concerns among villagers and wildlife observers.

Once safely roosting on two tamarind trees which are over 100 years old, the bats were left homeless after the trees collapsed in recent years. Since then, the colony has scattered across bamboo, mango and other nearby trees, exposing the flying mammals to hunters, who locals say are captur-

ing and selling them for profit.

Residents warned that unless immediate protective measures are taken, the colony could disappear entirely within a short time.

The bats first settled decades ago on two tamarind trees in the courtyard of an elderly woman known locally as Menki Mausi. Childless, she treated the bats as her own children and ensured their safety. Later, she adopted Harekrushna Panda of nearby Kalamachua village as her son and arranged his marriage. Panda, villagers said, continued her legacy by protecting the bats and preventing any harm to them.


About 25 years ago, the then divisional forest officer of Balasore

and the district collector visited Saradanga and expressed appreciation for the conservation of the bat colony. Panda was rewarded with ₹5,000 and assurances were given to provide water and other facilities to protect the bats during extreme summer heat. Locals said those promises were never fulfilled.

In recent years, with Panda's death and Cyclone Phailin uprooting the old tamarind trees, the bats were left without a caretaker and shelter. With no dedicated protection in place, the colony dispersed across nearby trees.

Villagers alleged that poachers have taken advantage of the situation, using nets to trap and poach bats for monetary gain. The threat intensifies as the breeding season approaches, further endangering the survival of the species in the area. When contacted, Kupari forester Naresh Singh said the issue would be looked into.

Local residents have urged the Forest department to intervene urgently, restore habitat support and ensure protection for the bats before it is too late.


|  UCO BANK | ZONAL OFFICE | POSSESSION NOTICE | |
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| | 18/1, Ainthapali Road, Sambalpur, Ph.: 0663-2540640 | | |
| (Under Section 13(4) of the Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 for Immovable Property) | | | |
| Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of UCO Bank, Concerned Branches under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of Powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice under section 13(2) of the said Act calling upon the Borrower/Guarantor/Co-Applcant to repay the amount with interest at the contractual rate together with incidental expenses, cost, charges etc. within 60 days from the date of the said Notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Guarantor/Co-Applcant and the public in general that the undersigned has taken POSSESSION of the property described here-in below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrower/Guarantor/Co-Applcant in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the UCO Bank, Concerned Branches for an amount with interest and expenses thereon. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets. | | | |
| BRANCH / Name and Address of the Borrowers/Guarantor/Co-Applcant | Outstanding Amount | Date of Demand / Possession Notice | Description of the Properties |
| ROURKELA MAIN BRANCH / Borrowers: 1) Rajinder Kaur , W/o.: Mr. Pritam Singh, 2) Mr. Rupinder Singh , S/o: Mr. Pritam Singh, 3) Mr. Pritam Singh , S/o: Mr. Bachan Singh, All are At: BL-128, Basanti Colony, Rourkela-12, Dist.: Sundargarh, Odisha | ₹ 19,07,608/- as on 29.11.2024 (inclusive of interest upto 31.07.2024) with further interest and expenses thereon | 18.01.2025 (Paper Publication date : 16.09.2025) / 23.12.2025 | All that part and parcel of the Immovable Property Land and Building over Plot No.: 595/P & 533/2478/P, Khata No.: 172 & 731, Flat No.: 3G/3rd Floor, Area: 1400 sqr feet, Mouza: Brahmanitarang, Tahasil: Lathikata, SRO: Rourkela, Dist.: Sundargarh, Odisha, KISSam: Gharabari (Residential Flat in the name of flat Sahej Lagoon) in the name of Rajinder Kaur |
| ROURKELA BAZAR BRANCH / Borrower: M/s. Smridhi Enterprises, Prop.: Mrs. Priti Kumari , W/o: Mr. Sourav Sahoo / Guarantor: Mr. Sourav Sahoo , S/o.: Balkrishna Sahoo, Business/Residential Address: At: Kopsingha, Jaraikela Post, PS: Bisra, Dist.: Sundargarh, Odisha-770036 | ₹ 28,90,782.28 as on 15.09.2025 (inclusive of interest upto 16.06.2025) with further interest and expenses thereon | 15.10.2025 / 23.12.2025 | All that part and parcel of the bearing Khata No.: 119/86, Plot No.: 140/670, Area: Ac.16Dec., Mouza: Kopsingha, Tahasil: Bisra, PS.: Bisra, Sub-Registry: Birmitrapur, Dist.: Sundargarh, in the name of Mr. Sourav Sahoo , S/o: Balakrishna Sahoo, Bounded (as per sale deed) North: Road, South: Plot No.: 141 & 493, East: Plot No.: 140/P, West: Plot No.: 140/P |
| ROURKELA BAZAR BRANCH / Borrower: Mr. Sourav Sahoo , S/o.: Balkrishna Sahoo, At/Po.: Jaraikela, PS.: Bisra, Dist.: Sundargarh, Odisha-770036 | ₹ 9,39,124.40 as on 27.09.2025 (inclusive of interest upto 30.05.2024) with further interest and expenses thereon | 15.10.2025 / 23.12.2025 | Description of Machinery: Fully automatic hydraulic Fly Ash Brick Machine, Quantity: 1, Year of Installation: 2023, Market Value: Rs.15,50,000/- |
| Place: Sambalpur Date: 26.12.2025 | | | Authorised Officer UCO BANK |

WOMEN LEAD FROM THE FRONT

Indian women sportspersons soared to new heights in 2025; besides cricket triumphs, they led globally in archery, athletics, snooker, chess, and motorsport


TAKE A BOW, SHEETAL

For Sheetal Devi, the bow asked for patience before it delivered promise. In 2025, that discipline led to a world title at the World Archery Para Championships. Later in the year, she crossed another milestone when she was selected for India's able-bodied compound team for the Asia Cup, becoming the first para-archer to be included at that level. Her journey expanded how excellence and ability are understood in Indian sport.



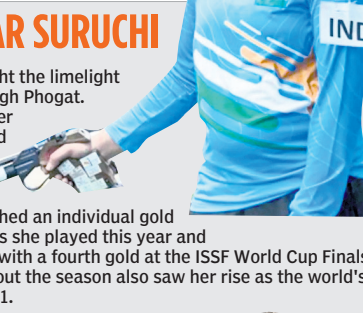
CHECKMATE TO HISTORY BOOKS

The third edition of the Women's Chess World Cup in Batumi, Georgia, saw two Indian women competing for the world title. Koneru Humpy and Divya Deshmukh played for three days and finally multiple tiebreakers resulted in the final score of 2.5-1.5 with Divya emerging victorious. The young chess player became the first Indian woman to win FIDE World Chess Champion title and became only the fourth female chess grandmaster of the nation.



SHOOTING STAR SURUCHI

Another shooter who caught the limelight this year was Suruchi Singh Phogat. The 19-year-old also made her debut this year and remained unbeaten in women's air pistol on the World Cup Circuit. She clinched an individual gold medal in all three World Cups she played this year and then finished off her season with a fourth gold at the ISSF World Cup Finals. Her dominating run throughout the season also saw her rise as the world's best to be ranked world No 1.




PUNCHING INTO BOXING FAME

India placed first in the medal tally at the 2025 World Boxing Championship in Liverpool with Jasmin Lamboria becoming the World Champion. But this was not a solo feat as she was joined by the gold medalist Minakshi Hooda, silver medalist Nupur Sheoran and bronze medalist Pooja Rani.




JYOTHI'S ARCHERY FEAT

Securing India's maiden medal at the World Cup Final, Jyothi Surekha Vennam became the first Indian woman compound archer to win a bronze in the competition at Nanjing after defeating number 2. Having previously exited at the opening round itself, Jyothi's resolve this time made her the first Indian woman to medal at the season ending finale.



ANNU'S GOLDEN LAUNCH

Entering the top-15 by delivering her season best throw of 62.59 meters Annu Rani won the International Wieslaw Maniak Memorial held in Szczecin, Poland in August 2025. Following this she won another gold medal at the Indian Open World Athletics Continental Tour Bronze meet in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.




JYOTHI FASTEST HURLER

India's first-ever gold medal in the women's 100m hurdles at the Asian Athletics Open 2025. Pooja Olla had a breakthrough year. After having won silver and bronze in the same categories in the 26th Asian Athletics Championship in Gumi, South Korea earlier this year, she outdid herself. This is her second double-gold win after the National Inter-State Championships.



PISSAY BREAKS BARRIERS

In a historic milestone for motorsport, Aishwarya Pissay became the first woman from both Asia and India to race on two wheels at Round 4 of the FIM World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC), the 6P Ultimate Rally-Raid Portugal 2025. This campaign marks a pivotal step on Aishwarya's road to Dakar 2027, where she aims to become the first Indian woman to race and finish the Dakar Rally on two wheels, a record no woman from Asia has yet achieved.



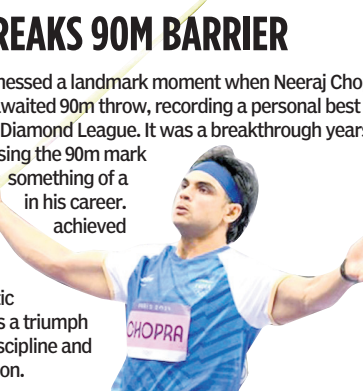
KARTING PRODIGY ATTIQA

Indian racing prodigy Attiqa Mir stormed to a historic pole position before finishing third on the podium in the opening round of the Formula 1 Academy backed COFPA UAE karting series. The 10-year-old is the first Indian to be supported by Formula 1. She clinched the pole position, becoming the first-ever female in the world to achieve this feat in COFPA mini class before adding a Heat win to a successful weekend.



SAMRAT NEW AIR PISTOL KING

In 2025, Samrat Rana emerged as India's "new king" of air pistol shooting by becoming the first Indian ever to win a World Championship gold medal in the men's 10m event. The 20-year-old from Karnal, Haryana, defeated World No 1 Hu Kai of China in a dramatic final. Following his world title, Rana also secured a bronze medal at the season-ending ISSF World Cup Final 2025 in Doha in December.



CHOPRA BREAKS 90M BARRIER

Indian athletics witnessed a landmark moment when Neeraj Chopra achieved the long-awaited 90m throw, recording a personal best of 90.23m at the Doha Diamond League. It was a breakthrough years in the making. Crossing the 90m mark had become something of a mythical barrier. When he finally, it, the moment resonated deeply—not just as an athletic achievement, but as a triumph of perseverance, discipline and unwavering ambition.



WATERSHED YEAR

2025 was a year brimming with sporting drama, seasoned stars and fearless newcomers. Rivalries burned brighter than ever, as old foes and rising stars clashed in battles that defined the year. Across fields, tracks, and courts, Indian athletes delivered moments that stayed long after the cheering faded. Records were rewritten. Long waits ended. The year will long be remembered as one of the most extraordinary chapters in global sporting history—a year in which seemingly unbreakable curses crumbled, years-long droughts came to an emotional end, and underdogs across continents rose to seize glory in spectacular fashion

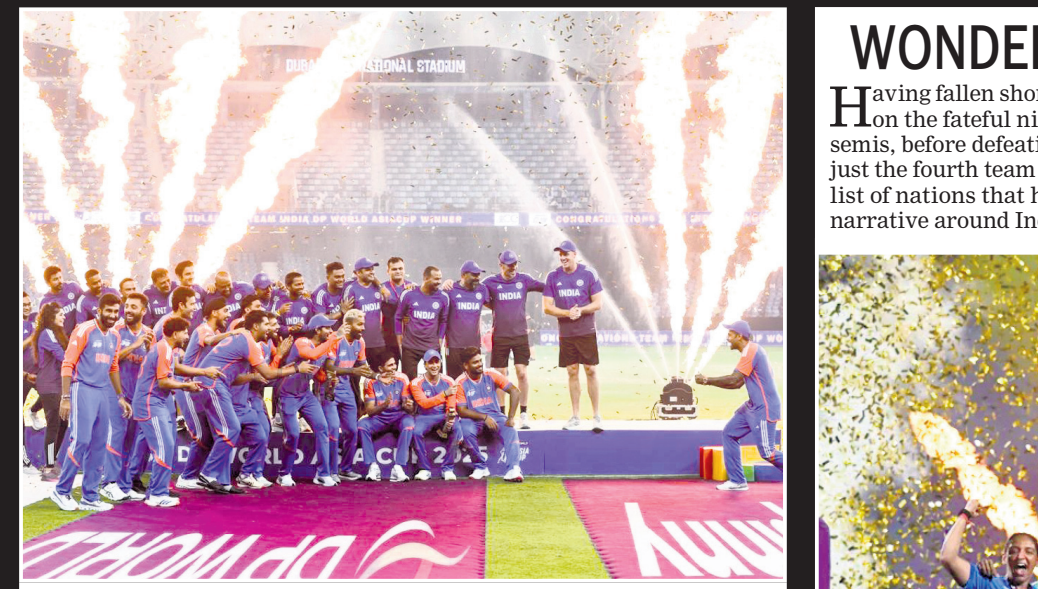
CHASING HISTORY

THE YEAR 2025 HAS BEEN NOTHING SHORT OF EXTRAORDINARY FOR CRICKET, WITH HISTORIC TRIUMPHS AND LANDMARK MOMENTS THAT HAVE SHAPED THE SPORT THIS YEAR



CHAMPIONS AGAIN

Team India's unbeaten run at the Champions Trophy 2025 culminated in clinching the coveted title by defeating New Zealand in the final in March. The Men in Blue ended a 12-year drought for Champions Trophy triumph, with the last title win coming in 2013 under the leadership of MS Dhoni. In the final, Team India, led by Rohit Sharma, defeated Mitchell Santner-led New Zealand by four wickets to take home the silverware. The reigning champions are the most successful team with three titles (2002, 2013, 2025). The unbeaten run in the tournament reaffirms India's dominance in white-ball cricket.



WONDER WOMEN CROWNED WORLD CHAMPIONS

Having fallen short on multiple occasions, the Indian women's cricket team finally became champions of the world. On the fateful night of November 3, The Harmanpreet Kaur-led side vanquished the formidable Australia in the semis, before defeating a spirited South Africa in the final to set off nationwide celebrations. Women in Blue became just the fourth team after Australia, England, and New Zealand to win the Women's ODI World Cup, joining the elite list of nations that have claimed the prestigious title. The historic, unprecedented victory promises to change the narrative around Indian cricket, which has been dominated by the men for decades, by default.



BLIND SUPREMACY

After India's historic triumphs at the Champions Trophy, Asia Cup, and Women's World Cup, the Women's Blind Cricket Team clinched a historic T20 World Cup in the first edition of the tournament in November. The team, led by Deepika TC, defeated Nepal in the final to clinch the inaugural Women's Blind T20 World Cup title, adding another proud chapter to India's growing legacy in world cricket. Interestingly, India were unbeaten throughout the tournament, successfully culminating their campaign with a historic title win.

ASIAN DOMINANCE

Team India clinched their record-extending ninth Asia Cup triumph, defeating long-time arch-rivals Pakistan in the final at the Dubai International Stadium in September. The Men in Blue were unbeaten throughout the tournament, including victory over Pakistan three times on the trot, showcasing their dominance in Asian cricket and reinforcing their reputation as the premier team in the region. India's historic victory was overshadowed by the Asia Cup trophy controversy, wherein ACC chief Mohsin Naqvi took away the silverware after India refused to accept it from him due to the controversial social media posts which forced Suryakumar Yadav-led team to celebrate without a trophy.

ODISHA'S BREAKTHROUGH ATHLETES

KUIJR INDIA'S FASTEST MAN

Animesh Kujur enjoyed a landmark year in 2025, establishing himself as one of India's fastest sprinters and Odisha's biggest athletics breakthrough. He achieved significant milestones, including becoming the first Indian male sprinter to qualify for the World Athletics Championships and setting national records in both the 100m and 200m events. He also made history by qualifying for the 2025 World Athletics Championships in Tokyo, the first Indian male sprinter ever to do so. Adding to the list of milestones, he also set a new national record with a time of 10.18 seconds at the Dromia International Sprint and Relays meeting in Greece in July 2025, becoming the first Indian man to run under 10.2 seconds in the event.

PREETISMITA'S HISTORIC LIFT

In October 2025, 16-year-old Odisha's weight-lifter Preetismita Bhoi achieved a gold medal at the 3rd Asian Youth Games in Bahrain, where she set a new Youth World Record in the clean and jerk category. Bhoi's performance in the women's 44 kg category was historic, earning her multiple accolades and breaking records. This success followed her gold medal win at the 2024 World Youth Championships in Peru, where she also set a world record in the 40 kg category.



PAYAL OVERCOMES HER DISABILITIES

Payal Nag, a 17-year-old quadruple amputee para-archer from Odisha, created history in 2025 with remarkable achievements. She won double gold at the 6th National Para Archery Championship in Jaipur, defeating her idol and Paralympic medalist Sheetal Devi. In March, she secured silver at the Khelo India Para Games in the Compound Women's Open. Payal is recognized as the world's first archer without all four limbs, using a unique adaptive technique involving her foot, shoulder, and a mouth-release device.



PRAGYAN NEXT HURDLES ACE

In 2025, Indian track athlete Pragyan Prasanti Sahu solidified her position as a rising star in the women's 100m hurdles. On August 10, she secured the gold medal in the women's 100m hurdles at the inaugural World Athletics Continental Tour Bronze event. Following her performances in 2025, she is recognized as the third-fastest woman in India in the 100m hurdles discipline.



WHITES LOSE SHINE AS RO-KO RETIRES



The year 2025 saw Indian test cricket bidding adieu to two of its greatest batters, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, as the duo stepped aside to make way for newcomers in the longest format of the game. As Rohit and Virat decided to hang up their boots in Tests, thousands of cricket fans across the globe were left shocked as they had expected them in whites for a few more years, at least. Rohit Sharma, under whom India could not win the World Test Championship, announced his retirement from Tests May 7 who amassed 4,301 runs from 67 Tests. On May 12, 2025, barely a few days after Rohit's retirement, Virat Kohli also announced that he was retiring from Tests, a decision which left his fans shell-shocked. Virat, who played as many as 123 Tests, scored 9320 runs and was unable to breach the 10,000 run mark. The star cricketer retired as one of the best Test captains of India having led the team in 68 matches.

FOOTBALL, OUT OF BREATH

2025 was a year of reality check for Indian football. The football crisis deepened, with women's and junior men's teams performing despite, not because of the system. The Indian Super League showed no signs of revival, and months after it was suspended, the state of clubs, footballers and other stakeholders remained precarious. To compound fans' woes, the senior men's team suffered its first defeat against Bangladesh in 22 years, finishing last in an AFC Asian Cup qualifying group with Bangladesh, Hong Kong and Singapore, countries with far more modest resources and smaller pools of players. But in sharp contrast to their senior counterparts, the India U17 men's football team sealed its AFC Under-17 Asian Cup 2026 berth. Before that, the women's team secured a direct berth to the AFC Women's Asian Cup, and the women's T20 team made the cut for the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup for the first time in 20 years.

HOCKEY HURRAH

ASIA CROWN COMES HOME

The Indian men's hockey team were crowned Asia Cup 2025 champions after they beat the Republic of Korea 4-1 in the final at the Rajiv Sports Complex in September. With the win, India ended their eight-year wait to regain their title and qualified for the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 in the Netherlands and Belgium. This was India's fourth Asia Cup hockey win. Their last triumph came in 2017 in Dhaka.



Bronze Signals New Dawn

India clinched the bronze medal at the FIH Men's Hockey Junior World Cup in Chennai, ending a nine-year wait for a podium finish, with a dramatic come-from-behind victory over Argentina after a late surge in the final quarter in December. While the medal is a welcome result, the most intriguing outcome of any age-group global event such as this is the emergence of future stars.



THE KINGS' CORONATION

One of the most talked-about triumphs came from the Indian Premier League, where Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) finally lifted their maiden IPL trophy. After 17 seasons of heartbreak, near-misses, and relentless fan support, No 18 turns lucky for the team. Coincidentally Virat Kohli's jersey number is 18 and it was 18th season of IPL. Kohli, long the face of the franchise, basked in the glory as the team silenced years of "no-cups-for-you" jokes.



SA CHOKERS NO MORE

If there was one international team whose wait for a trophy felt eternal, it was South Africa. Labeled "chokers" for decades, the Proteas repeatedly faltered at crucial stages of ICC events despite fielding world-class teams. In 2025, they finally rewrote the script. South Africa won their first ICC trophy since 1998, claiming the World Test Championship by defeating Australia in the final.




PARIS FINDS ITS CROWN

Just 297 miles away in France, Spanish manager Luis Enrique landed a first Champions League title for Paris Saint-Germain, who routed Inter Milan 5-0 in the final in Munich. The triumph comes five years after they lost to Bayern Munich in their only previous final appearance. This win was more than just a club milestone; it was a watershed moment for French football.

SINCARAZ SAGA

The "Sincaraz" rivalry dominated the 2025 tennis season, with Carlos Alcaraz and Janik Sinner contesting all four Grand Slam finals between the French Open, Wimbledon, and the US Open, plus three other tour finals. They split the four majors (Sinner won the Australian and Wimbledon, Alcaraz took the French and US Open), with Alcaraz holding a 4-2 head-to-head advantage for the year. Their five-hour, twenty-nine-minute French Open final was a classic, highlighting their era-defining battles. Alcaraz secured the year-end World No 1 ranking, while Sinner retained his ATP Finals title.



SILVER WITH BITTER AFTERTASTE

The Indian hockey team had to settle for the runners up prize at the Women's Asia Cup 2025 after losing 4-1 to hosts the People's Republic of China in the final at the Gongshu Canal Sports Park Hockey Field in Hangzhou in September. The result means that the Indian women's hockey team also failed to secure a direct berth to the 2026 FIH Women's Hockey World Cup and will have to go through the qualifiers route.



SILVER RUN REVIVES HOPE

The Indian hockey team returned with a silver medal from the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup 2025 after losing 1-0 to Belgium in the final in Ipoh, Malaysia in November. For world No 7 India, who were returning to the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup after a six-year gap, it was a second successive runners up finish, with their previous appearance in 2019 also ending with a final loss to the Republic of Korea.



The sacrifices made by Guru Gobind Singh and his entire family are unparalleled not only in Indian history but also in world history. Despite immense personal loss, Guru Gobind Singh never wavered from his principles and gave a powerful message to the world about protecting humanity and upholding righteousness

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA CM

When I read reports about the poor state of healthcare and hear the cries of families who have lost their loved ones, it deeply pains me

ASHOK GEHLOT | FORMER RAJASTHAN CM

India's climate is being deliberately poisoned. Right-wing forces, emboldened by power, are openly attacking Dalits, STs and minorities - through fear, lynching, threats and hate, all under the garb of religion

ABHISHEK BANERJEE | TMC GENERAL SECRETARY

SHORT TAKES

CEC calls on Vice President

New Delhi: Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar called on Vice President C P Radhakrishnan here Friday. The Election Commission shared a photograph of the meeting on its social media handle. "Chief Election Commissioner, Gyanesh Kumar, called on the Hon'ble Vice-President of India, C P Radhakrishnan, at Vice-President's Enclave today," the poll authority said. While Radhakrishnan was elected as the vice president in September, Kumar took over as the chief election commissioner in February this year. Besides the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and state assembly and legislative council polls, the EC also holds elections to the posts of president and vice-president.

VV Rajesh elected as 1st BJP mayor in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram: BJP leader V V Rajesh was elected mayor of Thiruvananthapuram Corporation Friday after the saffron party won 50 of the 101 wards, marking its first-ever victory in a municipal corporation in Kerala. In the mayoral election Friday, Rajesh secured 51 votes, including the support of an Independent councillor. R P Sivaji of the LDF received 29 votes, while UDF candidate K S Sabarinathan secured 19 votes, of which two were later declared invalid.

Man burns wife to death

Hyderabad: A man allegedly burnt his wife to death here, suspecting her fidelity, police said Friday. He purchased petrol in a bottle and poured it on his wife while she was sleeping, and set her on fire December 23, they added. The couple got married 10 years ago. The man is a construction worker, and the woman was doing housekeeping work.

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

I, Shifa Lakra, daughter of Anal Lakra, residing at Patalkanda, Biramitrapur have changed my name to INAYA ANVYN and shall henceforth be known as Inaya Anvyn for all purposes.



The BJP will not speak on the train fare hike. If we do it, then all the leaders will start talking about it

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

ATTACKS ON MINORITIES IN B'DESH

India expresses grave concern

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 26: India Friday said the "unremitting hostilities" against minorities in Bangladesh is a matter of "grave concern" as it demanded punishment to the perpetrators involved in the lynching of a Hindu youth in Mymensingh area last week.

New Delhi also reacted cautiously to the return to Dhaka of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) acting chairman Tarique Rahman after 17 years, saying it should be seen in the context of India's push for ensuring free, fair and inclusive parliamentary polls in that country.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India condemned the recent killing of Hindu youth Dipu Chandra Das and demanded action against those involved in the killing.

"The unremitting hostilities against the minorities in Bangladesh including Hindus, Christians and Buddhists at the hands of extremists is a matter of grave concern."

"We condemn the recent gruesome killing of a Hindu youth in Bangladesh and expect that the perpetrators of the crime would be brought to justice," Jaiswal said at his weekly media briefing.

Bangladeshi authorities have already arrested 12 people for Das's murder.

"Over 2,900 incidents of violence against minorities including cases of killings, arson and land grab have been documented by independent sources during the tenure of the interim government," Jaiswal said.

"These incidents cannot be brushed aside as mere media exaggeration or dismissed as political violence," he added.



External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India condemned the recent killing of Hindu youth Dipu Chandra Das and demanded action against those involved in the killing

Bangladesh has witnessed a fresh wave of unrest and political instability following the killing of youth leader Sharif Osman Hadi, who was a prominent face in last year's mass protests that forced the collapse of the Sheikh Hasina government.

His killing has also triggered some fresh strain in India-Bangladesh ties as certain elements in that country sought to link New Delhi to his death.

India dismissed the charges. "We have rejected the false narrative that has been projected in Bangladesh. The law and order situation and developments happening there is the

responsibility of the government of Bangladesh. To portray a narrative where things go in another direction is completely false and we reject that," Jaiswal said.

The external affairs ministry spokesperson said India is closely following all the developments in the neighbouring country.

"India stands for strengthening our ties with the people of Bangladesh. We favour peace and stability in Bangladesh. And we stand for free, fair, inclusive and participatory elections in Bangladesh," he said.

The parliamentary elections are slated for February 12.

On the killing of another Hindu man, Amrit Mondal alias Samrat, by a mob in Rajbari Town Wednesday night, Jaiswal appeared to link it to deteriorating security situation and hostilities towards minorities in Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh government said Mondal was accused in several serious cases, including murder and extortion and that the incident was not a communal attack.

On BNP leader Rahman's return to Bangladesh from London, Jaiswal said: "As you are aware, India supports free, fair and inclusive elections in Bangladesh. This development should be seen in that context."

Rahman, 60, returned to Dhaka to a rousing welcome by thousands of his supporters Thursday -- a homecoming that is expected to energise the BNP ahead of the February 12 parliamentary elections.

"India wants close and friendly relations with the people of Bangladesh which is rooted in the Liberation struggle and strengthened through various development and people-to-people initiatives," he said.

Class XI student shot dead after dispute at UP school



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gorakhpur, Dec 26: Uttar Pradesh Police detained two people after a Class XI student was shot dead following a dispute at a school playground here Friday afternoon, police said.

Additional forces have been deployed to maintain law and order in the area, they said, adding that two accused are absconding. The incident occurred at around 1.00 pm on the premises of Co-operative Inter College in Pipraich, police said.

According to eyewitnesses, the victim, Sudhir Bharti, was at the playground when an argument broke out between him and another person from the same neighbourhood.

The altercation escalated quickly, during which the accused allegedly took out a country-made pistol and fired at Bharti. The student collapsed and died on the spot, they said.

Following the incident, authorities closed the school as a precautionary measure, they said, adding that police arrived at the spot shortly after the incident and detained the accused.

The situation became tense as residents and relatives of both sides gathered there. Some relatives of the accused tried to block the movement of police vehicles by lying down in front of them.

Senior Superintendent of Police Rajkaran Nayyar said an additional police force has been deployed in the area, and the situation is under control. He assured of strict action against those responsible.

The SSP said the family has provided information about two absconding accused, among them one is a minor. Three police teams have been constituted to arrest the absconding accused, he said, adding that interrogation of the two detained is underway.

Chinese tourists return to Kushinagar after 5 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kushinagar (UP), Dec 26: A delegation of Chinese tourists arrived in Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh, giving a boost to tourism in the Buddhist pilgrimage town that had come to a halt due to travel restrictions imposed during the coronavirus outbreak, officials said.

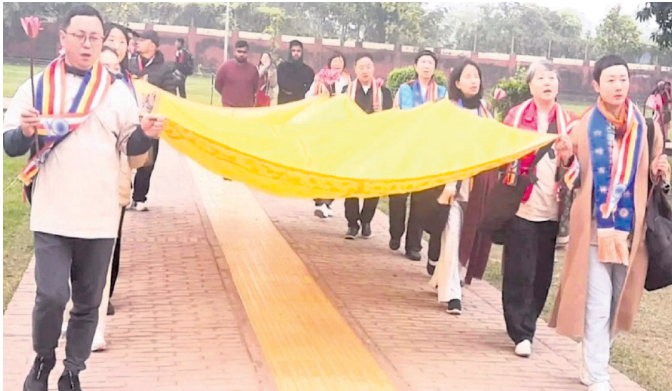
The arrival of foreign tourists has resumed and the situation is normalising, bringing back vibrancy to the local economy, they said.

A 21-member Chinese delegation reached Kushinagar Wednesday, marking the first visit by Chinese tourists since the pandemic five years ago. The group offered prayers and

'chivar' at the Mahaparinirvana Temple, which houses the fifth-century reclining statue of Lord Buddha.

The delegation was led by Bhikshuni Fujian Dayu, who said the group also visited and offered prayers at the Ramabhar Stupa, believed to be the cremation site of Lord Buddha.

The team arrived in Delhi from China December 21 and travelled to Kushinagar via Shravasti. The group will leave for Bihar Thursday and is scheduled to visit Vaishali, Rajgir, Nalanda and Bodhi Gaya before touring Sarnath, the site believed to be where Buddha held his first sermon, December 30, after which it will return to China.



Officials said improving bilateral ties and the resumption of visa issuance by India have been welcomed by Chinese citizens and are expected to increase tourist inflow, strengthening people-to-people relations and positively impacting the tourism sector.

Tourism officer Pran Ranjan said around 1,800 Buddhist tourists visited Kushinagar in

KOLKATA METRO SERVICES DISRUPTED

Metro services on the Blue Line (Dakshineswar to Kavi Subhash) were disrupted Friday evening after a 17-year-old girl jumped onto the tracks at Netaji Bhavan station, officials said. The girl was rescued from the tracks and rushed to a nearby hospital where doctors declared her 'brought dead', they said



A man carries a child on his shoulder as he walks along a road on a foggy morning near the India-Pakistan border, in Jammu

PTI PHOTO

Jharkhand govt ensures transparent rice procurement at over 700 centers

Jharkhand: The Government of Jharkhand is ensuring a smooth and transparent rice procurement process at more than 700 procurement centers across the state. Farmers can sell their harvested rice at the nearest procurement center in their respective blocks. Payments are being made directly to farmers' bank accounts at the rate of ₹2450 per quintal. In a public appeal, Chief Minister Hemant Soren urged farmers not to fall prey to intermediaries who may promise compensation or payments in exchange for a fee. He emphasised that any illegal demands for money or misleading information should be immediately reported to the concerned block office or district administration. The state government remains firm in its commitment to protecting the interests of farmers and ensuring that all processes are carried out with transparency and fairness.

President Murmu to undertake sea sortie in submarine Dec 28

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu will embark on a sea sortie in a submarine from Karwar Harbour in Karnataka December 28, her office has said. Murmu (67) will be the second head of state to sail in a submarine. Former president (late) A P J Abdul Kalam had undertaken a submarine sortie February 13, 2006 at Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh). Murmu is the first President of India to have taken sortie in two fighter aircrafts of the Indian Air Force. She flew in Rafale October 29 this year and took a sortie in Sukhoi 30 MKI in 2023. The president's undersea sortie is scheduled during her four-day visit to Goa, Karnataka and Jharkhand from Saturday.

Tripura Assembly Speaker Biswa Bandhu Sen dies at 72

Agartala: Tripura Assembly Speaker Biswa Bandhu Sen died at a private hospital in Bengaluru Friday, officials said. He was 72. He is survived by wife, son and a daughter. Sen was undergoing treatment in the Karnataka capital after suffering a massive cerebral stroke, they said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the Speaker's death and recalled his efforts to boost Tripura's progress. "Pained by the passing of Shri Biswa Bandhu Sen Ji, Speaker of the Tripura Assembly. He will be remembered for his efforts to boost Tripura's progress and commitment to numerous social causes. My thoughts are with his family and admirers in this sad hour. Om Shanti," the PM said on X. Sen's body will be brought here Saturday, the officials said.

Delhi court grants bail to six accused in India Gate protest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 26: A Delhi court Friday granted bail to six protesters arrested in connection with the agitation on Kartavya Path, where slogans were allegedly raised in support of slain Maoist commander Madvi Hidma, saying they were not required for further investigation.

Additional Sessions Judge Amit Bansal was hearing the bail plea of Ilakkiya, Ayisha Wafiya, Ravjot Kaur, Gurkirat Kaur, Abhinash Satyapathi and Kranti.

"The applicants (six accused people) have already accused a custody of about one month each, and it seems from the submissions that they are not required for any further investigation." "No reasonable apprehension has been shown by the prosecution that there is a threat of tampering with the witnesses or that the applicants are a flight risk," the court said.

It said that none of the accused persons were members of the banned Maoist student organisation, Radical Student Union (RSU).



tirely. "At a time when public space and avenues of communication stand severely restricted, this platform remains among the very few means available to me to reach out to my people... Under such circumstances, it is a Hobson's choice I was left to make," the Mirwaiz posted the clarification on X.

"Hobson's choice" means an apparently free choice when there is no real alternative. Founded in 1993, the APHC was once the Valley's primary separatist conglomerate, which

mainly indulged in coordinating mass shutdowns and political mobilisations. However, its influence has steadily eroded over the last decade due to internal differences, followed by a legal crackdown post-2019.

Most of the constituent groups are now banned under anti-terror laws, rendering the conglomerate largely inactive.

The move has drawn both support and criticism across Jammu and Kashmir's political spectrum, with the ruling National Conference (NC) chief spokesperson and MLA Tanvir Sadiq calling the pressure "wrong" and emphasising that the Mirwaiz has the role of a religious scholar in the Valley.

PDP leader Waheed Para defended the move, comparing it to the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, where Prophet Muhammad agreed to remove certain titles in the interest of peace.

■ A 21-member Chinese delegation reached Kushinagar Wednesday, marking the first visit by Chinese tourists since the pandemic five years ago

■ The group offered prayers and 'chivar' at the Mahaparinirvana Temple, which houses the fifth-century reclining statue of Lord Buddha

November, with most coming from Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

Pankaj Kumar Singh, general manager of The Royal Residency hotel, said the Centre resumed issuing visas to Chinese tourists about six months ago, but footfall on the Buddhist circuit remains below expectations.

He cited restrictions on Chi-

nese tourists travelling onward to Lumbini in Nepal, Buddha's birthplace, as a key reason, noting that a fresh Indian visa is required for re-entry.

Officials said Chinese tourists had been barred from visiting India due to the India-China border dispute and COVID-19. The last Chinese tourist group visited Kushinagar in March 2018, when 11,213 Chinese tourists arrived between April 2017 and March 2018.

The Centre approved visa issuance to Chinese tourists on July 24 this year. Officials said nearly 90 per cent of the world's Buddhist population resides in China, and tourism generates about ₹12 lakh annually in hotel stays alone in Kushinagar.

national

of the day quote

We will not allow the government to loot. Not only is the public rejecting the 100-metre parameter, but the Supreme Court's empowered committee has also said that the 100-metre limit is unjustified

DEEPENDER HOODA | CONGRESS LEADER

Why? Translate it. Why don't you ask Stalin to speak in English or Urdu?. This is the only thing that is left now, so respect the Kashmiri language a little

The alliance between the BJP and the Shiv Sena is a selfless alliance. It is not for power. Some people form alliances for selfish reasons and for power, but this alliance has been formed for the people and for development

EKNATH SHINDE | MAHA DEPUTY CM & SHIV SENA LEADER

X POST OF THE DAY

> MNREGA
> Right to Food
> Right to Education
> Right to Information
> 10% GDP

> Aadhaar & DBT
> Lifted 20 Cr people out of poverty
> Liberalization of Indian Economy
> No Hate Speech Ever
Humble tributes to Dr Manmohan Singh on death anniversary

@mr_mayank

India flags H-1B visa appointment delays

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 26: India Friday said it flagged its concerns to the US over cancellation of pre-scheduled H1B visa interviews of a large number of Indians and that both sides are engaged on the issue to address the disruptions caused by Washington ordering enhanced vetting of applicants.

The interviews of thousands of H-1B visa applicants slated from the middle of this month in India have been abruptly postponed by several months to scrutinise their social media posts and online profiles.

Some of the applicants, whose visa appointments



were scheduled last week, received e-mails from US immigration authorities informing that their interviews are being pushed back as late as May next year.

“The government of India has received several representations from Indian nationals who are facing delays or problems with rescheduling of their visa appointments,” External Affairs Ministry

spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at his weekly media briefing.

“While we do understand that visa-related issues pertain to the sovereign domain of any country, we have flagged these issues and concerns of our nationals to the US side, both in New Delhi and in Washington DC. We hope that these delays and the disruptions will be addressed,” Jaiswal said India remains actively engaged with the US to “address and minimise the disruptions caused to our nationals”. The Trump administration’s policy impacted H-4 visa applicants as well.



SURYA KANT | CJI

Our legal framework draws a very clear and deliberate distinction. Those who traffic narcotics, organise supply chain, who profit from human vulnerability are not victims of circumstances. They are perpetrators of serious harm. For those actors, the law must speak firmly, decisively and without hesitation

Unnao rape survivor's mother to move SC against Sengar bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 26: The Unnao rape survivor's mother Friday said she will approach the Supreme Court challenging the suspension of life term of convict Kuldeep Sengar as she participated in a protest outside the Delhi High Court against the last week's verdict.

Activists from the All India Democratic Women's Association along with activist Yogita Bhayana and the survivor's mother held a protest outside the court, demanding cancellation of the bail of Sengar, an expelled BJP MLA.

Speaking to PTI, the survivor's mother said she had come to the high court to protest as her daughter had endured immense suffering. “I am not blaming the entire high court, but only the two judges whose decision has shattered our trust,” she said.

The mother added that earlier judges had delivered justice to the family, but the accused had now been granted bail.

“This is an injustice towards our family. We will approach the Supreme Court, as I have faith in it,” she told PTI.

Scores of protesters gathered outside the high court holding placards saying: “Kuldeep Sengar ki umar kaid ki saza barkaraa rahe” and “Mahilaon ki garima ke saath kihilwad nahi chalega”

They also raised slogans such as “Balatkari-yo ko sanrakshan dena band kro” and “Guneh-

garon ko bachana band karo” (stop protecting rapists and convicts) in support of the Unnao rape survivor.

Criticizing the central government over the ruling, one of the protesters said, “How can the BJP government or the court give him bail. They have to dismiss his bail or this government must go.” “This is not a coincidence that the bail was granted just two days before court holidays. This is a planned move. The citizens of this country are not foolish. Till how long will they continue to deceive us...” another woman said.

Demanding the cancellation of Sengar's bail, another protester said, “He has raped a girl and killed her father because of which she is still in this condition. Stop giving protection to the rapist and protect the victims.”

As the agitators continued their protest, the Delhi Police announced through microphone that demonstration in front of the Delhi High Court is not allowed, warning them of legal action.

“Demonstrating here is prohibited and illegal. Legal action can be taken against you. If you want to protest, go to Jantar Mantar,” a police personnel said.

The Delhi High Court Tuesday ordered the release of Sengar, who is serving a life

term in the case, on bail pending the disposal of his appeal against his conviction by a trial court in December 2019.

In its order, the court directed that the former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA shall not

come within a five-kilometre radius of the victim's residence or threaten the rape survivor or her mother, and said any violation of the conditions would automatically lead to the cancellation of his bail.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, SUNABEDA

E-mail- eerw_sunabeda@yahoo.co.in

Letter No.5245
1st Corrigendum
Date:26.12.25

No.O-1878: In continuation to this office Bid Identification No. Online Tender/09/RWD-SBD/2025-26 invited vide this office letter No.5183, Dtd.19.12.2025, partial modification of TCN has been made of all the works as follows:-

| Sl. No. | Item | Time Schedule as per original TCN No.07/ RWD-SBD/2025-26 | Time Schedule as per 1st Corrigendum |
|---------|---|--|--|
| 1 | Availability of Tender online for bidding | From 22.12.2025 at 11.00 AM to 01.01.2026 upto 5.00 PM | Extended till 08.01.2026 upto 05.00 PM |
| 2 | Date & Time of opening of tender | 02.01.2026 at 11.00 AM | 09.01.2026 at 11.00 AM |

All other terms and conditions will remain unaltered.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer
R.W.Division, Sunabeda

OIPR-25059/11/0032/2526

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (AGRI.)
SOIL CONSERVATION, NORTHERN ZONE

No. L-148 **AT/P.O.: BURLA, SAMBALPUR - 768017**

e-mail: eenzsc.smbalpur@gmail.com

Notice No. 473
Dt.: 24.12.2025

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement Identification No. 04/DSC & WD/NZ/2025-26 Dt.24.12.2025

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | Nature of Work | Construction of new Non-Residential Building |
| 2 | No. of Works | 01 No. |
| 3 | Tendered amount in Rs. | Rs.21,86,903/- |
| 4 | Period of Completion | 180 days |
| 5 | Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal | From 10.00 hrs. of 04.01.2026 to 17.30 hrs. of 09.01.2026 |
| 6 | Last date/time of receipt of original documents in the tender box at the office of the undersigned | Before 17.30 hrs. of 12.01.2026 |
| 7 | Date & time of opening of bids | 11.00 hrs. of 13.01.2026 onwards |
| 8 | Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid | Executive Engineer (Agril.), Soil Conservation, Northern Zone, Sambalpur, At/P.O.: Burla, Near Planetarium Chowk, PIN - 768017 |

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

Sd./- Executive Engineer (Agril.)
Soil Conservation, NZ, Sambalpur

OIPR-01481/11/0010/2526

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION, RAYAGADA

e-mail: eeeph.rdga.od@od.gov.in, eeephrgda@gmail.com

No. C-1857

e-Procurement Notice for 2025-26

Bid Identification No. EEPHDRAYAGADA-36/2025-26 Dt.19.12.2025

- Name of the work : Recycle and Reuse arrangement for back wash water at WTP under Gunupur Municipality
- Estimated Cost : Rs.35.39 Lakh (Approx.)
- Class of Contractor : "C" & "B" Class
- Period of completion : 3 Months
- Date & time of availability of bid documents in the portal : From 11.00 A.M. of 29.12.2025 to 05.00 P.M. of 08.01.2026
- Last date/time of receipt of bids in the portal : 05.00 P.M. of 08.01.2026
- Date & time of opening of bids : 11.00 A.M. of 09.01.2026
- Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Engineer, P.H. Division, Rayagada, near Forest Check Gate, Seriguda, Rayagada - 765002

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal “<https://www.tendersorissa.gov.in>”.

Sd./- Executive Engineer
P.H. Division, Rayagada

OIPR-13052/11/0049/2526

OFFICE OF THE CDM & PHO-cum-DMD, KHORDHA

DISTRICT PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UNIT
NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION

Advt. No. 20513
Date: 26.12.25

TENDER CALL NOTICE

No. E-627: Sealed bids are invited from NABL Accredited Lab Quality Testing of Linen and Water (Used especially in Dialysis Centres) Samples at Public Health Institutions. Details regarding eligibility criteria, terms & conditions and the formats for submission of bid (Technical & Price Bid) are mentioned in the bid document, which may be downloaded from the website: <http://khordha.odisha.gov.in/>. Interested agencies have to submit their tenders in a sealed envelope super-scribing on the top of the sealed envelope as “**Tender for selection of NABL Accredited lab for Quality Testing of Linen & Water Samples**”. The bids should reach to the office of the undersigned by Dt.16.01.2026 at 11.00 A.M. through Speed Post, Regd. Post/Courier only and will be opened on Dt.16.01.2026 at 11.30 A.M. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof. The authority is not responsible for any postal delay.

OIPR-10029/11/0023/2526 Sd./- CDM & PHO, Khordha

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, CHILIKA WILDLIFE DIVISION

At/P.O.: Gopinathpur, Balugaon, Dist.: Khurda, Odisha - 752030, E-mail ID: dfc.chilikaw@odisha.gov.in

Tender Notice No. 07/2025-26

No. MM-430: The Divisional Forest Officer, Chilika Wildlife Division, Balugaon invites tender in Single Cvoer System in conformity with Detailed Tender Call Notice to be eventually drawn up from Registered Electrical contractors having valid licences from competent authority for execution of works as detailed below.

| Sl. No. | Name of Work | Project Cost (In Rs.) | EMD @ 1% of E.C. (in shape of NSCKVP/POTD/TDR/pledged in favour of DFO, Chilika WL Division payable at Balugaon) | Class of Contractor | Cost of bid documents in shape of D.D. in favour of DFO, Chilika WL Division, Balugaon (Non-refundable) | Time of Completion |
|---------|---|-----------------------|--|---------------------|---|--------------------------|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| 1. | Construction of 11KV Line, LT Line & Installation of 63 KVA 11/0.4KV S/S for 30 Power supply to Behampura Nature Camp, Satapada Wildlife Range of Chilika Wildlife Division | 32,75,043.00 | 32750.00 | "HT" | Rs.6,000/- | 02 (Two) Calendar Months |

- Date and time of availability of bid documents in <https://wildlife.odisha.gov.in> and <https://odishaforest.in> : From Dt.24.12.2025 to Dt.13.01.2026 upto 11 A.M.
 - Submission of Tender Documents: During office hours on 13.01.2026 upto 11.30 A.M. in the Office of the undersigned.
 - Date and place of Opening: Dt.13.01.2026 at 12.00 P.M. in the Office of the undersigned.

Detail terms and conditions are available in the Detailed Tender Call Notice.

Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer, Chilika Wildlife Division

OIPR-08142/11/0003/2526

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, KENDRAPARA

No. O-1860

“E” PROCUREMENT NOTICE No. RWD/KBP-13/2025-26 Dt.22.12.2025

INVITATION FOR BIDS

- Name of Work : Building work in the District of Kendrapara for the year 2025-26
- Total No. of Work : 01 Number of Building Work
- Estimated Cost : Rs.52.23 lac approximately
- Period of Completion : As specified in the Annexure
- Class of Contractors : As specified in the Annexure
- Cost of Tender Paper : Cost of tender paper is to be remitted ONLINE for Rs.10,000.00 per set.
- Detail Projects : As per Annexure attached

Other details as follows:-

| Procurement officer | Place of Opening | Availability of Tender Online for Bidding | | Last date & time of seeking tender clarification | Date and Time of Opening of Tender | |
|--|---|---|---------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| | | From | To | | Technical Bid | Financial Bid |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Kendrapara | Office of the Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Kendrapara | 29.12.2025 at 5.00 P.M. | 08.01.2026 upto 5.00 P.M. | Upto 5.00 P.M. on 07.01.2026 | 09.01.2026 at 11.00 A.M. | The date will be intimated to the technically qualified bidders later on |

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd./- Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Kendrapara

OIPR-25064/11/0040/2526

STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD, ODISHA
(Forest, Environment & Climate Change Department, Govt. of Odisha)
ParibeshBhawan, A/118, Nilakantha Nagar, Unit-VIII, Bhubaneswar – 751012
No. 22669/IND-I-SWM-19/25-26 Date 23.12.2025/
PUBLIC NOTICE
PLASTIC FREE PICNIC SPOTS CHALLENGE-2025

No.CAD-2844:The State Pollution Control Board in association with Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department, Govt. of Odisha have undertaken a campaign "Plastic Free Picnic Spots Challenge, 2025" with an objective to make Picnic Spots free from littering of plastic and other materials. The campaign will be implemented through creating public awareness and other allied activities by engaging NGOs, local volunteer, Eco Clubs, SHGs and Gram Panchayats etc. The following 500 Picnic spots in Odisha have been chosen under this campaign.

List of Plastic Free Picnic Spots challenge for 2025

Angul (25 station)- Deuljhari Hot Spring, Dangapal (Bamur range), Digi (Bamur range), Manjore Reservoir, Ketakijharan, Jharjhari Ghati, Binkey Pitha, Belpunji Matha, Tikarapada /Satkosia Gorgeancuary-Tikarapada (Mahanadi Bank),Kholudi Waterfall, Balipasi River side, Pallahara River Bank, Baniapali Forest Picnic Area, Derjang Reservoir, Patrapada, Bayani Pitha, Narayana Seva Ashram, Kukudang, Rengali Dam Backwaters, Samal Barrage, Talcher Palace Grounds, Mango Orchard Gaham, Pabitranganar Eco Spot, Talcher Bulajhar, Chhendipada Banadurga Temple, Jarapada Antulia Compt.No.10, Pandurisuni Temple, Baragounia

Balangir (24 Station)- Harishankar Waterfall, Ranipur- Jharial Picnic Area, Jogeswar Hill (Khaprakhol), Tureikela Reservoir, Sainatala Picnic Ground, Khairguda Dam,Chatuapalli Hill View, Belpada Riverside, Sadeipali Forest Edge, Agalpur Dam Picnic Spot, Patnagarh Fort Grounds, Gandharadi Riverbank, Khuenipali Nature Point, Kumuda Pahad, Bhimadungri Eco-tourism Spot, Gaikhai Ecotourism, Chota Harishankar, Balangir, Dumerbahal dam, Badmal, Mathanpalla, Titlagarh, Meherakata, Bandhapada, Patnagarh,ChandilPahad, Desandh, Patnagarh; Phalsamal Temple, Loisingha; Dumdumi, Loisingha; Amajharan, Loisingha

Balasore (12 Station)- Kasafal Beach,Panchalingeswar Hill & Stream, Chandipur Beach, Talasari Beach, Udayapur beach, Chaumukh beach, Dagra beach, Haskara Dubuagadi / Kuldhia Sanctuary Zone, Bichitrapur Eco Spot, Rissia

Bargarh (20 Station) - Nrusinghanath, Dedhara, Apkhola, Patharseni, Govindpur (Bird village), Barabakhara Waterfall, Chikili, Rani Dam, Kumbho Dam, Samardhra, Manvang Dam, Ambabhana Dam, Khandijharan Water, Patharseni Temple (Hirakud Reservoir area), Baishnodevi Temple, Papanga Hills, Ghunghati, Barapahad Hills, Khajuria Dam, Tamdei Picnic Spot

Bhadrak (3 Station) - Eram (Basudevpur WL Range), Gohiratikiri (Dhamnagar WL Range), Adampur (Dhamnagar WL Range)

Boudh (20 Station)- Nuapada Dam, Naikpada Cave, Balasingha, Marjakud River side, Girasinga, Shyamasundarpur & Pargalpur Buddhist Heritage Sites, Baunsuni Riverside, Dambarda Nature Camp, Ramgarh, Manipur, Palsakutuni, Maa Bhairabi Temple, Kumbidhar Waterfall, Damkuch Dam, Khandikampa, Reghamunda Rock Hills, Sargipali waterfall, Watch Tower at Lakhparbat, Watch Tower at Dangapala, Padelh Dam

Cuttack (13 Station)- Saranda Hilltop, AnsupaDeojhar, Kalakala Nature Nest of Dalijoda Range,Naraj Barrage, Dhableswar Island, Jobra Park, Baimundi Hills, Badamba Dam, Damdamani Temple & Dam site in Mangarajpur section of Dalijoda Range; Mahavinayak Temple, Chandikhol, Olasuni Ecotourism complex and Temple in Dalijoda Range; Dhaltangarh in Jagatsinghpur Range.;Ashokjhar waterfall in Sukinda Range

Deogarh (10 Station) -Pradhanpat Waterfall, Kurudkote Waterfall, Deojharan Waterfall, Gohira Dam Site, Ghodapaka PRF near Dalabeharamunda, Bhai Bhauni Water fall, Badapathar, Bhandar Khol, Maa Jhia Darha, Dargadi

Dhenkanal (13 Station)- Kapilash Hills, Saptasajya Hill & Forest, Kualo Dam, Baladiabandha Reservoir, Joranda Forest Picnic Point, Kamakshyanagar Hill, Bhuban Riverside, Hindol Dam, Mahimagadi Riverside Spot, Sapua Reservoir, Dandadhar Dam, Sunajhar Waterfall Gundichanali river side.

Gajapati (9 Station)- Gandahati Waterfall, Mahendragiri Hill, Taptapani, Harabhanghi Dam, Chandragiri Buddhist Monastiry, Jirang Monastery Hill View, Serango Valley, Gumma Hill Range, Koipur Stream

Ganjam (25 Station)- Ramachandri Sea beach, Shri Dhableswar Sea Beach, Khallingi, Gopalpur sea beach, Sunapur Sea beach, Pantha Nibas, Rambha, Narayani Temple,Taratarini temple, Bateswar Temple, Aleswar Temple, Barihapathar Waterfall site; Baghalati Ecotourism site,Pasuram Kunda Waterfall, Ghodahada Eco Park, Balakumari Temple, Maa Bankeswari Temple, Kas/Viswanath Temple, Ujaleswar Temple,Van Bihar, Bhanjanagar, Daha Dam site, Bapangi Temple, Daha Blackbuck Nature Camp Saluapali, Giant Squirrel Nature Camp Kaliamba, Budhakendu Temple, Keshtriya Barapur, Day Tourism Centre, Chakraghati, Ghatisula Temple,Laxmi Nursinghwa Cave, Kolkalaba

Jagatsinghpur (15 Station)- MaaSalara Temple, Kanankpur, Gorekhnath Temple, Baranga Jagannath Temple, Sidhhala Jagannath Temple, Maa Narayani Temple, Raghunathpur, Dhaltangarh PRF Digabareni Temple, Lankapada, Rahama,Kujang Mangrove Area, Jamboo River Mouth, Nehru Bagala Park, Maa Bandarei Temple, Siali Sea Beach, GadaKujang Jagannath Temple,Paradeep Light house,Hawakhana River mouth

Jajpur (10 Station)- Dasarathpur Riverbank, Sukinda Valley, Gokarneswar Hill, Vyasanager Park, Biraja Dargah, Olasuni Hill &Cave,Panikoili Canal Side,Kuakhia Riverside, Singada Hill, Baitarani Ghat (Chandikhole Side)

Jharsuguda (11 Station)- Rampaluga Hirakud Reservoir Area, Eco-park Malimunda, Koilighughar Waterfall, Bikramkhola Picnic Area, Hirakud Backwater (Larikata), Kelsa Hill, Laikera Forest, Belpahar Picnic Ground, Katapali Riverside, Bagdighi Dam, Patrapali Backwater.

Kalahandi (13 Station)- Dokrichanchara Water fall of Dharmagarh Range, Hello Point of Th. Rampur South Range, Phurlijharan Water fall of Karlapat Sanctuary Range, Dalguma, Rabandhara, Ret Dam, Madia Rakhi, Bhaludhara, TinDharia, Mukhipitha Waterfall, Kamalabari, Asurgarh, Mundganga Waterfall

Kandhamal (20 Station)- Pokadagiri, Nature Park Medubandha Waterfall, Ludu Waterfall, Hill View Daringbadi, Coffee Garden Daringbadi, Midubandha Waterfall Daringbadi, Ludu Waterfall Kathagarh, Putudi Waterfall Phulibani, Muklingia Hill View Udegiri, Madasuru Waterfall and Viewpoint, Sunset Point Daringbadi, Pine Forest Daringbadi, Kisubadi Waterfall Daringbadi, Lover point Kiriuti Daringbadi, Emu Bird Park Kiriuti Daringbadi, Butterfly Garden Daringbadi, Rainbow Waterfall Pangali Daringbadi, Darbadi Waterfall,Partamaha Daringbadi, Traditional Cottage andTribal Museum Kathagarh

Kendrapara (13 Station)- Sakhibata, Bagada Barunei, Ostapur, Balikatsati, Marshaghai, Rajnagar, Derabisi, Gojabayani, Dumuka, Marshaghai, Dangamala,Gupti, Hukitolalsland, Rajkanika Palace, Habalikhati, Ekakula Beach, Ramchandi Temple, Barahnew temple (Aul)

Keonjhar (10 Station)- Sanaghagra Waterfall, Badaghagra Waterfall, Khandadhar, Waterfall, Kajioda, Murgamahadev, Bhimkund, Gundichaghahi, Kanjharri Dam, Handibhanga, Sitabini

Khurda (27 Station)- Barunei Temple, Atri Hotspring, Kosalasuni temple; Arachandi Temple, Ugratarra Temple, Padabasuni, Maa Maninag temple, Asura kumari Temple, Maa Khlamunda Temple, Hanuman Gumbpha Kotagarh, Sri Rama Mandira, Nakithana, Samuka Temple, Damani Temple spring, Berbera Ecotourism; Biswanath Hill /Temple, Maa Kalijai Temple, Kaliyugeswar Hill of Kaliyugeswar Temple, Kankana Sikhari Temple, Samalnasi, Gurubai, Sipakuda, Pitkhalra, Rajhansa, Bhabakundaleswar Temple, Manikapatna, Deras Ecotourism, Jhumka

Koraput (16 Station)- Duduma Waterfall, Deomali Hills, Nandapur, Gupteswar Cave, Kolab Dam, Jalaput Dam, Minapai Valley, Nandapur Hill, Hatipathar Waterfall, Kotpad Riverside, Kunduli Forest Area, Machkund Riverbank, Potangi Hill, Deomali Eco-tourism Nature Camp , Semiliguda Range, Rani Duduma Water fall and day destination centreSemiliguda Range Nageswara Cave ,Balda Range.

Malkangiri (23 Station)- Sitakunda Picnic spot, Amakunda Waterfall, Gummajharan Water fall, Ekagodi Waterfall, Saptadhara Picnic Spot, Hantalguda Picnic spot, Dakraijodi Picnic spot, Polluru Picnic Spot, Kamaraguda Picnic spot, Mi Tank of Podia,Madka Water fall near Pradhaniguda, Badathakura, Manyamkunda,Satiguda Dam,Balimela Reservoir, Chitrankonda, Motu River side, Manyamkonda Hill,Khairput Reservoir, Mudulipoda Forest, M.V-79 Picnic Zone, Mogi Point, Malikeshwar Temple, Jaduguda Shiv Temple

Mayurbhanj (18 Station)- Khadkhai Dam (Suleipat), Nesa Dam, Bankbal Dam, Binjdihara water Fall (Kailaghaty), Asurghaty water Fall, Khandia Water Fall, Bhimkund Eco tourism,Bhairav Kunda, Barehipani Waterfall, Sitakund, Joranda Waterfall, Lulung Picnic Spot, Devkund Waterfall, Ramatirtha Park, Khiching Hill, Kalo Riverbank, Haripur Hill, Karanjia Riverside

Nabarangpur (10 Station)- Mangardhara, Indravati Dam, Ghumureswar, Chandandhara, Kelia, Saidhara, Bhairaghumar, Goseidhara, Bhaskal Dam, Podagad Hill

Nayagarh (20 Station)- Panipolla dam, Rajgiri Pitha, Baishnabgiri Pitha, Chanchunia Pitha, Ghagra Dam / Kuanria Dam, Bhimrapahad, Ratnagada Waterfall; Simili Waterfall, Baraknya waterfall, Budhabudhiani Dam, Mohanagaru Dam, Pachilagodi Dam, Bhalujhara Dam, Kanigiri Sapa Ghususra Bandh, Gokulananda Pitha Sidhamula, Sunamuhin Park, Kantilo Narayani Temple; Bagdevipitha, Baghua Dam

Nuapada (20 Station)- Patalganga,Tikhal Dam, Risipithi, Goddhuapadar, Pendrawan Dam, Jogimath, Kadaljharan, Upkaganga, Kapatdara, Jadamunda Dam , Patora, Maraguda, Jogeswar Temple ,Saipala Dam ,Penkundongri, Tipakhola, Ghumar, Guasli (Budighat) , Liad Dam , Badhibahal Dam

Puri (20 Station)- Balukhanda- Konark Beach, Chandrabhaga Beach, Balighai Eco Park, Raghurajpur Riverside, Sakhigopala Lake, Nuanai River, Astarangha Beach, Satapada Chilika, uri Beach front, Kakatpur Mangrove Trail, Alarnath Temple Riverside, Jagannath Ballav Eco Spot, Ramachandi, Lotus Hotel Area, Chandrabhaga Eco-retreat, Area nearby Light House; Tavagolara, Kutamchandi, Jahania, Gangadevi

Rayagada (15 Station)- MaaMajhigouriTemple,Haluwa, BairagiHaluwa Water Fall, TalaGumma, Sanshesh Temple, Durgapadu Water Fall, Minajhoia Shiva Temple, Chatikona Shiva Temple, Debagiri, Gadagada, Kulabandha Temple, Toyangiri Water Fall, Kenduguda Dam, Cherakota Water Fall, Ailguna Water Fall

Sambalpur (17 Station)- Hirakud Dam-Zero point, Dhodrokusum, Debajharan, Ushakothi Sanctuary, Huma Temple, Debrigarh, Budharaja Hill, Bhatra Forest, Sason Canal, Sardegia Hill, Gudguda, Phuljharh, Ghanteswari (Chiplilima), Pradhanpatthi, Hotapal, Badsinghari, Pitapali,

Sonepur (15 Station)- Sonepur confluence, Binka river side, Singjurikata, Pujadungri, DUNGRIPI forest, Rampur forest, Chardaa picnic ground, Papakshayaya ghata Binka,Metakani, Thengodam reservoir, Patalikot samelei, Pratappurkata, Deuljhari, Baarapahadkhol, Ranjiluha Tarva

Sundargarh (33 Station)- Chhengapahad Natural Arc Heritage Site, Saragarh Nature Camp, Sundargarh Town Park, KannaKund, Koilighughar Picnic Spot, Hemgiri, Jhadeswar Temple, Beng Benguli, Hemgiri Tinkinda Waterfall, Rauguda, Ujalpur, Akthosia Waterfall, Ujalpur, Saragarh Dam Side Renagihai Dam, Talsara, Rushi Gumpaha, Kuchedaga, Gopalpur, Hanuman Vatika, Panposh, Rourkela, Baishnodevi Temple, Panposh, Rourkela, Akshaya Shila, Bisra, Rourkela,Vedvyas Dam, Kuarmunda, Rourkela, Pitamahai Dam, Kalunga, Rourkela Mandira Dam, Rajgangpur, Rourkela,Kansbahal Dam, Kuarmunda, Rourkela,Deomul Waterfall, Rajgangpur, Rourkela, Brahmani River Darjing, Banki, Rourkela, Deodhar Eco Tourism, Banki, Rourkela, Khandhar Waterfall, Bonai,Rukuda Dam, Bonai,Tensa Nature Camp, Bonai,Sundhikon River View (Brahmani River bank). Amco-Simco- Raibaga-G.P Kuarmunda Block,Chhatri Hill- Bargaon Block, Darieeing- Lahuniapara Block, Deogarh- Daeieeing G.P Lahuniapara Block,Ghogar Baba Shiv Temple- Rajgangpur Block, Junagarh- Hemgiri Block, Kanhakund-Balisankara Block, Akshyasila Waterfall- Bisra Block

These Picnic spots shall have restriction / regulations on use of single use plastic (SUP) and advisory of Dos and Don'ts for strict adherence. All citizens are requested to follow the restrictions and the advisory to maintain the cleanliness of the surroundings and maintain enjoyable environment. Cooperation of every individual shall help making the campaign successful accomplishing its objective.

“Spread joy, don't litter, be nature friendly”.

By order of the Chairman
Sd/-
OIPR-08012/11/0039/2526
MEMBER SECRETARY

of the day

quote

What is important is that both of us have to keep the promises that both will not threaten, offend, and instigate, and to reduce hostility between the two countries

ANUTIN CHARNVIRAKUL | PRIME MINISTER, THAILAND

As I meet people of different faiths, I find it enormously encouraging to hear how much we have in common, a shared longing for peace and a deep respect for all life

KING CHARLES | KING, BRITAIN

On earth, there is no room for God if there is no room for the human person. To refuse one is to refuse the other

POPE LEO | HEAD OF CATHOLIC CHURCH

SHORT TAKES

Thailand bombs village in Cambodia

Bangkok: Thailand and Cambodia were engaged in combat along their border Friday, even as the two countries held talks to try to put an end to armed clashes that erupted in early December, breaking a ceasefire that had been reached five months earlier. Cambodia's Defence Ministry said that Thailand deployed F-16 fighter jets to drop around 40 bombs on a village in the northwestern province of Banteay Meanchey. There were no immediate reports of casualties, but the ministry said that houses and infrastructure were destroyed. Thailand's military confirmed the attack, saying that a joint army-air force operation was essential to protect Thailand's Sa Kaeo province, which borders Banteay Meanchey and where the two nations have overlapping territorial claims.

Pak, UAE leaders hold 'substantive talks'

Islamabad: Pakistani and the UAE leaders Friday held "substantive talks" to further strengthen bilateral ties, according to an official statement. The talks came during the day-long official visit of UAE President and Ruler of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to Pakistan at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. This was Al Nahyan's first official visit to Pakistan in his capacity as the UAE president. "During the visit, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed held substantive talks with the Prime Minister. Their discussions focused on exchange of views on further strengthening the longstanding fraternal relations between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates," according to the statement.

Explosion at mosque in Syria's Homs kills 5

Damascus: Five people were killed in an explosion at a mosque of the Alawite minority sect in the Syrian city of Homs Friday, Syrian state news agency SANA said. SANA cited Syrian Health Ministry official Najib al-Naasan as saying 21 others were wounded and that the figures were a preliminary toll, indicating they could rise. Homs city's press office said an explosive device had detonated inside the Imam Ali bin Abi Talib mosque and that security forces had cordoned off the area. Local official Issam Naameh told Reuters the blast took place during Friday noon prayers, typically the busiest time for mosques. Syrian state media SANA published footage of rescuers and security forces examining debris splayed across the mosque's green carpet. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.

Chinese sanctions hit 20 US defence firms



The Foreign Ministry in a statement warned that any attempt to provoke China on the Taiwan issue would be met with a firm response

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Dec 26: China Friday imposed sanctions on 20 US defence firms in response to the Trump administration's approval of a record \$11.1 billion arms sales package to Taiwan. The Foreign Ministry in a statement warned that any attempt to provoke China on the Taiwan issue would be met with a firm response. In response to the US announcement of large-scale arms sales to what it described as "China's Taiwan region", the ministry said Beijing has decided to take countermeasures against 20 American military-related firms and 10 senior executives who have been involved in arming Taiwan in recent years.

The ministry said Beijing has decided to take countermeasures against 20 American military-related firms and 10 senior executives who have been involved in arming Taiwan in recent years. "The Taiwan question is at the very core of China's core interests and the first red line that must not be crossed in China-US relations. Anyone who attempts to cross the line and make provocations on the Taiwan question will be met with China's firm response," it said. It urged the US to abide by the one-China principle and to "stop the dangerous moves of arming Taiwan, stop undermining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, and stop sending wrong signals to 'Taiwan independence' separatist forces". China will continue to take resolute measures to firmly defend national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity, the statement said. The sanctions were largely seen as symbolic, as most of the targeted US defence firms do not have business operations in China.

Trisha Mukherjee wins Rupert Cornwell Prize

AGENCIES

New York, Dec 26: The fifth Rupert Cornwell Prize for Journalism has been won by Trisha Mukherjee, a freelance journalist based in New York. The annual award is aimed at younger journalists at the start of their careers. Ms Mukherjee, beat an exceptionally talented group of applicants with her proposed series of stories about the US-Mexican border. The prize was established in memory of Rupert Cornwell, the distinguished foreign correspondent and writer who died in 2017. The goal is to help fund a suitable journalistic project in any of the broad regions Cornwell spent much of his career covering – North America, Europe and the Soviet Union. The £5,000 prize is supported by The Independent and is awarded by the Rupert Cornwell Trust. "It's a true honor to be awarded this year's Rupert Cornwell prize. I am deeply inspired by Mr. Cornwell's tenacious and incisive journalism. Reporting from anywhere,



he knew how to make each sentence sing. I hope to carry forth his inimitable spirit in my own reporting at the US-Mexico border and beyond." Ms Mukherjee said. On behalf of the judges and the trust, Cornwell's widow Susan, a former US Congressional correspondent for Reuters, praised Ms Mukherjee's "topical, detailed and well-researched" proposal. "Trisha's pitch showed her to be a talented and sensitive writer. The judges were also impressed with her focus on global human rights and her desire to create a more compassionate world through stories," Cornwell said. Ms Mukherjee has contributed to the New York Times and Business Insider.

Russia plans a nuclear power plant on the moon within a decade

REUTERS

Moscow, Dec 26: Russia plans to put a nuclear power plant on the moon in the next decade to supply its lunar space programme and a joint Russian-Chinese research station, as major powers rush to explore the earth's only natural satellite. Ever since Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first human to go into space in 1961, Russia has prided itself as a leading power in space exploration, but in recent decades it has fallen behind the United States and, increasingly, China. Russia's ambitions suffered a massive blow in August 2023 when its unmanned Luna-25 mission smashed into the surface of the moon while attempting to land, and Elon Musk has revolutionised the launch of

space vehicles - once a Russian speciality.

IS THAT A NUCLEAR REACTOR ON THE MOON?

Russia's state space corporation, Roscosmos, said in a statement that it planned to build a lunar power plant by 2036 and signed a contract with the Lavochkin Association aerospace company to do it. Roscosmos did not say explicitly that the plant would be nuclear but it said the participants included Russian state nuclear corporation Rosatom and the Kurchatov Institute, Russia's leading nuclear research institute. Roscosmos said the purpose of the plant was to power Russia's lunar programme, including rovers, an observatory and the infrastructure of the joint Russian-Chinese International



We have agreed on a meeting at the highest level - with President Trump in the near future

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKIY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE



Indian student shot dead near University of Toronto campus



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Toronto, Dec 26: A 20-year-old Indian doctoral student has been shot dead near a leading university in Toronto, with authorities probing the case as a homicide, officials said Friday. The shooting took place Tuesday near the campus of the University of Toronto Scarborough, local police said and identified the victim as Shivank Avasthi. In New Delhi, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India has been in touch with the local authorities in Canada. "We are in touch with his family. It's very unfortunate. We convey our deepest condolences. We are also in touch with local authorities as to what were the circumstances that led to the death. We are in touch with the local authorities in the matter," he said. "Our consulate is extending all possible support to the family of the person who died," he said. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation said police were called to the area of Highland Creek Trail and Old Kingston Road at about 3:30 pm Tuesday for a report of an injured person lying on the ground. Duty Inspector Jeff Allington told reporters near the scene.

JUSTICE FOR HADI'S KILLING

Protesters block key Dhaka junction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka/New Delhi, Dec 26: Bangladesh's slain radical leader Sharif Osman Hadi's party activists Friday blocked one of Dhaka's busiest intersections, demanding justice for his killing, disrupting traffic in the capital for several hours. After Friday prayers, leaders and supporters of Inqilab Moncho and July Moncho, joined by students and members of the public, brought out a protest procession from the Dhaka University Central Mosque and marched towards Shahbagh, where they staged a sit-in demonstration. The Daily Star newspaper reported. Md Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station, said the agitators began blocking the intersection at around 2:30 pm local time and traffic has remained suspended since then. The protesters blocked the main roads at Shahbagh, bringing vehicular movement in the area to a complete halt.



Addressing the demonstrators, Inqilab Moncho Member Secretary Abdullah Al Jaber said the group would continue the blockade until justice was ensured for Hadi's killing, adding that protesters were prepared to stay overnight at the site if necessary. "From today, we declare this Shahbagh as 'Shaheed Osman Hadi Chattar'. Our movement will not leave the streets until

justice is ensured for Hadi's killing," Al Jaber was quoted as saying by The Dhaka Tribune newspaper. Shahbagh is a strategic junction connecting several key parts of Dhaka, and blockades there often cause widespread traffic congestion across the city. Hadi, a staunch critic of India alongside the Awami League, was one of the leaders of last year's violent student-led

CHINA OPENS WORLD'S 'LONGEST' TUNNEL

China opened to traffic a 22.13-km-long tunnel, which it claimed to be the "world's longest", in Xinjiang province, Friday. The Tianshan Shengli tunnel, which traverses through the central Tianshan Mountains in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, has reduced a treacherous mountain journey of several hours to about 20 minutes, official media reported



Malaysia ex-PM Najib Razak jailed for 15 more years

REUTERS

Kuala Lumpur, Dec 26: Malaysia's influential former premier Najib Razak was jailed Friday for a further 15 years and fined \$2.8 billion for power abuse and money laundering in the biggest trial of the multibillion-dollar 1MDB scandal, a ruling that could have big political ramifications. Malaysia and US investigators say at least \$4.5 billion was stolen from 1Malaysia Development Berhad, a state fund Najib co-founded in 2009 during the first of his nine years in power in the Southeast Asian country. More than \$1 billion allegedly made its way into accounts linked to 72-year-old Najib, who was first imprisoned in 2022 in another 1MDB case and has long insisted he has been made the scapegoat for Malaysia's biggest-ever financial scandal. During a verdict that took five hours to deliver, high court judge Collin Lawrence Sequerah said Najib's contention that he was repeatedly deceived by others at 1MDB was implausible and to believe that would "stretch the imagination into the realms of pure fantasy". The ruling could fuel further tensions in Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's governing alliance, which includes the once dominant United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) party, over which Najib has retained significant influence even from jail. On a day of reckoning for arguably Malaysia's most divisive politician, Najib was found guilty of all four counts of abuse of power and all 21 money laundering charges, after a marathon legal battle that included multiple appeals and a partial royal pardon.

of the day

quote

2025 has been a year of broad-spectrum upheaval, including geo-political turmoil, layoffs in the IT sector, tariff tensions and other uncertainties

ANUJ PURI | CHAIRMAN, ANAROCK

We need 35 million green jobs by 2047. We need mandatory green skills modules integrated into technical education, industry-aligned certification programmes, and dedicated funding for training institutes focused on sustainability sectors

VINAYAK WALIMBE | MD, CUSTOMIZED ENERGY SOLUTIONS

There was good buying of US dollar with FPIs continuing to sell India assets. Overall, the currency has maintained the 89.50-90.00 range for the day with the RBI interventions and merchant flows dominating the session

ANIL KUMAR BHANSALI | HEAD OF TREASURY AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FINREX TREASURY ADVISORS LLP

SHORT TAKES

Forex reserves surge

Mumbai: India's forex reserves jumped by \$4.368 billion to \$693.318 billion during the week ended December 19, the Reserve Bank said Friday. The overall kitty had increased by \$1.689 billion to \$688.949 billion in the previous week. For the week ended December 19, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by \$1.641 billion to \$559.428 billion, the data released by the central bank showed. Value of the gold reserves increased by \$2.623 billion to \$110.365 billion during the week, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by \$8 million to \$18.744 billion. India's reserve position with the IMF was up by \$95 million to \$4.782 billion in the week, according to the RBI data.

Renault to hike prices

New Delhi: Renault India Friday said it will increase vehicle prices by up to 2 per cent from January, to offset the impact of rising input costs. The French automaker sells three models -- Kwid, Triber and Kiger -- in the Indian market. "The price increase will vary across models and variants and has been necessitated by rising input costs and prevailing macroeconomic factors," the automaker said in a statement. Despite the revision, the company remains steadfast in its commitment to delivering high-quality products and services while ensuring a compelling value proposition for customers, it added. Already, various brands like Mercedes-Benz, BMW, and Audi have announced hiking vehicle prices from next month, owing to weakening of the rupee against the euro.

Coforge buys Encora

Mumbai: Indian IT services provider Coforge said Friday it would acquire US-based AI firm Encora from private equity groups Advent International and Warburg Pincus at an enterprise value of \$2.35 billion. The acquisition will give Coforge a stronger foothold in the AI-led services segment, the company said, adding that the business is likely to deliver \$2 billion in revenue for the fiscal year to March 2027. Coforge said it will fund the equity value of the deal, worth \$1.89 billion, through the issue of preference shares, which will give Encora shareholders a 20% stake in the Indian firm.



The pathway ahead demands sustained demand creation, policy stability and bold investments. These will determine whether India not only meets its goals but sets a new benchmark in competitive, low-carbon steelmaking

NAVEEN JINDAL | PRESIDENT, INDIAN STEEL ASSOCIATION

Gold, silver smash all-time peaks again

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 26: Silver prices soared by Rs 9,350 to hit a fresh lifetime high of Rs 2,36,350 per kilogram in the national capital Friday, tracking strong global cues, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The white metal had closed at Rs 2,27,000 per kilogram Wednesday.

Over the past the four sessions, silver prices have added Rs 32,250, or 15.8 per cent, from Rs 2,04,100 per kilogram since December 19.

During the calendar year, the white metal had risen Rs 1,46,650, or 163.5 per cent, from Rs 89,700 per kg recorded December 31, 2024.

Meanwhile, gold prices maintained their upward momentum in the local bullion market. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity jumped Rs 1,500 to touch a new record of Rs 1,42,300 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes).

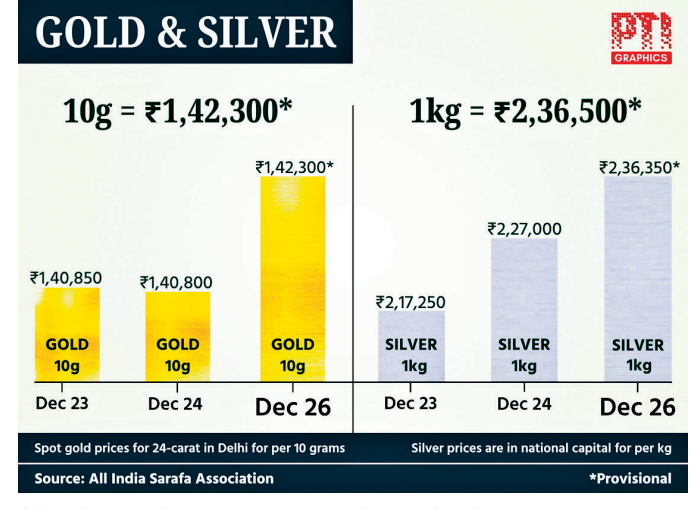
It had finished at Rs 1,40,800 per 10 grams in the previous market session.

So far this year, gold prices have added Rs 63,350, or 80.24 per cent, from Rs 78,950 per 10 grams recorded December 31, 2024.

"The precious metals rally continued on the last trading day of the week, with gold and silver reaching new record highs once again," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

In the international markets, spot gold rose \$50.87, or 1.13 per cent, to hit a new lifetime high of \$4,530.42 per ounce.

"Gold continues to trade at a record high of \$4,530 per ounce, buoyed by the Fed rate cut expectations and positive undertone in the commodities market.



- GOLD GLITTERS**
 - The yellow metal jumped Rs 1,500 to touch a new record of Rs 1,42,300 per 10 grams
 - So far this year, gold prices have added Rs 63,350, or 80.24 per cent, from Rs 78,950 per 10 grams recorded December 31, 2024
- SILVER SURGE**
 - The white metal soars Rs 9,350 to record Rs 2.36 lakh/kg in Delhi; crosses \$75/ounce mark in int'l markets
 - During the calendar year, the white metal had risen Rs 1,46,650, or 163.5 per cent, from Rs 89,700 per kg recorded December 31, 2024

Thin trading condition due to the year-end holidays is exaggerating the moves," Praveen Singh, Head of Commodities and Currencies, Mirae Asset ShareKhan, said.

Spot silver rose to hit \$75 per ounce-mark for the first time in the overseas trade. The white metal climbed 43.72, or 5.18 per cent, to touch a new record of \$75.63 per ounce in overseas trade.

"Spot silver hit a high of \$75 during the Asian trading hours on Friday. The strong bullish momentum has attracted more momentum-driven traders, who have been active in the precious metals market since early December," Saumil Gandhi of HDFC Securities said.

This trend has been intensified by the low liquidity that is

near the year-end and Christmas holiday season, he added.

Jigar Trivedi, Senior Research Analyst at Reliance Securities, said silver has been in a multi-year supply deficit, global mine output has lagged demand, and above-ground inventories are declining.

He further stated that structural tightness on the physical market could support much higher prices if deficits deepen. Silver is crucial in solar panels, EVs, 5G/AI electronics, and other clean-tech infrastructure.

As these sectors grow, industrial demand may outpace supply further, tightening markets, Trivedi, said, adding that other catalysts are weak dollar and rising safe haven demand could push silver prices to \$100 per ounce in 2026.

BIPF felicitates recipients of Prof Ghanashyam Dash Scholarship

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 26: The Bansidhar & Ila Panda Foundation (BIPF) Friday felicitated the recipients of the 21st edition of the 'Professor Ghanashyam Dash Scholarship for Higher Education' (PGDS) for the academic year 2025-26.

This year, five meritorious students have been selected under the prestigious scholarship. Four recipients are pursuing MBBS—Chumki Jena (AIIMS Bhubaneswar), Annapurna Chakrabarty (SCB Medical College & Hospital, Cuttack), Gyana Ranjan Bhera (Jagannath Medical College & Hospital, Puri) and Dhableswar Pujari (Saheed Laxman Nayak Medical College & Hospital, Koraput). Naba Jyoti Giri has been selected for pursuing B.Tech in Computer Science at NIT Rourkela.

Instituted in 2005 by IMFA, the scholarship is named after renowned historian Late Professor Ghanashyam Dash, father of late Ila Panda, with the objective of enabling equal access to higher education through financial assistance.



The scholarship supports students pursuing professional degrees in engineering, medicine, STEM and liberal arts, covering up to 90 per cent of academic fees and eligible expenses, amounting to Rs 6 lakh per recipient over a four-year course.

Since 2016, BIPF has been

administering the scholarship and has strengthened it by introducing 'UTSAAH', a structured mentorship programme. Under this initiative, scholars receive mentoring through 20 modules focusing on academics, career planning, mental wellness, AI skills, leadership, communication and life skills. Congratulating the scholars, Shaifalika Panda, Trustee and Founder CEO of BIPF, said, "Education is fundamental; for every individual educated, the impact uplifts families and transforms entire communities. By supporting meritorious students, we fuel their potential to become enablers of national growth. Through mentorship, we aim to equip them with leadership qualities and agile skills to navigate an evolving world."

Govt to sharpen focus on steel output as 2030 target nears

The industry has added a record 15 MT of capacity over the past three to four quarters, with another 5 MT likely by the end of FY2026

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 26: The government will continue to prioritise higher steel production and raw material security in the coming year, as India enters the final five years of its journey towards achieving an installed steelmaking capacity of 300 million tonne (MT) by 2030.

Alongside capacity expansion, the emphasis will remain on the adoption of low-carbon technologies, the development of green steel capacity and the production of special and high-end steel grades to meet the evolving needs of domestic industries and export markets, a steel ministry official said.

The push comes at a time

when India is the world's second-largest crude steel producer, and steel demand continues to be supported by strong infrastructure spending, housing, railways, automobiles, defence manufacturing and capital goods under government initiatives such as PM Gati Shakti, National Infrastructure Pipeline, and Make in India.

However, the industry is also bracing for continued challenges in 2025, including rising imports, volatile raw material prices and global trade uncertainties. Imports, particularly from Asian markets, remain a concern for domestic producers despite safeguard and anti-dumping measures already in place.

In May 2017, the government unveiled the ambitious National Steel Policy (NSP), targeting the addition of over 200 MT of steelmaking capacity with investments estimated at around Rs 10 lakh crore.

The policy also envisages actual steel production of 250 MT and per capita steel consumption of 160 kg by 2030-31.



According to steel ministry data, India's steel production capacity rose from 97 MT in 2012-13 to 138 MT in 2017-18, and has since expanded steadily with significant brownfield and greenfield investments by both public and private sector players.

As per data research firm BigMint, India's installed steel-making capacity was 235 MT as of November 2025, and it is estimated to remain at around the same levels by FY26. The

TITAN ENTERS LAB-GROWN DIAMOND BIZ

Titan Co, the country's leading jewellery maker, on Friday announced its entry into the lab-grown diamond segment, under the brand name of "beYon". Focusing on the emerging segment of affordable lab-grown diamonds in the country, the company will open a store in Mumbai

December 29



PROFIT TAKING

INDICES TRIM WEEKLY GAINS

REUTERS

Mumbai, Dec 26: Indian equities eased Friday as investors locked in gains near record highs, with thin year-end participation and persistent foreign selling keeping risk appetite in check

The Nifty 50 index fell 0.38% to 26,042.3, while the BSE Sensex index shed 0.43% to 85,041.45.

The session's moves trimmed the weekly uptick in the Nifty and Sensex, which rose 0.3% and 0.1%, respectively, snapping a three-week losing run.

"The consolidation near record-high levels continued this week due to the lack of fresh triggers and muted year-end activity," said Siddhartha Khemka, head of research of wealth management at Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

The average daily trading volumes of Nifty 50 stocks in December has been around 250 million shares, compared with about 300 million shares the previous month.

After touching fresh peaks in November, helped by improving earnings expectations, steady growth and supportive policy

from the government and central bank, the benchmark indexes have gone quiet in December, down 0.6% and 0.8% for the month so far.

Robust pre-quarterly updates from companies starting on January 1 and a potential trade deal with the US will be necessary to take markets higher from current levels and sustain the rally, Khemka said.

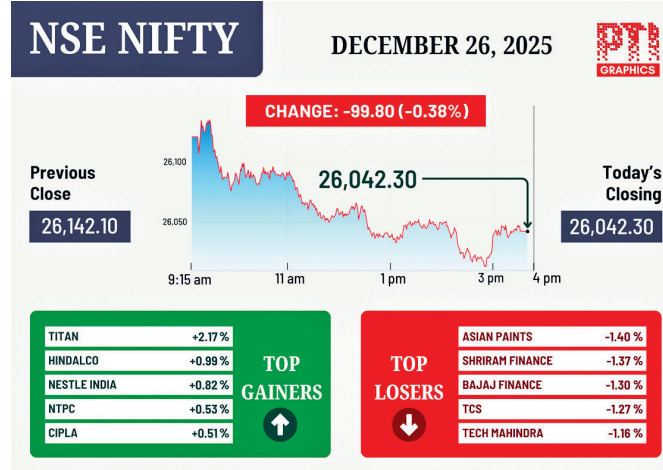
Eight of the 16 major sectors logged weekly gains.

Metals, which rose 2.7% this week, were supported by firmer demand signals out of China and a softer US dollar as markets leaned into expectations for two additional US rate cuts in 2026.

The broader small-caps gained 1.8% this week while mid-caps closed flat.

Among individual stocks, Shriram Finance jumped 6.5% this week, extending last week's 6.3% rise after Japan's Mitsubishi agreed to buy a 20% stake in the company for \$4.4 billion.

Coal India climbed 4.3% after securing in-principle approval to list units Mahanadi Coalfields and South Eastern Coalfields.



BoM opens 62nd branch in Ganjam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 26: Bank of Maharashtra, one of India's leading public sector banks, expanded its footprint in Odisha with the inauguration of a new branch at Humma in Ganjam district.

With this addition, the bank now operates six branches in Ganjam and a total of 62 branches across the state.

The new Humma branch was inaugurated by Ali Kishore Pattnaik, Managing Director of Odisha Diesel Pvt Ltd, in the presence of Dilip Kumar Raulo, Zonal Manager, Bhubaneswar Zone; Sanjib Kumar Dash, Deputy Zonal Manager and G Sai Sankar, Branch Manager, Humma. Addressing the gathering, Pattnaik appreciated the role of public sector banks in supporting local economic de-



velopment and financial inclusion. He encouraged residents and entrepreneurs of Humma and surrounding areas to actively avail themselves of the banking products and benefits offered by public sector banks to support personal and business growth.

Commenting on the expansion, Dilip Kumar Raulo said the new branch reflects the bank's commitment to strengthening its presence in Odisha.

leaders say momentum must accelerate.

Industry body Assocham noted that while the government support has been significant, challenges such as rising coking coal costs, high logistics expenses, limited availability of railway rakes and infrastructure bottlenecks continue to weigh on the sector.

In the new year, Assocham expects a pickup in steel demand and does not anticipate further relaxation of quality control orders (QCOs). It also flagged growing trade barriers globally.

"Trade restrictions imposed by other countries on Indian steel exports are increasing. Some relief could emerge if free trade agreements with the EU and the US are concluded, supporting the domestic industry," it said.

On the green steel transition, PHDCCI Secretary General Ranjeet Mehta said it remains a highly capital-intensive industry, with greenfield capacity requiring very large investments per tonne.

Suryavanshi conferred with Rashtriya Bal Puraskar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 26: The 14-year-old batting prodigy Vaibhav Suryavanshi, who has taken the cricket world by storm with his audacious stroke-play, and seven-year-old chess prodigy Vaka Lakshmi Pragnika were among a host of children who were Friday conferred with the prestigious Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar by President Droupadi Murmu here.

Swimming sensation Dh- inidhi Desinghu was also among the recipients of the award given for exceptional achievements in the field of sports, bravery, social service and environment.

Just a few days back, Suryavanshi slammed 190 runs off 84 deliveries, studded with 16 fours and 15 sixes, for Bihar

ISL UNCERTAINTY

City Football Group exits Mumbai City

REUTERS

Mumbai, Dec 26: The City Football Group (CFG) has divested its stake in Mumbai City amid uncertainty over the future of the Indian Super League (ISL), the team announced Friday.

CFG, which owns several top clubs including Manchester City, had acquired a 65% stake in Mumbai in 2019, with the club going on to win two league titles.

However, the ISL is in a state of limbo with the national governing body, the All India Football Federation (AIFF), struggling to find a new commercial partner after its 10-year deal with the previous one expired.

"The founding owners will assume full control of the organisation moving forward," Mumbai said.

"CFG has made this decision following a comprehensive commercial review and in light of the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the future of the Indian Super League." The ISL was put on hold in July with stalled negotiations for a renewal of the AIFF's contract with its commercial partners, Reliance-led Football Sports Development Limited, cited as the reason. Talks to renew the 2010 agreement came to a halt after India's Supreme Court asked the AIFF not to renew the deal with FSDL until it had issued an order over a separate case to implement a new constitution for the federation.

SENIOR BADMINTON NATIONALS

Surya, Shruti send top two seeds packing to reach semis



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vijayawada, Dec 26: Producing major upsets, local favourite Surya Charishma Tamiri and seasoned campaigner Shruti Mundada ousted the top two seeds -- Unnati Hooda and Anupama Upadhyaya -- in straight games to advance to the women's singles semifinals of the Senior National Badminton Championships, here Friday.

Surya was in complete control against top seed Unnati, sealing a 21-12, 21-15 quarter-final win in 36 minutes, while Shruti accounted for second seed and former national champion Anupama 22-20, 21-12 in a 39-minute contest.

In the semi-finals, Surya will face Rakshita Sree after the 18-year-old came from a game down to beat world junior championships silver

CRICKET PRODIGY



against Arunachal Pradesh in a Vijay Hazare Trophy Plate group match in Ranchi.

With that effort, he became the youngest male cricketer to score a century in List A cricket at just 14 years and 272 days. He reached the three-figure mark off just 36 balls.

Suryavanshi's unprecedented batting saw Bihar pile up 574 for 6, the highest total ever recorded in List A cricket.

Earlier in the year, Suryavanshi became the youngest centurion in men's T20 cricket when he smashed 101 off 38 balls for Rajasthan Royals against Gujarat

Titans an IPL game in Jaipur. His hundred, which came off 35 deliveries, was the second-fastest in IPL history. The India U-19 cricketer had slammed a century in a four-day game against Australia Under-19 this year.

Hailing from Surat in Gujarat, Pragnika won the Under-7 Girls title at the 2025 FIDE

Honour for Jyotsna

Odisha's 17-year-old Weightlifting Champion Jyotsna Sabar has also been conferred with the prestigious Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar by the President. The Gajapati girl has been bestowed with this honour for setting the Asian Youth Record and winning medals at World, Asian, and Commonwealth Championships. Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi congratulated Jyotsna for this feat. Taking to X, Majhi wrote, "Heartiest congratulations to Jyotsna Sabar, the pride of Odisha, on being conferred the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar by Hon'ble President Smt Droupadi Murmu Ji. Rising from a remote tribal region in Gajapati, Jyotsna's journey to the pinnacle of international weightlifting is truly extraordinary."



Women in Blue pocket series

Shafali's blitz after Renuka, Deepti show powers easy win over Sri Lanka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 26: Renuka Singh Thakur and Deepti Sharma dazzled with the ball before Shafali Verma's pyrotechnics powered India to a commanding eight-wicket victory over Sri Lanka, clinching the five-match series in the third women's T20I here Friday.

With the win, India have taken an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series, underlining their complete dominance over the visitors. The contest followed a familiar script, with India first restricting Sri Lanka to a modest total before overhauling the target with consummate ease.

Renuka (4/21) marked her return to the side in scintillating fashion, while Deepti became the joint-highest wicket-taker in women's T20Is as India limited Sri Lanka to a paltry 112 for seven. Shafali, who blazed away to an unbeaten 79 off 42 balls, was at her imperious best as she single-handedly dismantled the chase, powering India home with 40 balls to spare.

Playing her first T20I since December last year, Renuka did what she does best with the new ball, rattling the Sri



Star all-rounder Deepti Sharma etched her name into global cricket folklore, becoming the first-ever cricketer across men's and women's games to register 1,000 runs and 150 wickets in T20Is

Lankan top order and swinging the momentum decisively in India's favour.

The ever-reliable Deepti (3/18) provided excellent support with timely breakthroughs and also joined Australia's Megan Schutt as the highest wicket-taker in women's T20Is, claiming her 151st scalp in the format.

Chasing the modest target, the big-hitting Shafali picked up from where she had left off

in the previous match, going all guns blazing to register her second consecutive half-century.

After facing three dot balls, the explosive opener danced down the track to clobber a towering 83-metre six over long-off, following it up with back-to-back boundaries through mid-wicket and mid-off.

Timing the ball to perfection, she punished the Sri Lankan bowlers with an entertaining

knock, smashing 11 boundaries and three sixes.

Spinner Kavisha Dilhari (2/18) briefly stalled India's momentum by removing vice-captain Smriti Mandhana's (1), whose lean patch continued, and Jemimah Rodrigues, but the outcome was never in doubt with Shafali finishing it off in style with a boundary.

BRIEF SCORES

Sri Lanka: 112 for 7 in 20 overs. (Imesha Dulani 27, Hasini Perera 25; Renuka Singh 4/21, Deepti Sharma 3/18) lost to **India:** 115 for 2 in 13.2 overs (Shafali Verma 79 not out; Kavisha Dilhari 2/18) by eight wickets.

Suraj shoots golden double

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 26: Madhya Pradesh's Suraj Sharma delivered a golden double, sweeping both the senior and junior men's titles in the 25m rapid fire pistol at the National Shooting Championships here Friday.

Suraj began the senior final in dominant fashion, hitting 19 of his first 20 targets, and went on to close the contest with 31 hits, finishing three clear of defending champion Vijayveer Sidhu of Punjab, who settled for the silver medal with 28 hits.

Rajasthan's Bhavesh Shekhawat rounded off the podium, claiming bronze with a total of 24 hits. Earlier in the qualification round, Ankur Goel topped the standings with a strong score of 582-20X.

Odisha storm into final round of Santosh Trophy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Narainpur (Chhattisgarh), Dec 26: Team Odisha played its third match of the 79th National Football Championship for Santosh Trophy 2025-26 against Chhattisgarh and registered a 3-1 victory to qualify for the final round of the championship held here Friday.

Odisha showed dominant display in their final group game by earning a two goal cushion before the first half ended. Forward Jitu Muduli (32') led the attack to fire the first blow to Chhattisgarh, while midfielder Chandra Mohan Murmu (37') added another.

After the halftime, in only five minutes, Chhattisgarh's midfielder Avishek Kungum (51') got their first goal to shake Odisha's defense. However, captain and forward



Kartik Hantal (64') of Odisha got them a two goal margin again after adding the third goal.

Chhattisgarh showed frustration, collecting two yellow cards in the second half af-

VIJAY HAZARE

Rajesh scripts history as Odisha outclass Services



The bowler claimed a hat-trick and became the first bowler from Odisha to do so in List A cricket

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore, Dec 26: Odisha registered a composed four-wicket victory over Services in Match 2 of the Vijay Hazare Trophy 2025-26 at Alur Cricket Stadium III, Bangalore, showcasing discipline with the ball and patience with the bat.

After winning the toss, Odisha elected to field and were rewarded almost immediately as their bowlers dismantled the Services batting lineup for a modest 83 in just 21.5 overs. Services never found momentum, despite a brief resistance from PS Poonia, who top-scored with a brisk 25 off 18 balls, striking two fours and two sixes. AP Sharma struggled to anchor the innings, managing only 13 runs from 36 deliveries, as wickets fell steadily at the other end.

Odisha's bowling attack was led superbly by Sambit S Baral, who delivered a match-defining spell of 8.5 overs, conceding just 21 runs while claiming four wickets at an impressive economy of 2.38. He was ably supported by Rajesh Mohanty, who matched the four-wicket haul, giving away 25 runs in his nine overs and keeping constant pressure on the Services batters.

Chasing a small target of 84, Odisha approached the innings cautiously on a pitch that offered assistance to bowlers. Services bowlers fought hard, with Poonia once again making an impact, this time with the ball, picking up four wickets for 27 runs. N Yadav also bowled economically, taking two wickets for 20 runs.

However, Odisha found stability through Sandeep Patta-

naik, who played a measured and unbeaten knock of 32 off 69 balls, anchoring the chase with maturity. Rajesh Mohanty chipped in with a handy 12 off 13 balls, including a six, to push Odisha closer to the target.

Odisha eventually reached 84 for 6 in 24.3 overs, sealing a comfortable four-wicket win. The match highlighted Odisha's bowling depth and game awareness, setting a confident tone for their Vijay Hazare Trophy campaign.

Kohli pips Bevan to own 'world record'



The "King" Virat Kohli has claimed another throne as he slammed a 77-run knock for Delhi in the Vijay Hazare Trophy match against Gujarat in Bangalore Friday. Kohli has officially broken one of the most long-standing world records in 50-over cricket, surpassing the legendary Australian finisher Michael Bevan to become the highest-averaging batter in the history of List A cricket (minimum 5,000 runs). While Kohli has long been compared to Sachin Tendulkar for his century-scoring prowess, his latest feat solidifies his status as the most efficient run-scorer the game has ever seen. Following his blistering 77 off 61 balls against Gujarat in the Vijay Hazare Trophy at the BCCI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, Kohli's career List A average has risen to 57.87, narrowly eclipsing Bevan's iconic mark of 57.86. Since his continuity in the One-day format has been questioned, Kohli has ascended to the top of this run-scoring chart, averaging nearly 150 over the last 6 games in the 50-over format. In this six-match stretch, Kohli has amassed 584 runs at an astronomical average of 146.00.

Ashes batters run for cover on manic Day 1

REUTERS

Melbourne, Dec 26: Australia finished marginally on top at the end of a chaotic opening day of the fourth Ashes test after an extraordinary 20 wickets fell in front of a record crowd at the Melbourne Cricket Ground Friday.

Australia nightwatchman Scott Boland was four not out with Travis Head yet to score as the hosts went to stumps at four for no loss in their second innings, carrying a 46-run lead over England.

With England bowled out for 110 in reply to Australia's first innings 152, it was the highest number of wickets in a single day at the MCG since a record



25 fell in the 1902 Ashes.

Josh Tongue took a career-best 5-45 to skittle Australia on the grassy pitch after En-

gland captain Ben Stokes won the toss and elected to field in the traditional Boxing Day test.

But the tourists' batters then

- Twenty wickets fall on chaotic day one
- Tongue gets five-wicket haul for England
- Tailender Naser top-scores for Australia with 35

suffered a more egregious collapse. The batting carnage unfolded in front of a crowd of 94,199, eclipsing the stadium's previous record of 93,013 for a day of cricket at the 2015 World Cup final.

England, who have already lost the series after three straight defeats, came into the match under a cloud following reports that some players had taken a "stag party" attitude to a trip to Noosa between the sec-

ond and third tests.

But they would have been well pleased with their work in the field early on, rattling through Australia in 45.2 overs to bring tea early.

The alarm bells were soon ringing, however, as their top order collapsed before they were bowled out in 29.5 overs.

Former England captain Michael Vaughan labelled the pitch a "shocker" but Australia seamer Michael Naser, who led his team's bowling with 4-45 and batting with 35, had no complaints.

"We know it can move real fast day one and two, and then once that wicket hardens up and dries out, it can be quite nice to bat on," he told reporters.